

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.

Gary Wright

Village of New Denver

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

There is a great need for electoral reform. The challenge to the Assembly will be to reach internal compromise in order to frame a single question/option to put to the general electorate.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Wright stated the resolution carried by the Council of the Village of New Denver:

“WHEREAS, in its Preliminary Statement to the People of British Columbia, the Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform said that: **“The Assembly believes it is important that the outcome of an election, in terms of the distribution of seats in the Legislature, should reflect the expressed intentions of citizens as expressed in their votes. This is the principle of proportionality – seats won should be proportional to votes won ...”** and

WHEREAS the present provincial electoral system is not based on the principle of proportionality; and

WHEREAS the Assembly has asked the people of BC, among other things, **“... if they agree with it that a more proportional system would better reflect the basic values of our province’s population ...”**; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the council of the Village of New Denver advise the Assembly that it supports electoral reform structured around the twin principles of proportionality and local representation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a mixed member proportional (MMP) system – such as the one recommended by the Law Commission of Canada – be drafted for voter consideration at public referendum.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Wright recommended a change to MMP.

Quote: When people look back, they will reflect that one of the finest things this government may have done is starting this process of electoral reform.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q How many people do you represent in New Denver?

A The population right now is 538, at any given time probably 400 people would say that I don't represent them, but we have FPTP for Mayor!

Q Do you have any ideas on how to improve the list portion of the MMP system?

A I favour an open list system. Closed lists are certainly an effective tool for political parties to forward their platforms, but I know that you will be looking at those details and I feel that some kind of MMP, open or closed lists, is preferable to STV, as STV mitigates against rural areas as your population nodules in rural areas will control the election of the MLAs.