

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

QUESNEL PUBLIC HEARING DATED
11 MAY 2004 AT THE SANDMAN 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.

Yvonne Dixon

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I believe in what you guys are doing but I think that the representative sitting in the provincial government should be from that field. For example, education should have educators, in the forestry department, elected representatives should be trained in forestry and all the way down the line in all the departments.

KEY THEMES

Yvonne Dixon argued that the province had change considerably since the commemoration of its centenary, and that the current system was not compatible with this change. She suggested a possible solution for the province by creating a party of people representing their chosen field. All Ministers would have professional experience in their portfolio area. For example, an Education Minister would have a professional background as an educator. Ms Dixon explained that such people would have the knowledge to implement better policies. She identified conflict of interest as being a potential weakness of this system but was positive that a solution could be found to this problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Yvonne Dixon recommended introducing a Cabinet system where all Ministers are required to have professional experience in their portfolio area.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	Do you have any specific ideas about how to get more people represented in the legislature or a better diversity of representation through the process of changing our electoral system?
A	Well I was in forestry for five years, and I can think off the top of my head of someone who would be qualified to hold that position. I was in education for 13 years and I could nominate another person who would fit that bill. I think everyone here in their field could think of someone who could represent them.

Comment from panel: “I have heard people at other hearings make similar suggestions, so you should know that there are other people out there who share your views.”

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Following this presentation two members of the audience had questions.

Q	Sometimes it's hard for cabinet members to have a background in that portfolio, just because you don't have that representation in the legislature. I think the bigger issue is that our Deputy Ministers don't have any background in their field, they've come from the corporate sector and they're the key people advising the minister.
A	I believe that everything is possible. I used to work in early childhood education.
Q	How do you see the issue of contact between self-governing First Nations and the provincial government? I really believe there needs to be representation of First Nations in our parliament.
A	I think that first off land claims need to be addressed and settled, with a representative of First Nations sitting at the table. And I think it should go right across Canada. My people have already done our fighting, we already know our boundaries.

Comment: There were no comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO