

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

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 BY CLICKING ON "GET INVOLVED". IF SUCH A SUBMISSION IS AVAILABLE, IT WILL BE NOTED AT THE END OF THIS REPORT.

J.R. McMaster

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Collaborative consensus building system.

KEY THEMES

J.R. McMaster supported the introduction of proportional representation because it will lead to a Legislative Assembly that will be more representative of the various mainstream views in our society. He predicted that three to five political parties could be represented in the legislature. Mr McMaster also proposed a number of reforms to improve the behaviour of MLAs within the legislature. These included abolishing the question period, which is currently the most confrontational and adversarial element of the legislature; remodeling the seats of the legislature into a horseshoe and seating MLAs alphabetically, geographically or by lottery; the election of the Premier by MLAs; training a new Speaker of the House as a facilitator, skilled in the art of interest-based negotiations and arriving at consensus; the use of proportional representation to select the Cabinet; and the reform of the Legislative Committee system to include public consultation and feedback.

RECOMMENDATIONS

J.R. McMaster recommended the introduction of proportional representation in BC.

Quote: "Every elected and proportionally selected MLA will be both representative of and responsible to the electorate. No more blaming all the ills of society upon the failures of a majority party."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

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

Q	Do you think there should still be a Citizens Assembly after our mandate has ended?
A	Absolutely.
Q	When you were talking about public feedback were you talking about referendums or a citizens' assembly?
A	I think there are a lot of electronic ways we could communicate with MLAs. If the government wants to know what people think about an issue, they could send out an email or a form to get our feedback.

Comment from panel There were no comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

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

Q	How can we have a government of the people, by the people, and for the people until we have a level playing field for elections with equal public funding for all parties?
A	I'm all in favour of that Valoree. I think changing the political system will take some time.
Q	Do you think we need a more neutrally run legislature?
A	I've described my dream and outlined the ways we could achieve that.

Comment: There were no comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO