

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.

Stephen Mann

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Benefits of mixed proportional representation as an advantage to bring back the vote.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Mann discussed the problem of voter apathy particularly among youth. According to Mr. Mann the current system is failing youth as reflected in the fact that 80% of eligible young voters are not even registered to vote.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Mann advocated the adoption of MMP as it enables the fair translation of votes into seats and it is easy for voters to understand. MMP was favoured over STV on the grounds of the perceived complexity of the latter system. Mr. Mann also challenged the contention that the production of two different types of members under MMP was disadvantageous. On the contrary, Mr. Mann argued that such friction could result in healthy competition.

Quote: I think MMP will unite our Province bringing good ideas from all.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- Q How did you get involved in the political process?
- A It just came to me. I turned 18 during an election year and I realized I had the opportunity to vote and I took it. I was surprised to learn how few youths actually vote.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

- Comment I was hoping someone in your age group would come and share your views and I was really glad you did so as it is my impression that so many youth just really can't be bothered.

- Comment It is true that you are the only youth here and I am the only aboriginal person. Most of my people just don't come to these things because they don't see the point and I applaud you for coming here and sticking your nose into this stuff.
- Q Do you think that more young people would vote under MMP as they would see more parties gaining representation?
- A I think that they would feel better represented under MMP. The Green Party is the biggest growing youth party right now and there is a lot of support for them.
- Q Do you think if political discussion was brought to the schools that that would help?
- A I think that would definitely help.