

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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CRANBROOK PUBLIC HEARING DATED  
21 JUNE 2004 AT THE PRESTIGE 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](http://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.

# Walter Latter

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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Resident of BC for 60 years, retired millwright.

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## KEY THEMES

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Walter Latter supported the adoption of a proportional representation system in British Columbia. He described the current First Past the Post system as not working because most governments receive a majority of seats in the legislature despite receiving a minority of the vote at the ballot box. Mr Latter made a number of criticisms of the current system, including the polarization and adversarial nature of the political system and the radical swings between the two major parties which wastes tax payer dollars. He argued that government has been dominated by big parties, supported by large corporations, resulting in an excess of power without accountability or transparency. Mr Latter predicted that a proportional representation system would create a more effective government and an improved environment of cooperation, as well as improving representation for women and minority groups. He urged the assembly to recommend Mixed Member Proportional representation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Walter Latter recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

*Quote: "A vote is the ultimate expression in a democracy, and I make a passionate appeal to you today: please, please do not end the assembly without a recommendation for an equitable voting system such as Mixed Member Proportional Representation."*

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	How important to you is local representation?
A	It's very important and right at the moment I feel that we don't have effective local representation.
Q	In New Zealand where they have MMP, we've had a speaker talk about the two types of MLAs: local MLAs and party MLAs. How would you feel if most of the party MLAs came from the highly populated areas?
A	That would concern me, but I have spoken to friends in New Zealand and they tell me that their system works fairly well so that's why I support it.

Q	MMP means larger ridings. Are you prepared to have larger ridings to have PR?
A	Absolutely.

**Comment from panel**      There were no comments from the panel.

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**QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

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Following this presentation quite a few members of the audience had questions.

Q	You're saying that the government has no role in the Citizens' Assembly process?
A	Well the politicians set the wheels rolling obviously, but these people were randomly selected and I have every confidence in their capacity to make a decision.
Q	Do you realize how limited they are in their scope?
A	I listened to your presentation Mr Garvey and I'm aware of your points about the limited scope of the Assembly. But I also think that we have a lot of limits place on us by the current system.

**Comment:**      "I used to live in Holland for 40 years and we voted using proportional representation. You could indicate your preferences on the list and because I was a feminist I would always vote for the first woman on the list. Now that I live in a very conservative riding I feel that my vote is lost and I don't like that feeling."

**SUBMISSION: NO**