

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SIDNEY/VICTORIA PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 15 MAY 2004
AT THE HOLIDAY INN VICTORIA

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.

Walter Meyer zu Erpen

Green Party of British Columbia

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Personal experience of participation as a Green Party candidate in the 2001 provincial elections.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Meyer zu Erpen discussed the need for electoral reform in order to produce a fair system under which votes would faithfully be translated into seats. The presenter argued that a move away from FPTP would temper the wild swings in policy, limit negative and strategic voting, enable vote-splitting, and encourage the political participation of voters and candidates as every vote will count. Mr. Meyer zu Erpen discussed the unrepresentative nature of the legislature and the alienation of youth under the current FPTP system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Meyer zu Erpen recommended the adoption of MMP in BC. The presenter stated that MMP would increase accountability in the system; enable the representation of a more diverse range of voices in the legislature; end the production of artificial majorities; and engender a consensual style of policy making in the legislature.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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| Q | What type of list system do you envisage for MMP, and with what threshold? |
| A | The 5% threshold sounds like a good one. We originally advocated a 50-50 split between list and constituency seats, however we now favour a two-thirds, one-third division. |
| Q | Why did you move to the two-thirds one-thirds split? |
| A | Certainly British Columbians are not ready for a full PR system. A 50-50 split would enlarge the districts too far, and two-thirds one-third may also be too much. But I'm flexible; I would like to see the adoption of a system that can gather enough support from British Columbians to pass a |

referendum.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q There appears a movement afoot among youth to vote at 16 and it may be because it is prohibited, so there may be some merit to increasing the voting age; I wonder whether changing the voting age upwards would have an impact on participation?

A It's an interesting idea but I would not support it. I favour lowering the voting age as many 16 year olds are more engaged in the voting process than others. What we really need to get onto is registration processes.