

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SECHELT PUBLIC HEARING DATED
5 JUNE 2004 AT THE DRIFTWOOD INN

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION TO THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON ELECTORAL REFORM. IT ATTEMPTS TO CAPTURE THE KEY ISSUES AND ARGUMENTS THAT WERE PRESENTED AND DISCUSSED DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING. IN SOME INSTANCES, THE PRESENTER HAS ALSO MADE A SUBMISSION TO THE ASSEMBLY AND THIS IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE WEBSITE AT WWW.CITIZENSASSEMBLY.BC.CA BY CLICKING ON "GET INVOLVED". IF SUCH A SUBMISSION IS AVAILABLE, IT WILL BE NOTED AT THE END OF THIS REPORT.

Janet McConnell

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Not going back and forth from extreme right and extreme left, a more democratic system is needed.

KEY THEMES

Janet McConnell told the hearing that she believes that a Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system is the only hope for democracy in British Columbia. She described the current political system as one of ‘serial dictatorship.’ She made a number of criticisms of the current electoral system, including the lack of diversity of views represented in the legislature, the lack of an official opposition, and extreme policy swings. Mrs McConnell argued that a PR electoral system would result in more stable policies because governments would have to work together cooperatively to achieve consensus. She predicted that voter turnout would increase under PR because they would realize that their vote really counts. Mrs McConnell also supported having separate votes for the party and for the candidate, which would allow voters to vote for the best candidate in their area regardless of their party affiliation, and still have their ideological views represented in the legislature via the party vote.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Janet McConnell recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

Quote: “At the moment we have massive swings to the right and to the left. Each party that wins a majority then sets about undoing the legislation brought in by its predecessor.”

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were no questions or comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO