

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.

Dave Koster

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I advocate that we use the Swiss democratic model.

KEY THEMES

Dave Koster questioned whether the Citizens' Assembly seriously considered it to be possible to address growing political resentment in BC with such a limited mandate. He argued that the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy is too easily abused. The requirement that any electoral system proposed by the Assembly be consistent with the Westminster parliamentary system prevents the Assembly from considering the Swiss system. Mr Koster argued that the Swiss model of direct democracy would be the best option for BC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Dave Koster recommended a Swiss model of direct democracy for British Columbia.

Quote: "If you ever become sincere about addressing the issue of voter intransigence you must consider a model like the Swiss have developed."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were no questions from members of the panel.

Comment from panel: "This is the second presentation I've heard suggesting the Swiss model, so you're not alone."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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

Q	Is it compulsory for citizens to vote in any referendum proposed by the government?
A	I don't know whether voting is compulsory but I do know that 100,000 signatures can initiate a referendum.
Q	Referendums are almost a daily occurrence in S, but in recent referendums voter turnout has declined considerably. People are not interested in government, only ones who are politically minded.

A	That's something that another citizen council can address.
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Comment: “Do you know when women got the vote in Switzerland? No canton allowed women to vote before 1966.”
“I think you’re right. Everywhere you go there’s declining participation.”

SUBMISSION: NO