

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

NELSON PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 11 MAY 2004
AT THE PRESTIGE LAKESIDE RESORT

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.

Patricia Lakes

Nelson Creston NDP Constituency Association

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A presentation supporting a proportional representation system that would reflect certain principles: that the number of members in the legislature be manageable; that the power of rural BC not be further eroded and that the members be made accountable to the electors.

KEY THEMES

Ms. Lakes discussed concerns with both the MMP and STV electoral systems. Regarding MMP, support was voiced for both a five per cent threshold and open party lists. Ms. Lakes expressed the need to protect local representation and stated her concern that the adoption of MMP with one-third of members being elected from party lists would increase the size of ridings that are already too large, and compromise the diversity of local communities. Regarding STV, concern was expressed over the possibility that the elected representatives would all be concentrated at one edge of a large multi-member riding. The presenter also discussed the need for electoral finance reform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. Lakes offered qualified support for both the MMP and STV systems.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q On what do you base the suspicion that some ridings would double in size?

A It is something I was told by a mathematician on the basis of where the population centers are. I would like to see a closer examination of that.

Q Were you saying that a closed list is ok if there was an opportunity for party members to structure the lists?

A Yes, that is what I meant.

Q Regarding your question regarding the timing of the referendum, what would you ideally like to see?

A A balance between enough time for people to look at the options and enough time to put the system in place possibly 2007.