

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SURREY PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 31 MAY 2004
AT THE SHERATON GUILDFORD HOTEL

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.

Tom Ashley

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A presentation about electoral reform revolving around debt management.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Ashley expressed the opinion that at 32 years of age he does not have, and never has had, any representation in government. The presenter argued that the current system constitutes an elected dictatorship that through mismanagement, biases, favouritism, misspending, lying, corruption, misinformation, and unaccountability, has enabled public debt to escalate out of control.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Ashley recommended reforming the current system in order to enable citizens to remove politicians from office when they make serious mistakes; by providing a “none of the above” option on the ballot. Further, the presenter recommended that the current form of society and government be thrown out in favour of a system of equality. This could be achieved via the use of supercomputers. Monday to Thursday questions that need to be addressed are circulated through our news media, the pros and the cons discussed, and everyone votes on Friday over the telephone utilizing SIN card numbers and passwords. Following the compilation of results, these are circulated via the media on Saturday and Sunday and the government is required to implement the will of the people. According to Mr. Ashley, this system would solve the problems of mismanagement and corruption that plaque our current system.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- Q Who decides what questions need to be discussed?
- A There is always going to be that problem, we have that problem in society today. There would have to be opinion polls put out regarding what is important to us as a society. There is no real guideline as to what questions would get on there, it would be questions that Canadians feel are important.
- Q But who makes the agenda?
- A I would like to think that it would be the public. If we have an open forum then people would bring forward questions, and there would need to be an organization

established to coordinate this. We would still have a civil service but we will not have politicians. Life will go on just the same.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q If the news reporters have the biggest say, don't they become the politicians?

A I didn't say that the news reporters have the only say. We have means now to ask questions. The true questions would come from the public but we would need a central agency to pull these together. I picture a world where it is more interactive, where everyday citizens can phone in and talk on television and we can come to solutions. We have the methods we just have to want to use them. The end result would be a real democracy, and if we don't push for that we have an elected dictatorship, and that's business as usual and that is something that I don't want as I'm going to work my life away for programs that I don't want and I can't use anyway.

Q I think very few of us know how provincial dollars are spent; what programs would you eliminate?

A I believe governments should be there for the big issues: healthcare; defense; infrastructure. They shouldn't be putting money into local soccer teams or on special interests. All of the main programs that keep our society going would all still be there under this system.

Comment I think one of the reasons why we have government is for them to make decisions on issues that the general public doesn't know anything about.