

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

SURREY-SOUTH PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 8 MAY 2004
AT THE ASTON PACIFIC INN

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.

Bill Picket

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

BC should have a combination of proportional representation and geographical representation.

KEY THEMES

The presenter addressed the need for electoral reform to provide a more moderate system of governing than that experienced by BC over the past two decades. Mr. Picket expressed the desirability of coalition government in order to encourage consensus policy making in government. Furthermore, under PR turnover in governing parties would become less dramatic, and wild swings in policy-making would be moderated. Finally, the dominance of the executive over the legislature should be tempered by the existence of multi-party coalitions in government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Picket recommended the introduction of a mixed system with a combination of party list candidates and single member constituencies in order to provide both proportionality and local representation.

Quote: Compromise is the basis of good government.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

- Q Do you prefer swift decisions, or decisions that take a little longer but are consensual?
- A I prefer the latter. Too often decisions are rushed.
- Q What do you like about the current system?
- A On a light-hearted note it's entertaining, but I don't think it is good government.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q What split did you envisage between the constituency and the list seats?

A Off the top of my head I would say 50-50. Perhaps constituencies the size of the current federal ridings and the list could be used to balance up the system.

Q I believe that people should be able to vote for different individuals that should not be controlled by the party, what are your views on that?

A I grew up in Holland, and I believe they gave people a chance to rank their preferred candidate. I found that to be a very good system.

Q How would your system work if the party with the largest number of seats took their appointed people and made them the cabinet?

A I don't see the difficulty. The problem now is that everything is run from the Premier's Office.

Q How does this change that?

A I feel that if you have two or three parties in a coalition then it's harder for the Premier to claim complete control.