

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SECHELT PUBLIC HEARING DATED
5 JUNE 2004 AT THE DRIFTWOOD INN

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.

Anna Banana

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

In favour of a system where ‘my role will count’ but I have questions concerning larger ridings in rural areas.

KEY THEMES

Anna Banana spoke in favour of proportional representation because she believes that parties should receive the same proportion of seats as their proportion of the popular vote. She supported the introduction of a mixed member proportional system in BC and suggested combining a preferential ballot to elect the local candidate with a separate vote for the party, in order to ensure that all winning candidates were supported by at least 50 per cent of voters in the riding. Ms Banana expressed concern about increasing the size of large rural ridings. She suggested that instead of a fifty-fifty split between list seats and constituency seats in a mixed system that the two thirds of seats should be allocated to constituencies and only one third elected via party lists. She argued that any boundary redistribution involved in the introduction of a new electoral system should be determined by an independent commission rather than by governing parties. Ms Banana also spoke in favour of closed rather than open lists, arguing that voters are not well enough informed to rank individual candidates and that parties are better able to evaluate the skills and expertise of their candidates. She suggested that voter apathy results from the current electoral system where one party dominates the legislature and can enact its agenda regardless of public opinion, making voters feel as though their views do not matter. Ms Banana explained that MMP would increase the diversity of views in the legislature by giving smaller parties a voice. She also criticized the lack of accountability in the political system and attributed this to the party discipline which prevents MLAs from representing local interests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Anna Banana recommended the introduction of a mixed system in BC, combining a preferential ballot to elect a local candidate in each riding with the proportional allocation of seats to parties according to their percentage of the party vote.

Quote: “Single party, dominant governments are detrimental to our economy, social services and the environment, and they alienate large segments of the population by ignoring their needs and concerns.”

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	I want to clarify your views on the difficulty faced by rural ridings. You suggest dividing the legislature into two thirds
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	constituency seats and one third list seats?
A	Yes, I think that would be better for BC than the New Zealand system where there is a fifty-fifty split.
Q	Are you suggesting that the bigger ridings should be made smaller?
A	No, I'm not familiar with the current electoral boundaries.

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