



**Record of Proceedings
of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform
February 7-8, 2004**

Saturday, February 7, 2004 (AM Plenary Session)

In attendance: J. Blaney, Chair
 159 Assembly members
 7 staff
 13 facilitators
 Evaluator: J. Shapiro
 35-40 observers
 2-3 media

Absent: D. Cochran

Recording secretary: L. Perra

W. Wong, accompanied by pianist B. Carter, led the Assembly in the singing of the National Anthem.

Opening remarks

The Chair opened the weekend session noting the order of business. The Chair indicated that the Assembly welcomed observers; however, information was not to be circulated in the Wosk Center for Dialogue. An information table was set up in the Atrium for the distribution of materials. The Chair advised the Assembly that the plenary sessions were being taped and would be broadcast on the Legislative Channel and web cast on the Assembly's website.

Question Period

There being no questions, the Chair invited K. Carty to proceed with the Learning session.

Presentation: Democratic Electoral Systems - Ken Carty

Following the presentation, questions on the following items were raised:

- Voting thresholds
- Voting franchise

The presentation concluded and Assembly members moved into discussion groups.

PM Plenary Session

Public Hearings

L. Perra described the changes to the schedule for public hearings. With the increase in hearings, the number of Assembly members in attendance will vary from 4 in smaller centers to 8 in urban settings. Presenters who pre-register will be provided with a copy of the Assembly's mandate and the options that it is considering. A presentation will be prepared describing the purpose of the hearings and the activities of the Assembly.

June Meeting

The need for a June meeting was discussed and there being agreement, the Assembly decided to hold the meeting in Prince George on June 26-27.

Presentation: Majority Electoral Systems - C. Sharman

Questions on the following items were raised:

- Votes required
- Marking of the ballot
- Breaking tie votes
- Impact of majority vote on candidate performance and balance in party numbers

The presentation concluded and Assembly members moved into discussion groups.

Plenary Session—Guest Presentation

Why do people vote/or don't vote - André Blais

Following the presentation questions were raised on the following:

- Electoral systems and voter turnout
- Voting age and voter turnout
- Electronic and/or better access and voter turnout
- Age profile—voter turnout across different levels of government
- Impact of compulsory voting
- Gender and voter turnout

Sunday, February 8, 2004 (AM Plenary Session)

Question period:

Members requested a copy of the cartoon prepared by C. Walker. C. Walker gave permission for its reproduction for the Assembly. D. Byford read out a poem and agreed to have it circulated to members.

Recommendation #3-Revised (“Recommendation”)

The Chair outlined a process for addressing the Recommendation:

- Review the contents of the Recommendation
- Look at some of the questions raised in the forum
- Provide 40 minutes of debate
- Reach a consensus and/or decision

The Chair outlined a few changes to the content of the Recommendation that had been circulated. During the ensuing discussions the following key themes were raised by several members:

- The presentations need to provide a balance of perspectives and viewpoints
- The reference to the term “influence” in the heading should be deleted
- Where appropriate, randomness in the selection of committee members and presentations should prevail
- Members should have the opportunity to recommend specific presenters
- A summary of the presenters should be placed on the members website before the September session

The Chair called for a show of hands in favour of the Recommendation. The Chair declared the Recommendation adopted subject to changes to the committee process and the selection criteria. The Chair thanked members for their participation.

Presentation: Plurality Systems—K. Carty

Items raised following the presentation included:

- Use the term “long lasting” rather than “stable”
- Using a threshold quota in a plurality model

Plenary Wrap-Up

The CBC news video on the Assembly was played. The Chair thanked the members for their participation and noted that two process decisions had been made with much discussion and goodwill. This fact augured well for the Assembly.

The Assembly adjourned at 12:30 p.m.