

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.

John Vegt

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Review of Preferential Plus proportional representation model and review of five goals to guide Citizens Assembly.

KEY THEMES

The presenter outlined the aims and accomplishments of Fair Voting BC. Mr. Vegt went on to note the need for electoral reform in order to combat wasted votes and party discipline; to work toward vote equity; to allow the representation of minor parties; and to create a consensus style of government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The presenter recommended a change to a proportional electoral system. Specifically, Mr. Vegt expressed support for the preferential plus model under which the province would be divided into fourteen multi-seat and nine single-seat constituencies. STV was recommended for use in the multi-member ridings and a majoritarian electoral formula using AV was proposed for the single member constituencies.

Quote: No candidate should necessarily earn his or her seat by virtue of his or her membership in a political party. It should be earned by a vote from the voters.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q Can you speak to the notion of stability under a coalition government?

A The kind of stability you do get is the representation of a multiplicity of interests in government. So you are required to achieve consensus on policy making and are unable to ram policy through bringing about stability in that sense.

- Q In a large rural area, how would we have local representation?
- A We have identified nine areas that would still have single member ridings to account for that very problem.
- Q In the larger areas such as Surrey and Vancouver with a district magnitude of seven, do you think that people will become disinterested in voting after ranking one or two candidates and start donkey voting?
- A I think that 7 would be alright if the area has a lot of commonalities, but you wouldn't want to go much beyond seven. I don't think people would lose interest in voting as they have to do it at the municipal level and it doesn't appear a problem.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

- Q Canada's demographic profile is different from the European countries where they have this kind of government. Do you see the possibility for candidates to be representing ethnic groups?
- A There is a possibility for ethnic groups to field a candidate, but they must have the votes to do so. However if they have enough votes then it may not necessarily be a bad thing. There may be many other communities that come up with an issue that they want to bring up and are able to elect someone.

SUBMISSION: YES SUBMISSION ID# VEGT-0067