

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

VICTORIA PUBLIC HEARING DATED
10 JUNE 2004 AT THE WESTERN BALLROOM,
HARBOUR TOWERS

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.

Al Reford

DESCRIPTION OF PRESENTATION

I wish to make a presentation in support of a mixed proportional representation system.

KEY THEMES

Al Reford told the hearing that he has not voted for 20 years as he has been boycotting the current system, although he has registered to vote in the 2004 election in preparation for being able to vote in support of PR. He described the current First Past the Post system as being controlled by social and business elites, and excluding women, aboriginal people and ethnic minorities. Mr Reford spoke in favour of direct democracy, although he recognized that this issue is not within the mandate of the assembly. He described the history of disenfranchising minorities within the province and criticised FPP governments for being able to vote as they wish without limitations on their power. He also criticized the STV system and described the Irish political system as dominated by two parties with policy flip-flopping and political scandals.

Mr Reford spoke in favour of the MMP system and described the mechanics of MMP. He quoted from the Free Your Vote Society literature in favour of MMP and advocated a system with two thirds of seats elected in constituencies, a requirement that parties must run candidates in at least 50 per cent of seats to qualify for list representation, a flexible list system, and democratic party selection processes. He also suggested doubling the size of the legislature to have 160 seats with the salaries for MLAs halved in order to fund the additional seats. Mr Reford supported a legal requirement that half of all MLAs be women and also suggested that a minimum of 10 per cent of seats be reserved for First Nations people, in order to address their historic disenfranchisement.

Recommendations

Al Reford recommended the introduction of MMP in British Columbia.

Quote: "The British system has resulted in highly undemocratic government of business and social elites and in BC it was designed deliberately to exclude at time the following citizens: women, Native peoples, Chinese, Japanese, East Indians, Mennonites and Doukhobours."

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PANEL

There were no questions or comments from members of the panel.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There were no questions or comments from members of the audience.

SUBMISSION: NO