

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.

Neil Sutherland

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Criteria for choosing an electoral system.

KEY THEMES

The presenter discussed the technical aspects of the electoral system, in particular how changes in district magnitude can address the vagaries of the current electoral system. Mr. Sutherland went on to address the instability that can be engendered by proportional representation as exemplified by countries such as Israel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended a change from the current FPTP system to a system in which ridings have a district magnitude varying from one (for the northern rural ridings) to six, thus allowing a limited measure of proportionality.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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| Q | How would you calculate the size of the ridings across the province, and how would you decide how many seats to allow each riding? |
| A | I did it on the basis of population density, with a logarithm in order that the largest district magnitude would be five or six. |
| Q | Is the system you are suggesting STV for the multi-member ridings and AV for the single member districts? |
| A | I haven't mentioned any specific system, you are referring to the system Nick Loenen proposed. |

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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| Q | If we have a White Rock-Cloverdale riding electing two members, how do minor party voters not waste their vote? |
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A I'm just addressing the mandate of the Citizens' Assembly, but you do lose that proportionality in areas of low population density.

Q If we'd had dual member constituencies in this province then we would have elected two Liberals in the last election, so explain to me how this would benefit voters?

A You're not referring to a proportional system.

Q Wouldn't this system, by having multi-member ridings in urban areas, leave the rural areas behind in terms of representation?

A No, every riding would have the same number of members it does now.

Q What happens to wasted votes under your system?

A The more proportional the system, the fewer votes are wasted. You don't have to go to full PR to get rid of the things that people don't like about the system. Most of these things disappear with just two-seat ridings.

Q Would you still go with FPTP in multi-member ridings?

A We're going from one seat to two seats where each person would have to get 33 percent of the vote to get elected. Proportionality increases as the number of the seats in the riding increases.