

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.

Ron Liddle

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A brief oral presentation in support of MMP.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Liddle expressed the shortcomings of the current FPTP system including its divisive nature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Liddle recommended the adoption of MMP to make more votes count and to encourage the representation of women and minorities in the legislature.

Quote: Any system you could propose would make people feel more included in the political system than the current FPTP system.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q Do you prefer MMP because you know more about it than the other systems?

A Perhaps, but I have read about the other systems. One of my tests is how easy it would be to sit down and explain the system to my neighbour, and I find it easier to explain MMP than STV. Simplicity is important. You have to remember that this has to convince enough people to vote for a change and the simpler it is, and the easier it is to talk about, the more likely people are to support the recommendation.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Do you agree that one of the problems with MMP lies in enlarging constituencies and only having one representative?

A Yes, I am concerned with that. There is already dissatisfaction with the size of constituencies so I'm not sure that any system will alleviate that. A strength of MMP is that the parties have to be relevant, their lists have to be well thought through in terms of their representative nature. And members on the party lists do establish constituency offices. Other countries that have tried MMP have found that because the parties have to be careful about who they put forward, it encourages voter participation in the construction of the list and accountability on the part of the representatives.

Q One of the nice things about STV is that it eliminates safe seats as it creates intra-party competition, if you move to MMP safe seats will remain in ridings such as East Van, how does MMP resolve the problem of safe seats?

A I'm not so concerned about safe seats, it will be up to the voters of North or East van to decide if they are happy with the representation, but what I like about MMP is that there will be a relationship between the number of votes a party gets and the number of seats it gains in Victoria.