

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

TERRACE PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 8 JUNE 2004
AT THE COAST INN OF THE WEST

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.

Lars Reese Hansen

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A presentation in support of MMP.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Reese Hansen discussed three problems with the current system:

1. Voter apathy. According to Mr. Reese Hansen, the current system has created a lot of voter dissatisfaction endangering the democratic process.
2. The production of wild policy swings which create a sense of instability that fuels voter apathy.
3. The disproportionate advantage it bestows on the party that wins the election.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Reese Hansen advocated the introduction of MMP along the lines of the German and New Zealand model. Regarding the selection of party lists, the presenter argued that it must be done via a transparent and accountable method, thereby enabling people to believe that these candidates got there by fair means. Mr. Reese Hansen expressed the opinion that the introduction of MMP would engender balance in the legislature, and allow all citizens to have a sense of equality in society. Further, the presenter argued that the system would encourage people to vote for the values that they feel are most important rather than against something they dislike. Mr. Reese Hansen urged the Assembly to take the opportunity to move toward a democratic system that provides the greatest level of enfranchisement.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Q You mentioned a concern with coalition back room dealing, however, there is an argument that this may only increase under MMP. What are your views on that?

A I think that that kind of maneuvering is inevitable. But I think that MMP will bring that forward into the public arena, whereas now a lot of that stuff happens behind closed doors.