

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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FORT ST JOHN PUBLIC HEARING DATED  
12 MAY 2004 AT THE QUALITY INN  
NORTHERN GRAND

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.

# James Little

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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Rural people will be forgotten in a PR system. We need an electoral system where local people have more power.

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## KEY THEMES

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James Little argued that any change in electoral system needs to retain a local voice for the Peace River area. He cautioned that people seemed to assume that everyone in rural areas has access to modern technology, but that that isn't the case and there are some rural people who do not even have a telephone. Mr Little was concerned that these people would be forgotten under a PR system. He argued that any electoral system should retain personal contact between voters and an individual representative, improve the representation of women, and devolve more power to the local level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

James Little recommended against a proportional representation system in BC.

*Quote: "In an afternoon in Vancouver I walked across 20 ridings. It would take me 20 days to walk across this riding."*

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	Why do you think that the area would be forgotten if PR came in. There are several system of PR that have some element of local representation?
A	I guess I'm most concerned about a system of pure PR, because then the parties would have total control.
	(Response from panel member) Most countries recently adopting PR have gone with a mixed system which tries to give the best of both worlds.
Q	Studies have shown that if you want more women in the system then you need a proportional system. Do you have concerns about a proportional system?

A	I think the main reason women don't get elected is because they don't have the dollars to stand. You need a system where it's not just people with the dollars who get elected.
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**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 mention that 52 per cent of the BC population is women, and you need a bit more proportionality to elect women. I think sometimes there's an element of choice, and that women choose not to get involved.
A	We have to include everyone in our system. In our next election, I think there'll be a lot higher turnout.
	(Response from another member of the audience) Maybe there weren't more women able to make that choice, because of other commitments, and money and household responsibilities.

**Comment:** There we no comments from the audience.

**SUBMISSION: NO**