

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

POWELL RIVER PUBLIC HEARING DATED
15 MAY 2004 AT THE CEDAR ROOM, POWELL
RIVER RECREATION CENTRE

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.

Delores Delatorre

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Proportional Representation advantages for voters' frustrations.

KEY THEMES

Dolores Delatorre argued that the current electoral system causes terrible frustration among voters who do not feel as though they have a voice. She argued that the electoral system needed to evolve to meet the changing needs of the province. Ms Delatorre expressed her support for the MMP electoral system because she finds it easy to understand and because it does not threaten the accountability of the voting process by using computers. She acknowledged that MMP has been criticized because it would require enlarging the current size of the ridings in BC, but argued that the key issue was not the size of a riding but whether or not an MLA listens to his or her constituents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Dolores Delatorre recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

Quote: "People criticize MMP because it makes ridings larger, but I find that even if you live next door to your MLA, if his ears aren't open it doesn't make any difference. I think it is more important to have a system where MLAs listen."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were no questions or comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Following this presentation quite a few members of the audience had questions.

Q	I get a sense that you feel you can't vote for a person who really represents you under the current system. A lot of us vote against something rather than for something
A	I totally agree.

Q	If you had 50 per cent plus one votes in your riding cast for an individual, would you go along with a system like that?
A	I'm not sure. I don't there's any one way which would be fair totally, but I think if we go to pleasing most of us and making us feel like we have some voice that would be better.
Q	But at least this way you'd have someone who was actually in your riding, and it's not someone appointed by the party. I'm afraid of someone else picking my MLA under PR.
A	But even in our riding we may not be represented. It's better to figure out which MLA shares your views and then communicate with them electronically.
Q	When you talked about ridings getting larger, I know a lot of people feel in Powell River gets lost in our riding because we're already lumped in with West Van. What are the ramifications for that under MMP?
A	Maybe someone who knows more can answer.
Q	My concern is that with the MMP system is that in the long-term you're going to guarantee the leaders of minor parties jobs for life. You won't be able to get them out of office? At least you can vote someone out in your riding, but with a party list, the party will always put the leader in first despite the fact that he loses in his ridings.
A	Well, parties change leaders. People die!

Comment: There were no further comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO