

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

KAMLOOPS PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 17 JUNE 2004
AT THE COAST CANADIAN 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.

Grant Fraser

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I wish to describe my experiences as a canvasser and the frustration with the current system.

KEY THEMES

Grant Fraser described his experience canvassing for the proportional representation initiatives. He described people as angry, disillusioned and discouraged. He predicted that proportional representation would give people a sense that it was worth getting involved and therefore improve voter turnout. Mr Fraser opposed the Single Transferable Vote system because it would prevent the views of a third party being represented and maintain a two party system in British Columbia. He supported MMP because gives voters two votes, one for party and one for candidate. This enables voters to split their votes and people can vote for the local candidate they think will do the best job regardless of their party. Mr Fraser predicted that this system would benefit independent candidates. He supported a closed party list to ensure that MLAs would represent a better balance of ethnic backgrounds and genders. He also argued that a party list would enable talented people to be elected who wouldn't otherwise succeed in a First Past the Post system, such as a brilliant scientist with a speech impediment. Mr Fraser addressed the criticism that proportional representation would cost more and suggested that the cost of a couple of extra elections would be less than the cost of the damage caused by recent majority governments. He also addressed concerns about the proliferation of tiny parties in a PR system and explained that this could be prevented by the introduction of an electoral threshold.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Grant Fraser recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

Quote: "I like MMP because it gives you freedom to vote for the person that you think would best represent you, even if it's not the person your party put forward."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were three members of the panel who sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	When you talk about a party list, do you think that people who run in the ridings would be on the list as well?
A	Not necessarily, no.
Q	With a closed party list, would you not be scared that it would create favouritism within the party
A	It could, but then party would be judged on that. You're not going to win support if you put a whole lot of party

	hacks on your list.
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Comment from panel There were no comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO