

# PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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KAMLOOPS PUBLIC HEARING  
DATED 17 JUNE 2004  
AT THE COAST CANADIAN 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.

# Don Cameron

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## DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

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To alert you of many of the many pitfalls that lay ahead if we abandon the party system.

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## KEY THEMES

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Don Cameron spoke about the Israeli experience of proportional representation, where unstable coalitions are formed between ideologically distant parties and small, extremist parties. He argued that the Israeli experience demonstrates the dangers of Proportional Representation. Mr Cameron also focused on the risk of having to rely on small parties when serious legislative matters need to be dealt with. He discussed his experience as an elected representative in the 1970s as member of the Progressive Conservative Party and argued that small parties such as the NDP contributed to the escalation of the national debt. He also described Joe Clark's negotiations over student debt which failed because members of small parties did not keep their commitment to vote with the Progressive Conservative party. Mr Cameron argued that small parties are unreliable partners in political negotiation, and will try to extract unreasonable pay-offs from major parties in return for their support.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Don Cameron opposed the introduction of proportional representation.

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## QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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There were no questions or 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	But the small parties you describe are already in the House and that's under the current system. Also, I don't think that Israel and BC are very similar. If you look at the Scandinavian countries or Germany then PR works very well.
A	I think we really need a party system and I don't think you have that under PR, you might be there all by yourself. A party whip is essential to the running of any political system.
Q	Small parties helped to push for and get us pensions, Employment Insurance and Medicare. So I think there's an essential role for small parties.

A	There's a use for them only if you can guarantee where they will vote. They need a whip and they need to do what the party tells them to.
Q	I think the apathy that we have now days is because we don't trust government any more. So wouldn't you agree that it's better for a coalition to make good policy decisions for a short amount of time than a party that makes bad decisions for a longer amount of time?
A	If you listen to what I said, how it worked was that you would make policy decisions with the party here in Kamloops and then you would go to Ottawa and make a caucus decision and you might have to compromise on some things because the party doesn't agree.

**SUBMISSION: NO**