

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SURREY-SOUTH PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 8 MAY 2004
AT THE ASTON PACIFIC 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.

Robert Stirling

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

The merits of partial proportional representation versus fully proportional representation.

KEY THEMES

The presenter addressed problems with the current FPTP system, including the polarized nature of the party system, strategic rather than conscience voting, the dominance of the executive in the legislature, and the existence of malapportionment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Stirling recommended the adoption of a fully proportional electoral system in order to increase the likelihood of minority governments and the need this creates to practice consensus politics and policy moderation.

Quote: I feel that proportion representation provides an opportunity for people to become interested in electing people to parliament again.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q How do you propose the ballot to be organized, would people vote for a party or for candidates across the whole province?

A I envisage you would vote for a party or an independent. In a one hundred seat legislature you would be required to gain one per cent of the vote for a seat in the legislature. If you gained 5 per cent then in my view you should get five votes in the legislature.

Q Are you advocating a closed or open party list?

A Voters would select the party or independent candidate they wished.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Are you suggesting that the voters would have no control over the candidates on the ballot?

A I hadn't got into that much detail. The parties could say ahead of time who is going to run on the ballot if they chose to.

Q How do feel about the NOTA option on the ballot and the random selection of candidates?

A You could certainly put that as an option on the ballot.

Q Would it be the responsibility of the party to ensure broad representation of the people?

A Parties could state ahead of time that they were interested in certain local issues, but whether or not they would get an MLA, that would probably be a matter of luck. In our system we vote on the basis of party. So the question is what is the party prepared to do?

Q I wonder if you have considered how much time MLA's spend dealing with the issues of individuals?

A I see no difference from that in the future. The MLA still has the responsibility to represent the voters of that area.