

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

NELSON PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 11 MAY 2004
AT THE PRESTIGE LAKESIDE RESORT

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.

Tom Prior

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Looking for an alternative to FPTP, suggesting proportional systems along the lines of New Zealand as a good option.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Prior outlined the history and evolution of democracy and stated the view that western democracies have become too arrogant.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended changing to a PR electoral system.

Quote: Greed and the contemptuous pride that has flourished with industrial democracy will be our demise.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q You draw a connection between democracy and destruction of our planet, but you suggest PR as a solution?

A I agree with Aristotle, it is the least evil form of government. I'm not an advocate of Plato. We've got to work with it and try to get democracy closer to the people again. It's time to get the corporations out of bed with the parties, there has to be limits placed on power and money.

Q In your comments you asked people about their views regarding control of the party system, do you think that PR does a better job of controlling the parties than the current system?

A I'm not an expert on electoral systems, but I think that change is better than the rest right now. Gerrymandering ridings and exaggerated majorities and wild swings in government policy mean that something really has to be done.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Are you saying that with representatives from minor parties in the parliament damaging legislation could not be rammed through the parliament without sensitivity to minority voices?

A Definitely, it seems to have created continuity in the members of the legislature in New Zealand and has encouraged the representation of women, and we certainly need more women and voices in our politics.