

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.

Alun Woolliams

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A vote in favour of proportional representation.

KEY THEMES

Alun Woolliams spoke in favour of a Mixed Member Proportional electoral system. He expressed a number of concerns about the current electoral system, including false majorities and wasted votes, disproportionality, party funding, riding boundaries, vote splitting and strategic voting. Mr Woolliams addressed two criticisms of the MMP system regarding its effect on government stability and local representation. While majority governments can act quickly, he argued that coalition and minority governments are more likely to produce more moderate and stable policy decisions with a broader base of support. Mr Woolliams also explained that local representation will be retained under MMP. Even though ridings will be larger under MMP, this is a trade-off to ensure that no voter in a riding wastes their vote. He argued that citizens will be better represented because their views may still be represented in the legislature even if their local MLA is not from their preferred political party.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Alun Woolliams recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

Quote: "I believe that MMP results in more representative and effective government."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	I just want to understand how important is proportionality in this balancing exercise between local representation and proportionality?
A	Proportionality is important but I don't think we should consider increasing the size of the constituencies more than twice the size they are now.
Q	As a young presenter, do you think that your proposal would attract more young people to vote?
A	I think that a lot of people feel that their vote doesn't count under the current system.

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