

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.

Robert Stone

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Citizens' Assembly for constitutional guarantees.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Stone expressed concern that the government may impose pressure on the Assembly before the referendum question is put to the public. The presenter discussed his own reluctance to vote which is rooted in a mistrust of our elected members, springing from a belief that they are dishonest. According to Mr. Stone the people should have stronger control over MLAs, possibly having the ability to fire these individuals. Mr. Stone recommended the introduction of other citizens' assemblies to deal with public policy issues, the members of which would be subject to recall based on their performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Stone recommended: the adoption of a yes or no vote during elections enabling voters to remove governments without being required to vote for candidates that they do not like; a shortening of the election period; staggered voting dates for ridings over a period of years preventing clean sweeps of the legislature; that the use of quotas of any kind be avoided; that the referendum proposal if accepted, be protected from change until after the next election; and that the referendum proposal for electoral reform be based on a model that is proven as opposed to bringing in an untried system.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q What does your "yes and no vote" do?

A Voters that didn't have a candidate that they wanted to vote for could cast a no vote, to allow voters to remove a government if they weren't happy with them.

Q Would you like to see more choices on the ballot?

A I've never voted, and it might be a personal issue with me of mistrust. As long as there is a choice of two or more that would be good, but we can't force people to run for office.

Q Why did you now decide that you wanted to be part of the political process?

A I moved out here from Quebec after the referendum when people were putting dynamite under the bridges between Ottawa and Quebec. I missed the boat on the referendum in 1995 and I just want to make sure that I don't miss it again.