

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

COQUITLAM PUBLIC HEARING DATED
1 JUNE 2004 AT THE EXECUTIVE PLAZA 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.

Stephen Broscoe

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I will be arguing in favour of Proportional Representation and offering a couple of 'Made in BC' electoral alternatives to First Past the Post.

KEY THEMES

Stephen Broscoe discussed three major problems with the First Past the Post electoral system: the lack of voter choice; the lack of representation for communities of interest other than geographical communities; and distorted electoral outcomes. He argued that the current ballot does not give voters sufficient choice, and suggested the use of a ballot that allows voters to cast separate votes for both a local candidate and a party, or to vote for more than one candidate in order of preference. He also suggested that riding boundaries in urban and suburban areas are arbitrary, and that as a voter he feels a stronger attachment to other voters who share his political views than to the voters who happen to live in his area. Mr Broscoe argued that local representation is important but that it is also important to represent non-geographical communities of interest. He expressed a number of concerns with the current practice of government, including the lack of an effective opposition, the capacity for wrong winners and false majorities. Mr Broscoe spoke in support of the Single Transferable Vote systems proposed to the Assembly by Dr Julian West and Mr Nick Loenen. He also supported a Mixed Member Proportional electoral system in BC with regional lists, but was concerned that such a system would require 40 per cent of the legislature to be made up by list seats in order to be sufficiently proportional, resulting in a dramatic increase in the size of ridings. Mr Broscoe suggested that a workable MMP model would require an increase in the number of seats in the BC legislature, potentially to 100 seats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Stephen Broscoe recommended changing the current electoral system. He considered both the Single Transferable Vote and Mixed Member Proportional electoral systems to be possible options for BC.

Quote: "My concern with MMP models is that studies have shown that ideally 40 per cent of seats should be list seats in order to guarantee broad proportionality. If we did this without increasing the size of the legislature, we risk creating some very large ridings."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

One member of the panel sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	A quick question regarding list seats, what size district magnitude are you thinking in terms of the size of the regional districts?
A	If we had 40 list seats allocated regionally, there could possibly be four or five regions electing 8 to 10

	candidates. I haven't considered this issue in depth but will do so in my written submission.
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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: YES