Record of Proceedings
of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform
November 13-14, 2004

In attendance: J. Blaney, Chair
150 Assembly members
11 staff
10 facilitators
10 notetakers
20 observers
2-3 media

On leave: G. Mackinnon

Absent: S. Arola
C. Fader
V. Gowing
M. Pritchard
S. Rai
A. Schallie
D. Sidhu
S. Todd

Recording secretary: L. Perra

Saturday, November 13, 2004

Plenary AM Session
The staff, accompanied by B. Carter, led the members of the Citizens' Assembly (the "Assembly") in the singing of the national anthem.

The Chair noted that H. Riemann was celebrating her anniversary.

The Chair recognized:
- Linda Johnson, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Elections BC
- Janet Erasmus, Senior Legislative Counsel, Ministry of Attorney General
- Jim and Jean Rough from Port Townsend, Washington State

The Chair made the following comments about the fourth weekend's evaluations:

- Last week was the highest on record
- Top marks were given for staff and facilitators
- Members were well prepared
- Small groups were the "meat and potatoes" of the weekend

The Chair emphasized the need to keep the message simple:
- Rank candidates
- Fair results
- Most/all votes used
- Strong local representation

The Chair informed the members that fellow Member, Gene Quan, would chair the evening session on Post December 15th.

Presentation: The Details of the Citizens' Assembly's Recommendation: STV System - K. Carty

(a)   District Magnitude:
   o Densely-populated areas may not be adequately defined. May not want to provide that much flexibility for the district magnitudes.
   o Presumption that the DM be as high as possible.
   o Mix of districts—try to keep rural with rural rather than rural with urban.
   o Might be better to express this as a continuum with emphasis that it be as high as possible.

   Consensus was reached on removing categories, having a range of 2 to 7 with preference given to high district magnitudes.

(b)   Droop Quota - *Agreed*

(c)   Ballot Design
   o Grouped by party
   o Names and party groups randomized.

   Agreed by consensus.

   Question from members: "How do we stop them from putting in party above the line?"
   Answer: *This is part of the recommendation.*

   Question from members: "Candidate photos on ballot?"
   Answer: *Agreed by consensus that we would not do that.*

(d)   Ballot Completion
   o   Voters would rank candidates
   o   Complete one or more preferences
   o   No provision for single party vote (above the line)
   o   Single X interpreted as a 1 or first preference
   o   When preference sequence is broken, the ballot becomes non-transferable
   Agreed by consensus, opposition to "X" mark was noted

(e)   Seat Vacancies
   o   By-elections require a simple majority

<u>Other Comments</u>:

One member suggested establishing a committee (referred to as "Counting Committee") that afternoon to look at the counting rules for STV. The Counting Committee would review and recommend the principles to produce a counting system recommendation. This committee will be inclusive in that any member can participate. The Counting Committee will report back to the Assembly in plenary later that afternoon.   On that suggestion, Shoni Field volunteered to be on the Counting Committee and advised members in plenary that the committee would meet in Room 420 after the plenary session concluded; the results of the discussions would be delivered at breakfast on Sunday morning.

Another member suggested that if the Assembly were to produce a video, it would be advisable to have Assembly members speak directly to citizens. However, one member cautioned whether the Assembly would want to create materials that carried only one message as there were some members who did not agree with the decision.

Other Considerations:
The Chair indicated that while the advice he had received was not to include a section on Other Considerations so as not to dilute the recommendation of the Citizens' Assembly, the fact that citizens across the province felt so strongly on some of these issues prompted their inclusion, not as recommendations, but as issues that the Assembly have heard. Following that note, the Assembly broke into discussion groups to discuss the paper on "Other Considerations" and on a name for the new electoral system.

Saturday Afternoon Plenary

The Referendum Question was put before the Assembly to consider:

> **"Do you support the recommendation of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform that British Columbia adopt the [Voter Preference] electoral system as outlined in the Assembly's final report?"**

Several comments on terminology were raised:

- o "support" changed to "agree with";
- o "adopt" changed to "change to" or "accept";
- o "outlined" changed to "described" or "written";
- o Question the need for the last part of the sentence "…as outlined…report?";
- o Prefer to put the system first , then reference the Assembly.

The Chair said that the Assembly would revisit the question on Sunday after the suggestions were taken into consideration and wording revised.

Review of "Other Considerations"

Following the discussion, the Chair asked members to pass their suggestions in writing to the Recording Secretary. A transcript of the section on "Other Considerations" will be produced and circulated to members at the last meeting weekend.

Review of Name for the new electoral system

The Chair invited members to suggest the principles that could guide the selection of a name for the electoral system. The following were offered:

- That it should be identifiable;
- That it came from the people and some reference to the people should be in the name;
- That it is identifiable; the Assembly did not want to create a new name that may cause confusion, maybe a slogan instead;
- That it is something catchy, with "Choice" in it;
- That it reflected ownership of BC; could be used as a marketing tool, easily understood;
- That it needed to be short so that it did not need an acronym;
- That it is friendly, easy to say, pronounce, and not technical;
- Felt that STV is complicated, behooved the Assembly to find a name that included "choice" and "people";
- That changing the name to include values, descriptors made it sound like a sleezy slogan. Felt that it should be called what it is, easy to find online;
- That the letters "STV" should be included as it belonged to the people
- Asked if "yes" could be added;
- That it included "Citizens' Assembly";
- "If it walks like a duck, talks like a duck, it is a duck, keep STV";

- "STV" in the name, problem with "BC" as it is associated with the government.

The Chair encouraged members to continue the discussions at the Members-Only Dialogue that evening and over dinner and would revisit the matter on Sunday morning.

Sunday AM Plenary, November 14, 2004
The Chair advised that the Assembly needed to select members who would accompany him to Victoria to present the final report to the Attorney General. The following names were drawn from the hat:

- John Chapman - Island
- Michelle Miller - Interior
- Steve Sage - North
- Adina Irimescu - Lower Mainland

The selected members met to add two more names to ensure all groups were represented. (Jacki Tait and Jack Zhang were subsequently selected.)

Referendum Question

The following question was agreed to by a show of hands:

> ***"Do you agree that British Columbia should change to the STV electoral system as recommended by the Citizens' Assembly in its final report? Yes/No"***

Final Report
Patrick Lewis described the context for the two volumes of the Final Report. Following the discussion, the Chair asked members to pass their suggestions in writing to the Recording Secretary. A transcript of the discussion on the draft Final Report will be produced and circulated to members at the last meeting weekend.

Name of the new electoral system
The Chair invited members to continue the discussion from the previous day on a name for the proposed electoral system for British Columbia. After extensive discussions, the Chair focused the selection through a process of elimination.

Members were asked to vote on whether or not they wanted to include "STV" in the name.

Results of the vote:
Yes - **95**
No - **49**

The Chair declared that "STV" would be included in the name.

The Chair then asked members to vote on whether they wanted to have something in addition to the name "STV".

Results of the vote:
>
> **STV alone**   -   **21**
>
> **STV combined**   -   **124**

The Chair declared that "STV" would be combined with something else in the name.

The Chair asked the members to vote on one of the three most discussed options:

- PR STV
- CC STV
- BC STV

Results of the vote:
>
> **PR STV**   -   **21**
>
> **CC STV**   -   **31**
>
> **BC STV**   -   **93**

The Chair declared "BC STV" as the new name for the proposed electoral system for BC.

The Assembly was adjourned at 11:45 am. Members were asked to complete evaluation forms.