

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SIDNEY/VICTORIA PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 15 MAY 2004
AT THE HOLIDAY INN VICTORIA

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.

Andrew Lewis

Pro Rep Initiative and the Green Party BC

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I wish to present my experiences and support for the Pro Rep campaign, (MMP) 2002, as one of the lead organizers for Saanich North and the Islands; one of the ridings to achieve over 10% support for the Initiative.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Lewis outlined his experience canvassing support for the 2002 Pro Rep campaign, noting in particular the extensive support at the constituency level for electoral system change. As the key organizer for the Saanich-Gulf Islands, Mr. Lewis exceeded the required target of 3600 signatures for the Initiative providing the presenter with confidence in the prospective success of MMP in BC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Lewis recommended the adoption of MMP.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q Why do you personally support the MMP system?

A I support it as a candidate running in the last provincial election. The Green party garnered 12% of the vote and that is not being reflected in the legislature and that disturbs me. MMP is an adaptation of the FPTP system and we are comfortable with that, so this change may be easier for people to grasp, far more so than STV which doesn't really suit what we already have.

Q Is there something in particular you like about MMP?

A I'm not going to firmly endorse one particular way. I recognize that there are a number of ways that MMP could be adapted. It certainly could evolve from the system that the Citizens' Assembly recommends. We initially recommended a 50-50 split as a result of a fixed number of seats, but I'm open to a system such as a one-third/two-thirds

split with an open list.

Q How did people feel about increasing the size of districts under MMP?

A We actually had 79 signature lists for the 79 districts and we managed to get signatures from people all across the province. Most people were supportive, but there was a concern about larger ridings but what helped was explaining to people that through party lists you may have two representatives one from the list and one from your riding.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Did you find that MMP would increase the representation of women?

A The initiative that we were working on was modeled on the NZ system and the experience there has been the increased involvement of women in parliament.

Q What is an open/closed/flexible list?

A Under MMP some MLAs are elected from constituencies and some from party lists, so there are several ways of managing the list component; the party may choose the list or the voters may choose the list, or it may be a flexible system in which you could vote for the party list or for an individual on that list.