

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.

Ken Panton

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Focus on finding a process that is judged successful on the basis of the percentage of the electorate that votes. Whether 90% vote or just 50% vote, the choice to exercise one's franchise is made for a reason.

KEY THEMES

Ken Panton explained that he is not advocating any particular electoral system but instead advised the Assembly to consider whether any electoral system that they may recommend will lead to good government. He argued that citizens should be engaged in system of government and that they need to feel that they have an effective and representative voice. Citizen engagement in the political process should not just be limited to voting out a government, but should involve participation in politics between elections. Mr Panton also expressed concern about campaign financing, although he acknowledged that the issue is not within the mandate of the Citizens' Assembly.

Mr Panton put forward four questions for the Assembly to consider when they evaluate electoral systems.

- 1) In what systems under study does the electorate believe that the government is truly representative of the wishes of the people?
- 2) In what systems is voter turnout the highest and the lowest? What are the salient characteristics of those systems?
- 3) In what systems do voters believe that their voice is worth no more or less than any other?
- 4) In what systems of democracy do people vote 'for' rather than 'against'?

Quote: "I believe that ongoing engagement is achieved when individuals see that they have an effective and representative voice in the system of government, regardless of the actual mechanics of the system they have chosen."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were no questions from members of the panel.

Comment from panel

"I just wanted to let you know that we had Professor André Blais come to speak to us about voter turnout. We learned that turnout is higher in PR countries but is still

declining there as well. So I just wanted to let you know that we have considered the issue of turnout.”

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO