

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

VICTORIA PUBLIC HEARING DATED
10 JUNE 2004 AT THE WESTERN BALLROOM,
HARBOUR TOWERS

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 Flavell

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I favour the single transferable ballot voting system in my presentation. I will make my case for the benefit of that system.

KEY THEMES

David Flavell discussed his values as they relate to the choice of a voting system, including local representation and accountability; the formation of government by the party that wins the most ridings; familiarity, simplicity and transparent counting; the freedom for voters to vote for the party or candidate who most closely reflects their political views, rather than having to vote strategically; representation for small parties in the legislature. He opposed the introduction of any electoral system that would weaken the member-constituency tie, and expressed concern that MLAs elected from party lists in a PR system would be even more dominated by their parties. Mr Flavell supported an Alternative Vote system, where voters would be limited to expressing only their first two preferences on a preferential ballot, and where a candidate would have to win 50 per cent of the votes in a riding plus one in order to be elected. He argued that this system could be used with the existing ridings and that the ballot would only need to be changed a little, to include a second column for voters to indicate their second choice candidate. The simplicity and familiarity of the current system would be maintained with a voter only having to mark an X in the first column for their first choice and an X in the second column for their second choice. Mr Flavell also argued that this system would benefit smaller parties because voters would no longer have to vote strategically. He also proposed that the results of the first preference count be published so that people were aware of the extent of support for smaller parties and consider the parties as a viable option.

RECOMMENDATIONS

David Flavell recommended the introduction of a majority-AlternativeVote system, modified so that voters only express two preferences on the ballot.

Quote: "This voting system would maintain the present close tie between the citizens of a particular geographic area and their MLA."

"It has the advantage of being a relatively minor change, and I think gradual change is the best way to go."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were three members of the panel who sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	A system similar to this was tried in British Columbia in 1952 and 1953 and this resulted in an election where the government that was elected was everybody's second
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	choice. How do you feel about that?
A	I don't have a problem with that, because it started a whole new party. Any new system will take voters time to get used to and once they get used to it they'll know how to use it. In the first couple of elections you might get results that weren't what you were expecting. Also, in that system voters expressed more than two preferences, so my system is a bit different.

Comment from panel There were no comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO