



CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY
ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Record of Proceedings of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform June 26-27, 2004

Saturday, June 26, 2004 (AM Plenary Session)

In attendance: J. Blaney, Chair
153 Assembly members
11 staff
13 facilitators
40-45 observers
3-4 media

Absent: I. Hay
W. Kilsby
C. Laing
P. Singh
S. Todd
N. Womacks
B. Yee

Recording secretary: L. Perra

M. Jarbek, accompanied by B. Carter led the Assembly in the singing of the National Anthem.

The Chair recognized special guests:

Hon. Shirley Bond, Minister of Advanced Education
Linda Johnson, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Elections BC
Ken MacKinnon, Commissioner for Electoral Reform, NWT
His Worship, Mayor Kinsley

Opening remarks

The Chair invited his worship, Mayor Kinsley to say a few words of welcome. The Chair read a short message from Sam Todd who is recovering at home. He read two sonnets from a poem on the hearings prepared by Diana Byford. The Chair recognized the effort of the members in promoting, supporting and attending the hearings. Staff also was recognized for their untiring efforts during the first year of the Citizens' Assembly. To conclude, the Chair provided a short summary of the Assembly's journey and the tasks that lie ahead.

Plenary Presentations Selection Committee Report

Anna Rankin provided a brief report on the activities of the Selection Committee. The Committee has received 32 plenary presentation applications and 50 recommendations

for consideration from members. The Committee will review these on July 10th and 11th and hopes to bring in a recommendation for eight to ten presentations. Care will be taken to cover all areas and where there are presentations of equal value and benefit, a random selection process will be used.

Plenary Session – What did we learn from the public hearings—Ken Carty

The presentation provided a statistical analysis of the hearings, described the key issues and themes of the presentations and the systems that were being advocated.

Question Period

Was the defense of the current system regional or province-wide?

Concern was expressed about the super majority requirement, lack of knowledge about the Citizens' Assembly and what will be done to provide information to the public following the tabling of the Report.

Since the hearings only involved a small percentage of the public, polling should be considered.

Plenary Presentation: What are the submissions saying to us? – Campbell Sharman

The presentation provided a statistical analysis of the submissions received, the usefulness of the web site in terms of storing and retrieving the submissions, and a categorization of the content of the submissions. The Assembly concurred that August 13th was a good day to cut off the analysis of submissions for the Assembly. After this date, submissions will be received and posted but will not likely be reviewed and analysed by staff. The late submissions will be available for interested members to review.

Question Period:

After the presentation, the following items were raised:

- Concern was expressed by members not on the web.
- Additional categories were suggested for the staff to consider.

The presentation concluded and Assembly members moved into discussion groups to consider questions regarding both hearings and submissions.

Plenary Session – Group Reports on Hearings and Submissions

Each discussion group provided an oral report to the plenary session. The reports highlighted the messages received during the hearings, followed by a similar report on submissions. Detailed notes were kept of the many suggestions given by the groups.

Plenary Session – A portrait of BC “beyond Hope”- Leo Perra

Leo provided an overview of population trends and economic drivers for a dozen interior communities.

Sunday, June 27, 2004

The Chair recognized special guests:

Hon. Pat Bell, Minister of State for Mining

Plenary Session - Open plenary sessions for deliberation phase – Leo Perra

The Assembly had been provided with a set of options regarding access (to the public) for sessions during the deliberations phase. Concern was expressed that certain individuals who were conducting research should be considered exceptions to a policy on in-camera discussion sessions. It was suggested that criteria be developed to accommodate these exceptions. Following discussions:

MSC T. Naccaratto, Brooke Banister, That the Citizens' Assembly keep all plenary sessions accessible to the public; however, all discussion groups will be for members and staff only.

Plenary Session – Decisions and Processes – Chair Jack Blaney

Jack reviewed a number of questions that the Assembly might want to consider in the process to reaching a decision during the deliberations phase.

A number of concerns were raised on the matter of the referendum question, an education process should a recommendation for change result and the role that Assembly members could individually perform following the conclusion of the Assembly.

Discussion groups were asked to consider these questions and to suggest others during their small group sessions.

Plenary Roundup

The Assembly reassembled to hear reports by each discussion group. Comprehensive notes were made of this session.

The Chair concluded the Prince George meeting by thanking the Prince George Committee (M. Jarbek, D. Waller, J. McConaghy, T. Ouellette and E. Morrison) for a job well done.

The Assembly adjourned at 11:45 a.m.