

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

NORTH VANCOUVER PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 2 JUNE 2004
AT THE LONSDALE QUAY HOTEL

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.

Ron Gamble

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A presentation on electoral reform and direct democracy.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Gamble discussed the proposal of the Reform Party of British Columbia. The presenter argued that there needs to be a system where elected members are made accountable to the population after they get elected. According to Mr. Gamble, proportional representation is not as democratic as it is often made out to be. PR gives parties enormous power in the electoral process and makes candidates accountable to that party rather than to the electorate. Mr. Gamble expressed the opinion that multi-member ridings may have little impact in ridings sharing a common municipal government. However, tremendous problems could arise if all candidates are elected from the same area, or the amalgamated districts span multiple municipal governments. Regarding preferential voting, Mr. Gamble argued that ranking candidates from different parties with different ideas does not work. The presenter argued the need to make governments responsive to the people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Gamble argued for a redistribution of electoral boundaries in order to equalize the number of voters across the province, plus or minus 25%. In order to eliminate this seemingly necessary level of inequality Mr. Gamble supported the introduction of a double majority for referendums (requiring a majority of the total votes cast and a majority of the regions would be required for the measure to pass). Mr. Gamble further recommended the introduction of a number of tools of direct democracy including: allowing MLAs free votes on the floor of the legislature; fixed election dates every four years; popular initiatives to either repeal existing laws, or propose new ones; referenda (held by the government prior to the introduction of legislation, the result of which would be binding on the government); and the power of recall. Mr. Gamble stated that direct democracy would reinvigorate a large part of the alienated and apathetic part of the electorate.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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| Q | Do you think that it would be wise for governments to enable people to be elected via a closed party list? |
| A | I do not support a proportional list. I believe that candidates should run on their own merit in every constituency and be accountable to those |

constituents and not the party.