

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

VALEMOUNT PUBLIC HEARING DATED
7 MAY 2004 AT THE HOLIDAY INN,
VALEMOUNT

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.

Steve Burchnall

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

Adversarial politics in BC has contributed to declining voter turnout. We need an electoral system that will promote more cooperation and a less adversarial system. Coalition governments would improve cooperation in the legislature.

KEY THEMES

Steve Burchnall argued that voter turnout is declining because voters are disappointed with the adversarial nature of the political system and the “silly headbutting” of “cynical politicians.” He also argued that voters are aware that their MLAs but conform to the party position on an issue, so feel that there is little point in contacting their representative to express an opposing view.

Mr Burchnall argued that voters in some parts of the province do not feel represented under the current electoral system, because one part of the province seems to control the choice of government for the rest of the province.

Mr Burchnall expressed his support for any electoral system that would result in more cooperation and a less adversarial system. He suggested that coalition governments, like those in Italy, would improve cooperation in the legislature.

Mr Burchnall also argued that communities within the province need to work more cooperatively together. He proposed that BC adopt a system of nested communities, similar to that of Nepal, which would complement a proportional representation system. This would help to transmit concerns and ideas from smaller communities to the centre of government.

Quote: “I favour any electoral system that produces more cooperation and less adversarial politics. We should try to bring people together rather than drive people apart.”

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

Two members of the panel sought clarification on elements of the presentation.

Q	Does local representation matter to you?
A	The main thing is that local representatives are not squashed from above.
Q	So if we had a system of 79 candidates where you could pick them from a list and rank them?

A	The system should not be too cumbersome, so we need to have a simple system. A lot of people just want to vote for someone and not really have to think too much about it. A lot of people are a little bit lazy. To me, what's important is that I find someone like-minded so that I can make a connection. I think the big thing is that sense of connection, which is why I like the system of nested communities.
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Comment from panel

There were no comments from the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments from the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO