

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

ABBOTSFORD PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 5 JUNE 2004
AT THE RAMADA INN AND CONFERENCE
CENTRE

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.

Karl Hann

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A presentation in favour of proportional representation.

KEY THEMES

The presenter discussed the unrepresentative nature of the current FPTP system. Mr. Hann argued the need to reform the electoral system as the government is not accurately reflecting the people. The presenter expressed the opinion that democracy should satisfy the people. The government should not be the enemy and should not be the rulers of the people. According to Mr. Han, people should vote for individuals that represent their interests and their communities, rather than political parties. Mr. Hann argued that governments only alienate the voters by neglecting their views.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Hann recommended the adoption of proportional representation as it provides people with better representation. The presenter also advocated the retention of the Citizens' Assembly as a permanent body to address issues in the future. Mr. Hann also suggested the introduction of performance reviews for governments.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q You indicated you would prefer any system other than the current system but then you mentioned PR?

A At the current time that seems to be the most preferred system. We should devise a system that is best for all of us, not just for parties and governments.

Q In terms of a performance card for governments, do you not see the election itself as a rating of performance?

A Yes, but this is so onerous for people to get the information. We need someone with the qualifications to handle a review of performance. It would be a panel that decides. The electorate is currently so over-informed on one hand and under-informed on the other. We need education and that education needs to come from someone who has

the qualifications.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Have you thought about what might happen if we set up a permanent bureaucracy of 160 over a long term, might it be something like the Senate, where they end up eroding our financial system and not contributing too much?

A We should see how much the Senate costs, and how much the Citizens' Assembly costs and then we should scrap the Senate as they are not doing anything anyway. Technology is in place for Assembly members to work from home, there need not be a building and offices.