

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

GRAND FORKS PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 10 MAY 2004
AT SELKIRK COLLEGE

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.

Raymond Gaudart

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A presentation in favour of a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Gaudart stated that the FPTP electoral system no longer adequately reflects the diversity of the citizenry of BC. The presenter expressed the need for electoral reform in order to combat voter alienation; disproportionality; false majorities; wasted votes; and adversarial politics that often results in wild swings in policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Gaudart recommended the adoption of MMP as it is a simple system that incorporates elements of the current system and introduces an element of proportionality while protecting geographical representation. Furthermore, the presenter stated that MMP would encourage sincere voting as every vote would count and proportional representation of parties should result in a more consensus style of politics in the legislature.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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| Q | Do you think an MMP system would produce a bunch of radical parties? |
| A | It may produce parties but whether they could gain representation is another thing. With a five per cent threshold fringe parties should not be able to secure representation in the legislature. With greater choice among serious parties I feel there would be less of a need for voters to cast protest votes. |
| Q | Could a minority government work in BC? |
| A | Yes I think it could. At the federal level it has produced some of the best legislation in this country has been the product of minority government such as Medicare. |
| Q | Do you know as much about the other systems as you know about MMP? |

A I've read as much as I can about them. I stumbled over things such as STV, but I lost interest because it became too difficult. I wasn't willing to go that far, and I don't think most people are willing to go that far.

Q Do you represent a political group or organization?

A I don't think that is appropriate here. I wrote this presentation myself after reading the available information and weighing the pros and cons.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Where does the number five percent threshold come from and is that high enough?

A That is the number that is common in PR systems such as New Zealand. Countries such as Italy have a lower threshold. Five per cent appears reasonable.

Q If we need to reflect the diversity of BC, Why have a threshold as high as five per cent?

A I think we have to start somewhere, and this is a number that has proven to work elsewhere. New Zealand is also a diverse country such as ours and one that comes from the Westminster Parliamentary tradition.