

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.

Robert Broughton

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I am an advocate of mixed-member proportional representation.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Broughton stated the need for electoral reform to stem voter alienation and apathy particularly among youth. The presenter expressed his own positive personal experience with government by consensus under a proportional electoral system. Mr. Broughton challenged the notion that parties should have control over which candidates were nominated on the ballot.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended a change to a MMP electoral system. Mr. Broughton suggested that parties be required to nominate their candidates via an open and fair process.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- Q How do you feel about the contention that MMP creates two classes of members?
- A In NZ list members are not necessarily tied to a geographical region but these members will open offices anyway. You can then have a situation where the constituency member has his parliamentary office and a list member of another party can have their office down the street. But from what I've heard from NZ this has been a good thing as constituents can go to their at large member if they are unhappy with their local representative.
- Q Why are you opposed to open lists?
- A They are prone to manipulation via negative voting, and usually the people at the top of the list will be elected anyway. And if the parties load their lists with party hacks then you have the choice of voting for another party which is what I would do.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q In Italy a party with only 6 per cent of the vote has managed to make it into the legislature and do good things for the country ...

A You have to accept the fact that people are going to get elected that you don't like, but that's democracy.