

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.

Ernie Schmidt

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

In the past few years is proof enough that Proportional Representation is a must. It's a known fact too much power corrupts, absolute power leads to absolute corruption. While proportional representation is a must, it's not the complete answer.

KEY THEMES

Ernest Schmidt told the hearing that the whole electoral system must be changed and that a band-aid approach will not be enough. He supported the introduction of some form of proportional representation to let all parties have some influence in how our province is run. He also spoke on the need to ban all donations to political parties, with each candidate to receive an equal amount of public funding to come from the provincial sales tax. Candidates caught overspending should be disqualified and barred from holding public office for life. Mr Schmidt recommended that all parties with candidates running in elections have equal time at public forums regardless of the size of the party. He argued that all elected MLAs should be held accountable for their election promises and their behaviour after the election. He proposed that any political party that is elected on fraudulent promises must be immediately dissolved, the party fined and disallowed to run in the next three elections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ernest Schmidt recommended the introduction of a proportional representation electoral system in British Columbia.

Quote: "British Columbia politics have so divided the province we shift from one extreme to the other but nothing much changes except it goes from bad to worse."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	Would you rather have a government that can get legislation passed quickly, regardless on whether you agree with it, or would you like a government where all parties are involved in negotiating and it may take ten times longer?
A	It depends on the situation. If it's an urgent situation then the government needs to be able to work quickly. But in most other situations, the people of BC should be as involved as possible.

Q	You've suggested that all candidates should have equal time but there are a huge number of parties in BC. Don't you think people might stop listening?
A	I think all candidates should have an equal chance to share their views, regardless of how many candidates there may be.

Comment from panel There were no comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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

Q	What do you meant by a bona fide candidate?
A	One that meets the requirements of Elections BC.

Comment: There were no comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO