PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SMITHERS PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 7 JUNE 2004
AT THE HUDSON BAY LODGE

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.

Alexander MacDonald

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A presentation in support of a form of majority run-off elections.

KEY THEMES

Mr. MacDonald argued for a slight modification of the existing FPTP electoral system. The presenter stated his dislike for PR on the grounds that it removes the connection between constituents and local representatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. MacDonald recommended the introduction of a type of majority run-off system. Under this system, in the event that no candidate receives a majority of the vote all candidates would be sequestered under the supervision of the returning officer. Each candidate would then receive a ballot weighted according to the number of votes received from the electorate. The candidates would then undertake successive rounds of voting until one secures a majority of the vote. In each round, the lowest ranking nominee would be dropped and the process repeated. If any delegate chooses not to participate in this process, the result would be a simple adjustment to the total number of votes required to prevail. Mr. MacDonald argued that while the outcome from the conventional FPTP system may remain unchanged, the principal benefit could be that every voter would be assured that every ballot cast counted.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q   Could you see this working without having the voter vote multiple times?

A   I have thought about that. Run-offs are costly and time consuming; we probably wouldn't want to wait three months to see someone elected to the legislature.

Q   This runoff vote will cost a lot of money and be rather cumbersome and the result will be very close to FPTP as many people wouldn't return to revote if their candidate doesn't get though, so why are we going though this exercise?

A   Under the logistics of this system, even if you get dropped of the list, everybody gets to vote and I believe that you would end up with more consensus politics as there would probably be a lot of deal making before the runoff.