

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

VANCOUVER PUBLIC HEARING JUNE 12,
2004 AT VANCOUVER MARRIOTT 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.

Dave Park

The Vancouver Board of Trade

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

There are several key principles that we believe should underlie the electoral system in British Columbia.

KEY THEMES

There are several key principles that we believe should underlie any changes to the electoral system. These are:

- 1) The system of electing members of the provincial legislature must lend itself to stable and responsible government.
- 2) A large majority of members of the legislature should be elected on a geographic basis. There is great and justified sensitivity in BC to the interest of the geographic regions which make up this far-flung province.
- 3) Preferential ballots should be used in elections.
- 4) Proportional representation should be used to elect a fairly small minority of members of the legislature. A fairer approach to ensuring representation by a party attracting the support of a sizeable percentage of electors would be to have, say, 25 per cent of the members of the legislature elected on the basis of proportional representation. Thus, 20 members would be elected in that way, while the other 59 would be elected from geographically based ridings. A threshold of 5 per cent might be used as a minimum for a party to qualify for proportional representation, and at that level the party would earn 1 seat. Similarly, a level of 10 percent would result in two seats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP).

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q Thank you for your clear presentation. I am curious about the proportional seats, 25% of what?

A I suggest it here, 25% is not precise, in our current legislature that would be 20 seats. That seemed to us to be a reasonable balance.

Q Moving to some PR, you would have some districts with more than one candidate?

A A. If elected at large they would be province wide, their place of residence would be irrelevant.

Q If 50 locally constituents, then you would have a boundary change?

A There is a procedure, whereby the population is taken into account in changing the boundaries, it would be short term pain, for a desirable change.

Q For your proportional ballot for members elected on the whole do you have a preference for open or closed lists?

A I am not clear on that. We should look at the merits of both, presumably there would be a slate of candidates put forward by the party, but we didn't get to that level of detail.

Q Of the 20 reps elected proportionally, would they be top-up seats?

A What we are suggesting is that the 50 or so seats would be distributed, then in addition to that, 20 seats would be distributed.

Q Are you concerned about coalition governments?

A There are examples of successful or less successful cases, what is necessary when a government comes in is that they have a platform, and that even 4 years is too little to accomplish that.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Italy is usually pointed out as most unstable, would you say that this has turned Italy into the basket case of Europe?

A No, I haven't done any studies on that. But a government needs a reasonable period of time to carry out its agenda.

Q How would you get to keep the majority happy?

A The next time to hold people accountable is the next general election.

SUBMISSION: NO