

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

FORT NELSON PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 11, 2004 AT WOODLANDS 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.

Chris Morey

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Local representation is very important for Fort Nelson. If the size of districts were to be enlarged, we would be outnumbered, outvoted and not counted. A voting system of representation that provides for LR where local reps respond to citizens is best. A "Seats won versus votes won" electoral system is important and especially in northern BC because it respects the values of British Columbians. Choices are important between electoral systems. Fort Nelson and the Northern Rockies believe that representation that reflects the unique challenges and vastness of the north is not only essential but must be ensured.

KEY THEMES

Local representation is very important. The size of districts should not be enlarged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Do not increase the size of electoral districts.

Quotes:

"Nothing is more important in a democracy than power to the people."

"We are concerned that reduced regional representation would occur because of changed boundaries."

"The vastness of our region and electoral district in comparison to the rest of BC is remarkable. If electoral boundaries were further deviated and made larger to encompass the entire northern region, Fort Nelson and the Northern Rockies could find itself underrepresented. Large scale regionalization has not worked and will not work for this part of BC."

"A voting system of representation that provides for local representation where local representatives respond to citizens is best."

"Fort Nelson and the Northern Rockies believe that representation that reflects the unique challenges and vastness of the north is not only essential but must be ensured."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Four members of the panel sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

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Q Have you ever found in past elections that people wished there had been more representation of their views?

A Yes, but I think the majority feeling is that we want our rep representing our turf, we want to see benefits

- Q What would your position be regarding a larger riding but with more members, like a three member riding?
- A I would see that as being confusing.
- Q How would you feel about having members elected by regions?
- A In the Northern Rockies, we see ourselves as a region, now we share our MLA with the Peace region, we wouldn't want to see anything less than that.

Comment from panel

The Assembly is not empowered to change electoral boundaries. A: I understand that the Citizens Assembly will not deal with electoral boundaries but they could be changed should a new system was adopted that required new boundaries.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Following this presentation quite a few members of the audience had questions.

- Q Are you happy with the current system regarding how MLAs tow the party line?
- A What I want to see is that MLAs are accountable to the people not the party.
- Q How would you feel about mandatory voting?
- A People would spoil their vote.
- Q How would you feel about a system that would require sacrificing local representation but where your vote would count?
- A Two persons agreed.
- Q I am concerned with the lack of opposition in government; I would like to see a government that encourages debates.
- A In small ridings proportionality would work quite well. It is also possible to have different size of ridings.

SUBMISSION: NO