

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

COURTENAY/COMOX PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 26 MAY 2004 AT THE COAST
WESTERLEY 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.

Angus Ramsey

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Lessons from history that can help us improve our democratic system.

KEY THEMES

Angus Ramsey explained that he did not feel a sense of ownership or responsibility in his community because his only opportunity for participation in the political process is on election day. He proposed a system where each citizen uses a citizen's card to electronically direct a Citizens' Assembly. Mr Ramsey described the creation of the original Citizens' Assembly by Solon in 594 BC and shared his vision for the political system in British Columbia in 2065. He argued that the BC Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform could revitalize democracy if it could persuade the government to extend the mandate of the assembly and develop a system of participatory democracy using electronic citizen cards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Angus Ramsey recommended the establishment of an electronic citizens' assembly.

Quote: "If you can keep this assembly alive past its mandate and convince the provincial government to build an electronic citizens' assembly you will be planting a seed that will revolutionize our province and eventually our world."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

One member of the panel sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	Is there a particular type of electoral system you're envisioning?
A	I think with participatory democracy and an electronic citizens assembly, the people themselves would work this out. I can't say what sort of system there will be in 2065.

Comment from panel: There were no further comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Following this presentation quite a member of the audience had a question.

Q	What is the requirement of government to respond to the Assembly's recommendation? Are they committed to a referendum?
A	(Answered by the facilitator) I can assure you that the whole legislature is committed to holding a referendum if the Assembly should recommend an alternative electoral system.

Comment: There were no further comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: YES

SUBMISSION ID# TO FOLLOW