

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

GRAND FORKS PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 10 MAY 2004
AT SELKIRK COLLEGE

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.

Scott Leyland

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I will speak about my experience as a campaigner for the proportional representation initiative in 2002.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Leyland discussed his canvassing experience during the 2002 proportional representation initiative. Of the people he encountered, Mr. Leyland stated that less than ten per cent were happy with the current FPTP system, with virtually all signers believing that the MMP alternative was much more logical. The presenter expressed the need for electoral reform in order for the values of voters to be reflected in the legislature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr Leyland recommended a move to MMP to protect local representation while introducing a measure of proportionality into the system.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q Do you favour MMP?

A I do, although I have been impressed with STV, I did find it a little complex, it may be equally valuable. A parliamentarian from NZ that spoke here spoke about the party list problems, and supported the notion that they were remarkably careful as to how they chose their list to accurately reflect the society in the knowledge that they would lose votes if they didn't

Q Did you think that there would be problems with the complexity of the ballot?

A No. Most countries have more than one ballot. It doesn't tend to drive away voters in fact from what I've read voter turnout increases.

Q Are you in favour of electronic voting?

A Sure, as long as it's safe. Frankly I would be happy with any system other than the current system.

QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE OF THE PANEL

Q Does this process have with it a budget for public education regarding the electoral systems so that we can make an informed decision?

A (Gene) We are just ordinary citizens. Dr Carty and others have walked us through these systems. We have a budget of five and a half million that doesn't leave much room for an advertising campaign for education. It is going to be up to interested citizens to get out there and question us, make submissions, read and download the fact sheets and spend some time if you are interested. We simply do not have the resources to launch that kind of campaign.

Q Is this process being promoted through the schools?

A (Ken Carty) There are a number of resources on our website for school teachers. One or two of the schools have held mock Citizens' Assemblies. But you are quite right that these are our future voters and it is very important to get the message out there.

Q I understand that you can invite members of the Citizens Assembly to come and speak to organizations?

A (Gene) Yes, that's true. We have all done a number of meetings to get the message out there.