

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

NEW WESTMINSTER PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 6 MAY 2004
AT THE INN AT WESTMINSTER QUAY

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.

Charles Boylan

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

We will advocate no election without selection of candidates. Need for a standing committee on electoral reform, and need for some system of proportional representation, but outside the box of Party representation.

KEY THEMES

The presenter stressed the need to increase the representativeness of the political system; for the advancement of direct democracy in Canada through permanent political forums; and the need for voters to select their candidates directly. Mr. Boylan expressed the view that electoral reform should: enable voters to reclaim control from political parties over the nomination of candidates; moderate yo-yo policy making; and prevent the dominance of the executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended a form of proportional representation, however, not on the basis of party representation. Mr. Boylan also proposed that the Citizens' Assembly be retained as a permanent political body and that voters be empowered to directly select their representatives.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- | | |
|---|---|
| Q | Have you given any consideration to geographic representation? |
| A | There is a need for constituency representation in a regionalized province such as BC. What I'm speaking to is how candidates are selected within those constituencies. There is a crisis with how citizens are selected to be candidates. We need to create mechanisms to control the selection of candidates to make sure the community interests are included. Parties should not be given power to rule the citizens. |

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Would you consider the NOTA option on the ballot?

A I think there is an important principle in politics for elections. I think that there should be a number of personalities involved, the question is: who puts them there? Citizens must know the intentions of the candidates. I think we're on a very slippery slope where there is no rules based system. There is no clear line of communication and power so we are falling into a system that is like the divine rule of kings with a Premier who has a non-reading majority that will say "aye" on cue. The citizen chosen candidates must control the legislature not the executive.