

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

VERNON PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 21 JUNE 2004
AT THE PRESTIGE INN VERNON SALON

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.

Basil Edwards

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A presentation about the introduction of preferential balloting.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Edwards stated that proportional representation does not constitute a viable alternative for a geographically large province with a legislature of 79 seats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended the introduction of the preferential ballot in order to gain a better consensus of voter preferences while retaining 79 local members. Mr. Edwards argued that a system of preferential voting would ensure that local members gain a majority of support from the electorate in order to secure election. The presenter stated that this system would work best if the number of parties within the system was limited to six, which would be required to run at least 50 candidates each. According to Mr. Edwards, this requirement would eliminate the entrance of frivolous parties into the system.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q Don't you think that by disallowing certain parties you are rejecting certain ideas that may be good for BC?

A I don't agree with you. If you have six parties surely one of those could bring forward good new ideas without all these side issues. Selecting a government is a very serious business.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Who would you suggest would determine which six parties could compete?

A If you limited the system to six parties and the number of candidates in each riding to fifteen then you would eliminate frivolous parties.

Q Why must people be affiliated with a party to run under your system?

A Mainly as a result of the cost involved in running. If it is only one person then they should be able to present their ideas through a party.