

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

VANCOUVER PUBLIC HEARING
DATED 29 MAY 2004
AT VANCOUVER CONVENTION CENTRE

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.

David Mills

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

A system if it is uniform and inflexible, over time becomes less adaptable to its environment, which is ever changing. In BC evidence suggests that our electoral system is lacking in the diversity necessary to accommodate change. I will share my views on how electoral reform would reinvigorate our political processes, making them more adaptable, and more of a reflection of ourselves.

KEY THEMES

Mr. Mills discussed the need for electoral reform on the basis of recent electoral results in British Columbia. The presenter argued that the production of artificial and exaggerated majorities have contributed to what may be termed a ‘representation deficit’. Mr. Mills stated that while participation of the citizenry is strong at election time, it is absent from day-to-day politics. The presenter stated that the current FPTP system emphasizes stable and effective government on the basis of political solidarity. However, the electoral results of the past twenty years have produced declining voter engagement, strategic voting, and polarized politics. Mr. Mills argued that under FPTP the diversity of ideas present in British Columbia is lost in adversarial politics. Further, under the current system lobbyists, NGO’s and pressure groups enjoy a privileged position in relation to the government as a result of their resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Mills recommended the adoption of a system of proportional representation in order to foster partnership and consensus in government and encourage participation on the part of the citizenry.

Quote: I support the adoption of a new system, and I believe that it will improve our government by enlightening it with the ideas of the citizenry, who for the first time in a long time in North America will be brought back to the fore, where they belong, to revolutionize our democracy and enliven our tired, repetitive, polarized, lobby-driven legislature.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Q Could you tell us what value you believe political parties provide today?

A Not much today.

Q What is one positive of political parties?

A Personally, I support political parties, but I would like to see more of them and I would like to see our votes spread amongst them. I'm not against political parties.