

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

CHILLIWACK PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 18 MAY 2004
AT THE RHOMBUS HOTEL

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.

Olaf Frost

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Randomly selected member proportional representation. Seats in the Legislative Assembly would be filled by random selection from voters willing to serve as a representative for that party.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Frost stated that the current FPTP system has served us poorly over the past hundred years essentially because of the tendency of individuals to get together and form political parties. The presenter outlined several problems with FPTP including the production of catch-all parties; the unfair translation of votes into seats; the lack of participation in campaign selection; and problems of campaign finance laws.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Frost recommended the adoption of a pure system of proportional representation to make all votes count. Furthermore, prospective candidates would be required to prove that they were both members of the party that they were intending to run for and that they had voted for that party previously. No individual would be guaranteed a seat as candidate names would go into a province wide pool for a party and the Elections Supervisor would pull the names of the winning candidates from the pools according to how many seats each party was entitled to. This form of “randomly selected proportional representation” would make public office a more altruistic endeavour as ordinary people are brought together to do a job as they see fit, without hopes of enrichment. Local representation could be achieved by locating government offices in all municipalities.

Quote: I think this system would remove some of the completely justified cynicism that has built up over the last 120 years.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- Q How important is your MLA to you?
- A I think that they can be important, but in the system I’m proposing they would be closer to the wants of the constituency. At the moment with party discipline it is hard to get members to follow the will of the constituency.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

- Q Under this system, are you suggesting that MLA's from a particular riding are going to be irrelevant?
- A I'm afraid they already are, especially if they are on the wrong side of a majority government.
- Q How important are parties to this model?
- A They are necessary, and under PR you tend to get a lot more parties.
- Comment Are you familiar with the electoral system of the North West territories? They don't allow political parties and all the individuals are elected to represent their constituencies, and once in the legislature they choose the Premier and Cabinet Ministers and that system seems to work well there.

SUBMISSION: YES SUBMISSION ID# 0016