

# ELECTORAL Insight

## Aboriginal and Youth Participation in Federal Elections



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**Note:** The opinions expressed are those of the authors; they do not necessarily reflect those of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada.

Aboriginal Candidates  
in the  
2004 General Election  
(January 2005)



# Aboriginal Candidates in the 2004 General Election

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This article summarizes statistical information about Aboriginal candidates in the 2004 general election, as one aspect of the representation of Aboriginal people in Canada's political institutions. Since political parties are one of the main vehicles for political representation, the article analyzes all the self-identified Aboriginal candidates endorsed by each of the five parties that obtained the most support from electors, their electoral districts, their proportion of the vote and the success of their campaigns. The data and analysis suggest that more representation (numeric and substantive) of Aboriginal peoples in our electoral process is necessary.

The information in this article comes from various sources, including the Web sites of Statistics Canada, Elections Canada and the registered political parties, and information provided by representatives of each of the political parties discussed. The political parties included in the analysis are the Bloc Québécois (BQ), Conservative Party of Canada (Conservatives), Green Party of Canada (Greens), Liberal Party of Canada (Liberals), and the New Democratic Party (N.D.P.). The analysis does not include candidates from any party other than the five listed.<sup>1</sup> The information in this article relies heavily on the process of self-identification. Despite the inherent flaws in using self-identification as the only means of identifying Aboriginal candidates, it is the only means available at this time.<sup>2</sup>

## Aboriginal people in Canada

According to the most recent census data, Aboriginal people account for approximately 3.3% of the Canadian population.<sup>3</sup> There are important differences between the Aboriginal population and the total population. For instance, Aboriginal

peoples, as a whole, tend to be younger than the total population, with a larger proportion of persons in the under-19 age group.<sup>4</sup> In terms of gender breakdown, the female-to-male ratio is slightly higher (in favour of females) than in the total population.<sup>5</sup> The importance of these subtle differences will become apparent in the following discussion.

## Aboriginal candidates in the 2004 election

The 2004 general election saw an increase in the number of electoral districts from 301 to 308. Twenty-seven candidates who are self-identified as being Aboriginal persons ran for the five political parties in 25 ridings. The BQ, Conservatives, Greens, Liberals and N.D.P. endorsed a total of 1,307 candidates in the 308 electoral districts. Of their 75 candidates, the BQ endorsed 1 Aboriginal candidate (1.33%).<sup>6</sup> The Conservatives had 3 self-identified Aboriginal candidates of their total 308 (0.97%).<sup>7</sup> The Greens surpassed them by one, with 4 Aboriginal candidates out of 308 (1.3%).<sup>8</sup> The N.D.P. had the second highest number of Aboriginal candidates – 8 of their 308 candidates (2.6%).<sup>9</sup> The Liberals had the greatest number of Aboriginal candidates – 11 of their total 308 (3.57%).<sup>10</sup> Thus the Liberals were the only party in which the percentage of Aboriginal candidates equalled or exceeded the proportion of Aboriginal people in the population as a whole.

## How successful were they?

Table 1 shows the Aboriginal candidates in the electoral districts where they sought election. Of the 25 ridings, 23 had only one Aboriginal candidate, one had two Aboriginal candidates (Athabasca), and Churchill River

had three Aboriginal candidates (including Rick Laliberte, who ran as an independent and is therefore not included in the tables). The candidates identified in bold and italics were elected.

Of the 27 Aboriginal candidates who sought election for the five leading parties, only six were successful: Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Western Arctic), Bernard Cleary (Louis-Saint-Laurent), Paul DeVillers (Simcoe North), Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut), Lawrence O'Brien (Labrador), and David Smith (Pontiac). Five of the Aboriginal candidates elected represented the Liberals, while one represented the BQ. Voters did not elect Aboriginal candidates from the other three parties. The provinces of Ontario,

Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the Northwest Territories and Nunavut all had Aboriginal candidates elected.

### Candidacies compared to proportion of population

Table 2 highlights the number of Aboriginal candidates compared to the total number of candidates for the five parties, by province/territory. It also indicates what might be considered the ideal number of Aboriginal candidates, based on the Aboriginal population in that province or territory.<sup>11</sup> In only 4 of the 13 provinces and territories did the number of Aboriginal candidates closely resemble the Aboriginal proportion of the population. These are Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick,

Photo: Wayne Broun



Elections Canada's efforts to make the federal electoral process welcoming to Aboriginal people and encourage their participation included targeted registration in places like this Native Friendship Centre.

**Table 1  
Aboriginal Candidates by Electoral District and Political Party\***

Electoral district	Liberal	N.D.P.	Green	Conservative	BQ
Kelowna		Starleigh Grass			
Skeena-Bulkley Valley	Miles Richardson				
Athabasca		Robert Cree	Ian Hopfe		
Calgary West		Tim Patterson			
Macleod	Chris Shade				
Westlock-St. Paul	Joe Dion				
Wild Rose		Jeff Horvath			
Churchill River	Al Ducharme	Earl Cook			
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin		Priscilla Settee			
Yorkton-Melville	Ted Quewezance				
Churchill	Ron Evans				
Winnipeg North				Kris Stevenson	
Winnipeg South				Rod Bruinooge	
Brant			Helen-Anne Embry		
Hamilton Centre				Leon O'Connor	
Kenora			Carl Chaboyer		
Middlesex-Kent-Lambton		Kevin Blake			
Niagara West-Glanbrook		Dave Heatley			
Simcoe North	<b><i>Paul DeVillers</i></b>				
Louis-Saint-Laurent					<b><i>Bernard Cleary</i></b>
Pontiac	<b><i>David Smith</i></b>				
Miramichi			Garry Sanipass		
Labrador	<b><i>Lawrence O'Brien</i></b>				
Western Arctic	<b><i>Ethel Blondin-Andrew</i></b>				
Nunavut	<b><i>Nancy Karetak-Lindell</i></b>				

\*Candidates identified in bold and italics were elected.

**Table 2  
Aboriginal Candidates by Province/Territory – 2004 General Election**

Province/Territory	Total number of candidates	Number of Aboriginal candidates	Ideal number of Aboriginal candidates	% of candidates who are Aboriginal	% of population that is Aboriginal
British Columbia	144	2	6	1.39	4.43
Alberta	112	6	6	5.36	5.35
Saskatchewan	56	4	8	7.14	13.61
Manitoba	56	3	8	5.36	13.64
Ontario	424	6	7	1.41	1.68
Quebec	375	2	4	0.54	1.12
New Brunswick	40	1	1	2.50	2.38
Nova Scotia	44	0	1	0	1.90
Prince Edward Island	16	0	1	0	1.01
Newfoundland and Labrador	28	1	1	3.57	3.73
Yukon	4	0	1	0	23.28
Northwest Territories	4	1	2	25	50.96
Nunavut	4	1	3	25	85.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,307</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>2.07</b>	<b>3.30</b>

and Newfoundland and Labrador. Among the areas showing the greatest disparity are Nunavut, British Columbia and Manitoba.

### By gender and political party

Table 3 examines Aboriginal candidates by gender and political party. It shows the number of female and male Aboriginal candidates, by party, with comparisons to the total number of candidates and their gender distribution.

As discussed previously, the female-to-male ratio is slightly higher among Aboriginal peoples (51.2% female and 48.8% male) than in the total population (50.9% female and 49.1% male). In general, women tend to be under-represented as electoral candidates.<sup>12</sup> In 2004, they accounted for only 23.1% of all candidates. Aboriginal female candidates are even more under-represented (18.5% of the total number of Aboriginal

**Table 3  
Candidates by Gender and Political Party**

Party	Aboriginal female	Total female	Aboriginal male	Total male	Total
BQ	0	19	1	56	75
Conservative	0	36	3	272	308
Green	1	78	3	230	308
Liberal	2	74	9	234	308
N.D.P.	2	96	6	212	308
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>1,307</b>

candidates). Although they are less likely to be selected as candidates, Aboriginal females were more likely to be elected, when compared to all other female candidates. Of the six Aboriginal candidates elected on June 28, two are female (33.3%) and four are male (66.7%). Of the total number of candidates elected, 65 are female (21.1%) and 243 are male (78.9%). However, given the small number of Aboriginal candidates elected, it would not be appropriate to draw broad generalizations from these results.

In terms of representation within political parties, the N.D.P. and the Green Party appear to better represent Aboriginal female candidates, where they made up 25% of the parties' respective total number of Aboriginal candidates. This is not surprising, given that the N.D.P. had a higher percentage of female candidates overall than the other four parties. The Green Party ran male and female Aboriginal candidates at roughly the same proportion as the total distribution of male and female candidates. While in aggregate numbers, the Liberals had the same



number of Aboriginal female candidates as the N.D.P. (and one more than the Greens), the Aboriginal female-to-male ratio is smaller in the N.D.P. and Green Party (1:3 – N.D.P.; 1:3 – Greens; 1:4.5 – Liberals). The BQ and Conservatives, however, did not endorse any female Aboriginal candidates.

## Support for Aboriginal candidates

The popular vote received by each successful Aboriginal candidate is also noteworthy. In the ridings where Aboriginal candidates were successful, five had a clear plurality of votes (i.e. at least 5% more votes than the next closest candidate). The exception was Western Arctic, which was the subject of a judicial recount. At first count, the difference between Blondin-Andrew and her closest opponent was only 52 votes. After a partial recount, the difference increased by one to 53 votes. Blondin-Andrew won the seat.<sup>13</sup>

The flip side to the success of the six MPs mentioned above is the lack of electoral success for the other 21 candidates. Of particular interest

here is the fact that although the N.D.P. ran nearly the same number of Aboriginal candidates as the Liberals, none of the Aboriginal N.D.P. candidates were elected. Moreover, voters did not elect any Aboriginal candidates in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or Yukon. This is of particular concern given the very high proportion of Aboriginal people in Yukon, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and the significant proportion of Aboriginal people in Alberta and British Columbia (see Table 2).

This lack of Aboriginal representation does not seem to be the result of an absence of Aboriginal candidates. Churchill River, Saskatchewan, provides an interesting example. In this electoral district, Aboriginal people of voting age account for an estimated 68% of the total population aged 18 and over.<sup>14</sup> In 2004, three Aboriginal candidates vied for success in this riding: Earl Cook (N.D.P.), Al Ducharme (Liberal), and Rick Laliberte (independent). None of

the three was elected. In fact, the non-Aboriginal candidate for the Conservatives, Jeremy Harrison, received a clear plurality of the popular vote over the next closest candidate.<sup>15</sup> In the other 18 ridings where Aboriginal candidates were unsuccessful, each of the successful non-Aboriginal candidates also received a clear plurality of votes.<sup>16</sup>

What accounts for the success of 6 Aboriginal candidates, relative to the lack of success of the other 21 Aboriginal candidates? Are there links between a candidate's degree of success and the popularity of the political party he or she represents? Such a link may offer a possible explanation for why the only Aboriginal candidates to be successful in this election were endorsed by the Liberals and BQ. It does not explain, however, why Aboriginal candidates for the increasingly popular Conservatives were not successful. It is possible that policy considerations might be implicated here, as prominent Aboriginal organizations insisted the Conservative Party clarify its policy on Aboriginal issues.<sup>17</sup>

Photos: La Ronge Northerner (Scott Boyes)



The northern Saskatchewan electoral district of Churchill River had three Aboriginal candidates (left to right): Earl Cook (New Democrat), Al Ducharme (Liberal) and Rick Laliberte (independent).



At an Ottawa news conference, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine encouraged Aboriginal people to vote and estimated that they had sufficient numbers to be a deciding factor in 63 Canadian electoral districts.

Another possible factor might be the significance of the Aboriginal vote in each electoral district. In the ridings where Aboriginal candidates were successful, the Aboriginal population aged 18 and over varied considerably in size, from a low of 1.51% (Louis-

Saint-Laurent) to a high of 75.84% (Nunavut) of the voting-age population. While a higher percentage of Aboriginal voters might suggest greater support for Aboriginal candidates, this does not appear to be an absolute certainty. In ridings such as Athabasca, Churchill, Churchill River and Kenora where Aboriginal electors exceed 20% of the voting-age population, Aboriginal candidates were not successful.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that more than “shared Aboriginality” is necessary for Aboriginal voters to support an Aboriginal candidate. A desire and ability to vote,<sup>19</sup> political party affiliation, and policy considerations must be some of the factors at play when Aboriginal voters decide for whom to vote. Other variables, such as the candidate’s background, education and political experience, in addition to the demographics and history of the riding are also likely to play a role in determining political success. Further research is necessary to determine the precise role these factors may have played.

## Conclusion

As a result of the 2004 general election, 6 of 27 Aboriginal

candidates for the five parties were elected, representing a success rate of 22.22%. This result is bittersweet for Aboriginal peoples. While it represents a record number of Aboriginal members of Parliament, Aboriginal persons fill only 1.9% of the seats in the House of Commons – far from the 3.3% Aboriginal share of the Canadian population. The disparity here is of continuing concern, and more research is necessary to cover the gaps in the existing literature on Aboriginal voter turnout, Aboriginal candidacy and Aboriginal participation in political parties. I suggest that fair and substantive representation can only come from an increased turnout of Aboriginal persons at the polling stations, increased Aboriginal membership in political parties, an increased number of Aboriginal candidates, and ultimately, an increased number of Aboriginal members of Parliament. Such issues present unique challenges for Canadian policy-makers and Aboriginal peoples alike. With increased roles in such political processes, Aboriginal peoples will be able to ensure their fair and substantive representation in Canada’s political institutions. ✖

## NOTES

1. The exception is the brief mention of Rick Laliberte, an Aboriginal candidate who ran as an independent in the electoral district of Churchill River.
2. See, for example, Drew Hayden Taylor, “How Native Is Native if You’re Native?” and Bonita Lawrence, “Mixed-Race Urban Native People: Surviving a Legacy of Policies of Genocide,” both in Ron Laliberte, *Expressions in Canadian Native Studies* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: University of Saskatchewan Extension Press, 2000).
3. Statistics Canada, “Aboriginal peoples of Canada,” [www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/abor/canada.cfm](http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/abor/canada.cfm).
4. Statistics Canada, “Population reporting an Aboriginal identity by age groups, provinces and territories (2001 Census),” [www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/demo40c.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/demo40c.htm).
5. Statistics Canada, “Age and Sex, 2001 Counts for Both Sexes, for Canada, Provinces and Territories – 100% Data,” [www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/AgeSex/Page.cfm?Lang=](http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/AgeSex/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&View=1&Code=0&Table=1a&StartRec=1&Sort=2&B1=Counts&B2=Both)
6. Official with Bloc Québécois, Personal Communication, June 22, 2004.
7. Official with Conservative Party of Canada, Personal Communication, June 22, 2004.
8. Official with Green Party of Canada, Personal Communication, June 22, 2004.
9. Official with New Democratic Party, Personal Communication, June 22, 2004.

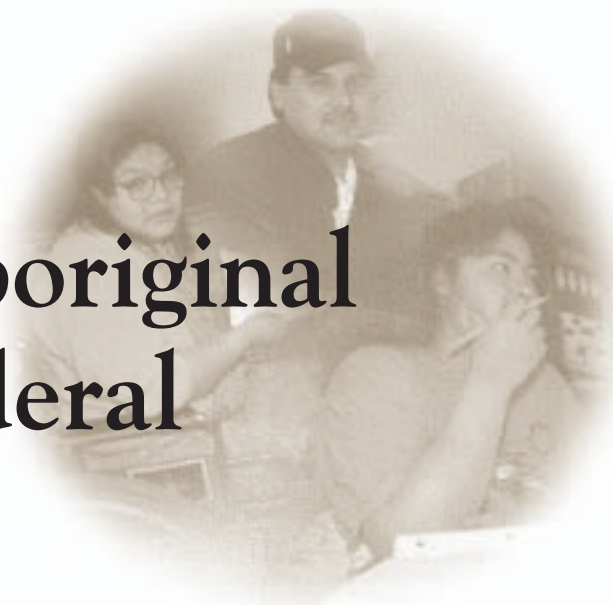


10. Liberal Party of Canada, "Paul Martin Celebrates Aboriginal Culture," [www.liberal.ca/news\\_e.aspx?site=news&news=793](http://www.liberal.ca/news_e.aspx?site=news&news=793).
11. This suggestion – that the proportion of Aboriginal candidates from each province should closely resemble the proportion of the population that is Aboriginal – is premised on a particular model of representation, namely the numerical or pictorial approach. According to this view, "parliamentary institutions should be microcosms of the Canadian electorate, with the same balance of demographic characteristics found in the broader population" (see Keith Archer, Roger Gibbins, Rainer Knopff, Heather MacIvor and Leslie A. Pal, *Parameters of Power: Canada's Political Institutions*, 3rd ed. (Canada: Thomson, 2002), p. 194. There are, of course, other models of representation, including the partisan model (MPs are seen as representing their parties) and the territorial model (MPs are seen as representing a particular geographical area). In reality, every MP must juggle multiple representational demands. For Aboriginal people, ideal numerical representation in the House of Commons has tended to be difficult to achieve, largely because the Aboriginal population tends not to be geographically concentrated. For a discussion of the implications of this lack of "critical mass," see Kiera L. Ladner, "The Alienation of Nation: Understanding Aboriginal Electoral Participation," in *Electoral Insight* Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 2003), pp. 21–26.
12. For example, see Lisa Young, "Representation of Women in the Canadian Party System," in William Cross, ed., *Political Parties, Representation, and Electoral Democracy in Canada* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2002).
13. Elections Canada, "Judicial Recount Terminated in the Electoral District of Western Arctic," [www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=med&document=jul2004&dir=pre&lang=e&textonly=false](http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=med&document=jul2004&dir=pre&lang=e&textonly=false).
14. Statistics Canada, "2001 Federal Electoral District Profile," [www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/fedprofile/SelectFED.cfm?R=FED03](http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/fedprofile/SelectFED.cfm?R=FED03).
15. Elections Canada, "Validated Results of the 38th General Election on June 28, 2004," [www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=pas&document=index&dir=38e/resval&lang=e&textonly=false](http://www.elections.ca/content.asp?section=pas&document=index&dir=38e/resval&lang=e&textonly=false).
16. Elections Canada, "Validated Results of the 38th General Election".
17. Assembly of First Nations, "National Aboriginal Leaders Call On Stephen Harper To Explain Position On Offensive Writings Of Tom Flanagan, Conservative Party Of Canada's National Campaign Chair," [www.afn.ca/Media/2004/june/june\\_7\\_04.htm](http://www.afn.ca/Media/2004/june/june_7_04.htm).
18. Statistics Canada, "2001 Federal Electoral District Profile".
19. For example, see Elections Canada, *Electoral Insight* Vol. 5, No. 3 (November 2003).

Roundtable on  
Aboriginal Youth  
and the Federal  
Electoral Process  
(April 2004)



# Roundtable on Aboriginal Youth and the Federal Electoral Process



On January 17, 2004, Elections Canada organized, in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Indigenous Research, Culture, Language and Education (CIRCLE), a roundtable on Aboriginal youth and the federal electoral process at Carleton University in Ottawa. The majority of the 27 participants were Aboriginal youth, most of whom represented one of the national Aboriginal associations.

## Opening session

The roundtable was opened with a prayer by Gordon Williams, an elder from the Peguis First Nation.

John Medicine Horse Kelly, co-director of CIRCLE and co-chair of the roundtable, said this initiative indicated that the question of Aboriginal electoral participation was getting the attention it deserves. Val Courchene, founder of the Dreamcatcher Aboriginal youth conferences and co-chair of the roundtable, said she was honoured to be part of this event.

The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, delivered informal opening remarks. He mentioned that the available research indicates that, even though in his view they have a good deal at stake, Aboriginal people participate in federal elections at lower rates than the population as a whole. In this context, he noted that turnout rates in the referendums sponsored by the Cree and Inuit in northern Quebec prior to the 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty were quite high. He added that, if young Aboriginal people participate in significant numbers, elected officials would listen. Mr. Kingsley mentioned that Elections Canada had developed a number of programs to

improve the accessibility of the electoral process for Aboriginal people. Certain improvements would be made by the next federal general election. However, a longer-term effort was required, in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, particularly concerning education about the electoral process.

## Presentations on Aboriginal People and Electoral Participation

Kiera Ladner, of the Department of Political Science at the University of Western Ontario, explored the question of why a significant number of Aboriginal people do not vote in federal elections. Dr. Ladner said that she has not voted in the past because of her understanding of treaties and her belief that she belongs to a nation that is “within the purview of Canada by default.” In her view, for some Aboriginal youth, voting in federal elections would be a question of participating within an “alien nation.” She added, however, that a lot of Aboriginal people do not share this perspective. Dr. Ladner did not offer a specific response to these differing stances, but suggested that a process of dialogue was necessary before Aboriginal participation would be broadened.

The next presentation was given by Jaime Koebel, former president of the Aboriginal Youth Council of the National Association of Friendship Centres and a Master’s student at Carleton University. Ms. Koebel said that, given historical events such as denying certain First Nations people the right to vote in federal elections until 1960, it is not surprising that some Aboriginal young people do not vote. However, this does not mean that they are not interested in other

political activities. She said that she votes on any occasion when she thinks she can make a difference. Ms. Koebel noted that Aboriginal youth are a rapidly growing community and therefore have considerable power. She mentioned a number of changes that had taken place within the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) since the mid-1980s, adding that youth now count for one third of the votes for the NAFC assembly. To close her presentation, Ms. Koebel stated, “your ideas can transpire into valuable changes.”

## Discussion groups

Following the initial sessions, participants divided into two discussion groups and addressed the following questions:

### 1. Barriers to Aboriginal youth voting:

What factors discourage Aboriginal youth from voting in federal elections? What can Elections Canada and Aboriginal communities do to lower these barriers?

### 2. Why Aboriginal youth should vote:

What can Elections Canada and Aboriginal communities do to increase Aboriginal young people’s understanding of and interest in the federal electoral process?

Following the group sessions, participants reassembled to hear reports on each group’s observations and suggestions. The points presented below, which are taken from the reports from both groups, have been structured according to a number of themes.

### **Barriers to Aboriginal youth voting**

Participants identified a number of reasons to explain why a significant

Photo: John Medicine Horse Kelly



*The Chief Electoral Officer, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, and participants at the roundtable on Aboriginal youth and the federal electoral process.*

proportion of Aboriginal youth do not vote in federal elections.

Relations with the federal government and political parties:

- The right to vote in federal elections was not extended to all Aboriginal people until 1960. For some, this is not a long time ago. For others, this is not a personal memory but an injustice they have learned.
- Negative experience in past relations with the federal government, which results in anger and disconnect with federal institutions.
- Lack of trust in political parties and elected representatives
- For some, a non-acceptance of Canadian citizenship
- Marginalization of Aboriginal people, including in their socio-economic conditions

Education/information about the federal electoral process:

- Lack of understanding of the federal electoral process – not only among youth but also within Aboriginal communities (e.g. chiefs, band councils, etc.)
- Lack of education among Aboriginal youth on the federal electoral system

- Lower education levels for some Aboriginal youth, which impedes understanding of the importance of voting

Representation within political parties and Parliament:

- Lack of Aboriginal representation and leadership in federal political parties and Parliament
- Lack of issues that affect Aboriginal people in the platforms of political parties
- Limited access to members of Parliament, political parties and the electoral process in general

On the question of why Aboriginal youth should vote or not, most comments fell into one of two groups. A number of participants said that Aboriginal youth should vote because the federal government makes decisions that affect the quality of life of their family and their community. Other participants said that Aboriginal youth should not vote because they do not trust or have faith in the federal government. They added that the best way to influence the government is to be active within their own organizations; in turn, these organizations can make

an impact by lobbying members of Parliament and the government.

### **Proposed actions for Elections Canada and Aboriginal communities**

Visibility and involvement with Aboriginal communities:

- Elections Canada should be more present and visible within Aboriginal communities, taking into account their diversity, including at important Aboriginal events (e.g. National Aboriginal Day). It should hold roundtables such as this one in schools.
- Elections Canada should increase its partnerships with various Aboriginal organizations at the national and local levels.

Education/information about the electoral process:

- Aboriginal youth should be provided with more education and information about the electoral process, and not only at election time. It was suggested that Elections Canada establish youth relation offices in the various regions; the staff could, among other things, go to schools to speak about the electoral process.
- Some participants said that youth councils and committees are the best way to reach youth, and that Friendship Centres could help distribute information to the grass-roots level.
- One participant proposed organizing mock elections, perhaps in Friendship Centres.

Communications/advertising:

- Elections Canada should make greater use of Aboriginal media and publications from national organizations.
- Messages from well-known personalities (for example, Jordin Tootoo, Tina Keeper) should be included in advertising campaigns.

- Set up a mailing list between Elections Canada and Aboriginal youth organizations so the latter can distribute material in their regions.

Political parties:

- Some participants said that political parties have a responsibility to reach Aboriginal youth and to build trust relationships with them. One participant suggested that political parties might be given funds for activities to educate youth about voting.

Accessibility:

- Have polling stations placed in band offices on reserves, Friendship Centres, as well as in the offices of provincial and territorial organizations.
- Hire people from the communities to go door-to-door – e.g. for targeted revision.

Parliamentary representation and the electoral system:

- One participant said that Elections Canada should undertake research on electoral systems and processes in other countries that guarantee representation for minority groups.
- Some participants said there is a need to look again at constitutional reform to build a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and federal institutions. There were a number of positive references to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.
- One participant suggested changing the rules for the redistribution

Photo: John Medicine Horse Kelly



*Participants at the roundtable on Aboriginal youth and the federal electoral process report back from their group discussion.*

process to specifically include the Aboriginal population in the concept of “community of interest.”

Aboriginal communities:

- Some participants said it is important for national and other Aboriginal organizations to work together to strengthen their relationships.

Other:

- Build awareness, including with the government, that socio-economic conditions and various public policies have an impact on Aboriginal people’s interest in voting.
- Build relationships with Aboriginal peoples that are based on trust and respect.

### **Concluding discussion**

During the last session of the roundtable, each participant was invited to share what he or she had learned during the day and any specific suggestions.

One participant said that, in order to better understand the barriers to voting, it would be important to meet Aboriginal youth at the grassroots level. She said it was important to



communicate to the government that there are barriers outside the electoral process that discourage young Aboriginal people from voting.

A participant said that the foundation of democracy is people choosing their own destiny and that the choice not to vote is an exercise of democratic rights.

Another participant said that the decision to vote or not is a personal choice, but that it is important to make the system accessible and give the opportunity to everyone who wants to vote.

According to one participant, voting is not the only way of bringing about political change. She underlined the importance of working within Aboriginal associations, which can make an impact through their lobbying and other efforts.

A number of participants said they were pleased that Elections Canada had taken this opportunity to bring together and listen to Aboriginal youth. One participant expressed the hope that Elections Canada would continue the dialogue.

Ms. Courchene said that she drew two conclusions from the day's discussions: 1) the importance of education; and 2) the need to come together and for healing to take place, so that Aboriginal youth can move to the next stage.

Mr. Kingsley said that Aboriginal people in Canada have equality with respect to the right to vote. From his perspective, that reflection of equality, the right to vote, does not just concern the individual but society as a whole. He said he had been enriched by each person's participation and that an event such as the roundtable "allows real change to find a beginning."

To conclude, Mr. Williams commended the "quality and vitality" of the youth who were present. He said he had learned from the discussion and that he would transmit that to others through teaching. Looking to the future, he quoted the following saying: "If the result is the same, the difference might just be you." ✖

National Forum  
on Youth Voting  
(April 2004)

National Forum on Youth Voting (April 2004)



# National Forum on Youth Voting



On October 30–31, 2003, Elections Canada held a National Forum on Youth Voting in Calgary, Alberta. This event, the first of its kind in Canada, brought together youth leaders and leading Canadians from a number of other sectors to focus on concrete measures to encourage youth electoral participation. In total, 48 participants took part; of these, 27 were youth representatives.

The Forum included presentations by representatives of youth organizations, small group and plenary discussions, questions and commentary. With the exception of the small group discussions, all parts of the event were recorded for television and broadcast by Canada's Political Channel (CPAC) on November 28, 2003.

The Forum was launched on the evening of October 30 with welcoming remarks by co-chairs Dominique Anglade, Senior Manager at Nortel Networks, and Phillip Haid, Senior Account Director and Director of Business Development for Manifest Communications. Ms. Anglade urged participants to become engaged and to look for ways



Photo: Elections Canada

The Forum was co-chaired by Dominique Anglade, Senior Manager at Nortel Networks, and Phillip Haid, Senior Account Director at Manifest Communications.

to convince the greatest number of young Canadians to vote. Mr. Haid said he hoped that, with the support of all the participants, this event would “galvanize even more activity over the coming months and years.”

## Presentations

The Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, Jean-Pierre Kingsley, followed with his keynote address. He congratulated participants on their commitment to strengthening youth civic engagement in this country and said that he looked forward to hearing their ideas for ways to encourage youth to exercise their democratic rights. “The future of democracy belongs to young people,” Mr. Kingsley stated. “I hope you will see this National Forum not as an end in itself, but as a starting point for revitalizing Canada’s democratic process.” He added that concerted efforts must be made for both the next election and the longer term, but that Elections Canada could not address the problem single-handedly: “We need others to become involved as part of a shared effort: political parties, civil society organizations, business and the media.”

On October 31, a number of youth organizations made presentations about their activities to encourage youth involvement.

Paul Green, director of Blockheadz, described the activities of his organization’s Rush the Vote concert series. Through free musical events, Rush the Vote aims “to increase voter turnout and political awareness among Canadian youth (18–30) through art, music and education.” He provided a video presentation on Rush the Vote concerts in Ottawa and Toronto and told how they were effective in connecting with youth and explaining to them how government affects



At the National Forum on Youth Voting, Chief Electoral Officer of Canada Jean-Pierre Kingsley outlined the initiatives Elections Canada was taking to encourage electoral participation among young people. Mr. Kingsley also proposed the creation of a national committee or council to encourage voting by young Canadians.

young people, how the electoral process works and how youth can get engaged.

Julianna Torjek and Tamar Eylon told the participants about their work with the City of Vancouver’s Youth Outreach Team (YOT) as a part of the city’s Civic Youth Strategy (CYS). The CYS is a policy that was endorsed by Vancouver’s city council in 1995 to ensure that: youth have a place in the city; youth have a strong voice in decision making; youth are seen as a resource in and to the city; and that there be a strong support base for youth in the city. Tamar and Julianna talked about the role of poverty and inequality as factors that discourage electoral involvement and went on to describe how the YOT’s programs and initiatives are intended “to speak to young people’s sense of self, identity and community.” In their words: “low voter turnout ... can only be addressed by a coordinated and concerted effort to restore policies and programs that promote equality.”

Carle Bernier-Genest, President of the Forum jeunesse de l’île de Montréal,

described his organization’s activities to promote youth civic engagement and voting. These include: disseminating information during elections, promoting youth candidates, offering election simulation activities in schools and offering activities to promote and support citizen involvement via their Web site, training, workshops, guides and conferences. Mr. Bernier-Genest stressed the importance of “politicizing youth” in order to increase their voting rates. He encouraged greater citizenship education through lessons in civics and exploring the values of mutual co-operation and democratic institutions.

Kids Voting Canada founder, Taylor Gunn, gave the participants an overview of his organization’s Student Vote 2003 educational initiative during the recent Ontario provincial election. As well as providing youth election-education activities and opportunities to talk with candidates, Student Vote 2003 featured an election simulation module. Mr. Gunn explained that on election day, some 350,000 students

from 800 schools across Ontario voted in their schools for candidates in their local riding. The ballots were collected and tabulated and the results were presented live on national television.

Tom Axworthy, Executive Director of Historica Foundation, underlined the importance of civic engagement and education. He noted the need for public policies to engage youth and urged political parties to play a greater role in this effort. He described Historica’s YouthLinks initiative – a Web-based program linking 400 schools in Canada and around the world – to foster discussions on democracy and civic engagement.



The importance of youth civic engagement was stressed by Tom Axworthy, Executive Director of Historica Foundation, who urged political parties to become more involved in this activity.

Roger Gibbins, President of the Canada West Foundation, gave the luncheon address on October 31. He used the “canary in the mine shaft” analogy to explain what he saw as the factors underlining the recent decline in youth electoral participation. He said that “Canadian youth, through their lack of participation, are sending a message about the health of Canadian democratic politics.” He noted that the Canadian political





Paul Green (Director of Blockheadz) tells the National Forum on Youth Voting about his organization's Rush the Vote concert series to encourage voter turnout and political awareness among Canadian youth through musical events. Pictured also are Forum presenters (left to right) – Carle Bernier-Genest (President of the Forum jeunesse de l'île de Montréal), Tamar Eylon and Julianna Torjek (City of Vancouver's Civic Youth Strategy) – and the co-chairs of the event.

culture carries a strong and persistent message that elections don't count for much, that Parliament is irrelevant, and that the courts are now the primary policy-makers. He suggested that the lack of a competitive party system and distortions in the electoral system could also explain low rates of electoral participation. In his view, while efforts to encourage youth to participate are worthwhile, there is a need for a wider debate on ways to revitalize Canadian democracy.

### Group discussions

Over the two-day event, participants took part in two sets of small group discussions. Rapporteurs from each discussion group reported back to plenary sessions on proposals to address the decline in youth voting for both the next federal election and the longer term.

The following provides a summary of participants' proposals and suggestions. The ordering of the various points is not intended as an indication of the level of support within the Forum as a whole.

### Possible actions for Elections Canada and others to improve youth voter turnout at the next federal election

#### Improve access to the vote

- Bring the election to youth by engaging them where they are – youth groups; universities; sports organizations; coffee shops; concerts; Friendship Centres
- Polling stations: at youth centres; universities; cinemas
- Hire more youth as election day workers
- Explain and encourage greater use of the mail-in ballot and advance voting



Participants at the Forum also met in small groups to discuss what can be done to improve youth electoral participation on an ongoing basis.

- Use of information and communication technologies

#### Improve voter registration

- Simplify the identification requirements for election day registration
- Flyers that provide information on registration and elections (possibly slipped into shopping bags)
- Use of information and communication technologies

#### Elections Canada's advertising campaigns

- No guilt trips in advertising campaigns: be honest and straightforward; passionate not passive
- Advertising blitz during last two days of election
- Encourage youth to contact Elections Canada for more information: Web site or enquiries line
- Use youth-oriented newspapers and magazines to publish information
- Fund youth organizations to organize get-out-the-vote campaigns for young people
- Work with several advertising agencies to create a variety of concepts: encourage creativity and diversity
- Invite well-known personalities and role models to promote the vote

### Possible ongoing actions to encourage youth voter turnout

#### Civics education

- Start in lower grades
- More training for those who teach civics
- Work with the provincial ministries of education to improve civics curriculum



## Main Messages from Participants

In addition to the specific suggestions and proposals put forward, a number of broader lessons, for both election and inter-election periods, were drawn from the National Forum on Youth Voting.

1. “Come to us” – bring the election to where youth live, work, study; make voting accessible to youth – e.g. polling stations on university campuses. Must not neglect youth “on the street” or marginalized in other ways; must be mindful that not all youth are involved in post-secondary education.

2. “Respect the diversity of youth” – recognize that youth are not a homogeneous group and that what works for one group of youth may not work for another; bear in mind rural/urban differences and

technological barriers (e.g. lack of or limited access to the Internet).

3. “Speak to youth in their own language” – don’t be bureaucratic, or worse yet, condescending; use multiple media (including musical and other events) and spokespersons who have influence with youth, including leaders from their own organizations.

4. “Work with organizations close to youth” – e.g. Friendship Centres are a good way to reach Aboriginal young people, particularly those who live in urban areas.

5. “Don’t just talk to youth at election time” – promote elections on an ongoing basis – e.g. through civics education and activities sponsored by community groups.

- Elections Canada should provide election information and sample materials
- Stress the historical importance of the right to vote (reference Elections Canada’s *A History of the Vote in Canada*)
- Support election simulations to develop the “habit of participation” – e.g. Kids Voting Canada
- Involve local leaders, educators and politicians
- Personalize issues – make them real for students

### Research and policy

- Feasibility of e-voting
- Effects of lowering the voting age
- More research into the decline of youth engagement

### Make voting day special

- Consider declaring election day a national holiday
- Concerts following the close of polls

### Youth outreach

- Outreach between elections is important

- “Take it local” – school-based activities; engage local leaders (not just politicians); encourage local co-operation and involvement of youth on governing bodies of various organizations
- Work with spokespersons youth respect – e.g. musicians, athletes
- Promote discussions of relevant issues
- Take risks and be innovative
- Take advantage of successfully tested programs that connect with youth

### Greater use of technology

- Improve Elections Canada’s Web site
- Create more links between Elections Canada’s Web site and other relevant youth sites
- Text messages from Elections Canada to promote voting and registration
- Chat rooms to discuss election issues

### Advertising

- Advertise between elections
- Change the message: instead of talking about “duty” or “responsibility”, emphasize political weight of young people as a group – e.g. a “way of

taking power into your hands” and exerting influence

- Multimedia approach including new technologies – maximize the potential of Elections Canada’s Web site

### New national committee or council to promote youth voting

- Would need national leadership
- Should be an NGO at arm’s length from government
- Could be a good place to promote and “bring together” best practices and research
- Could coordinate youth voter education and youth outreach programs
- Greater coordination among existing organizations may be an alternative to the creation of a new body

### Aboriginal youth participation

- Have more polling stations situated on reserves
- Utilize Friendship Centres to disseminate information
- Utilize Aboriginal broadcast networks and publications to promote the vote

- Benefit from National Aboriginal Day, powwows and assembly meetings to reach a greater number of Aboriginal youth – e.g. information booths
- Link Elections Canada's Web site with Aboriginal Web sites
- Encourage Aboriginal youth to run as candidates and work as election officers
- Encourage and utilize connections between elders and youth
- Engage Aboriginal organizations to develop projects to get-out-the-vote
- Be sensitive to Aboriginal customs

## Roles of various actors

- Political parties must make a greater effort to reach out to young voters: use youth caucuses as outreach tools; allocate part of the annual public funding they will receive as a result of Bill C-24 to fund youth education activities
- Parliament should allocate time to debate youth issues
- Leadership debates should address youth issues
- Encourage town hall meetings with candidates that target a younger audience
- Foundations and businesses should play a greater role

## Other major issues

- Lack of trust in political leaders
- Perception that votes are wasted under current electoral system
- Potential of direct democracy measures to encourage engagement

In his closing remarks, the Chief Electoral Officer stressed that the participation of everyone in this effort counts. Mr. Kingsley noted the need to reach out to youth in their milieu and by their own means at all

times: before, during and after an election. He indicated that the establishment of a national committee or council would be considered for the longer term. He assured the audience that Elections Canada would pursue participants' proposals and suggestions, and that he would share widely the messages he had heard, including with Parliament. ❌



Leonard Marchand:  
The First Status Indian  
Elected to  
Canada's Parliament  
(June 2000)

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# Leonard Marchand

## The First Status Indian Elected to Canada's Parliament

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In 1968, Leonard Marchand became the first Status Indian to be elected to Canada's House of Commons, as Liberal member for the British Columbia riding of Kamloops–Cariboo.

At that time, Canadians were not used to seeing Aboriginal politicians on the campaign trail or serving at any level of government. Until 1960, Status Indians could not even vote in a federal election unless they first gave up their right to be registered under the *Indian Act*, their treaty rights and their statutory right to property tax exemption. The 34-year-old Marchand defeated a prominent Conservative who had held the seat in Parliament for 23 years. Marchand would later become the first Aboriginal Canadian to serve in the federal cabinet, and subsequently, in 1984, he was appointed to Canada's Senate.



*Leonard Marchand is pictured with his wife Donna, son Leonard Stephen Jr. and daughter Lori Anne when he was first sworn in as a member of Parliament in July 1968.*



## Marchand's early years

Leonard Marchand was born in Vernon, British Columbia, in 1933. A member of the Okanagan Indian Band, his first education was at the Okanagan Indian Day School at Six-Mile Creek, a one-room schoolhouse with only 25 students, where he completed grades one through eight. Subsequently, he became the first Status Indian to attend and graduate from the public high school in Vernon. "The Indian Agent of the day enrolled me in a dead-end vocational agricultural program," says Marchand, "but along the way they found I may have a few brains." When local education officials urged him to go further, he took an extra year and completed his academic subjects. When Marchand later attended the University of British Columbia, only two or three other Aboriginal students were enrolled there. Marchand graduated in 1959 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. He married Donna Isabelle Parr of North Bay, Ontario, in 1960 and they have two children, Lori Anne and Leonard Stephen Jr. Marchand would finish one more degree in 1964: a Masters in Forestry, at the University of Idaho. His specialty was range management and, during the first half of the 1960s, he was employed as an agricultural research scientist at the Kamloops Research Station.

## His first Ottawa experience

Leonard Marchand was active in the National Indian Brotherhood. Some of its members encouraged him to go to Ottawa, to promote their views to the politicians. This goal is largely what led Marchand to travel to Ottawa, where he became the first political assistant of Aboriginal heritage to work in the office of a federal cabinet minister. During the late 1960s, one of the two ministers from British Columbia he would

### TREATY RIGHTS PREFERRED OVER RIGHT TO VOTE

The franchise barrier for Status Indians was removed very late in Canada's history. It was not until 1960 that Parliament passed a new *Canada Elections Act*, which confirmed the right to vote, without conditions, of all adult Aboriginal Canadians. Women, the other large group of previously disenfranchised Canadians, had received the right to vote forty years earlier.

Status Indians in most parts of Canada had the right to vote from Confederation on – but only if they gave up their treaty rights and Indian status through a process defined in the *Indian Act* and known as "enfranchisement". Understandably, very few were willing to do this. Métis people were not excluded from voting; few were covered by treaties, so there were no special rights or other basis on which to justify disqualifying them. Inuit were not excluded either, except from 1934 to 1950. Most were geographically isolated well into the twentieth century, so in the absence of special efforts to enable them to vote, they had no means to exercise the franchise.

Aboriginal peoples had well-established social groupings and elaborate systems of government long before their first contacts with Europeans. Many, therefore, looked unfavourably on nineteenth-century proposals for enfranchisement for at least two reasons: first, it would mean an end to their recognition as distinct nations or peoples – as signified by their treaties with France, Great Britain and later Canada – and the beginning of assimilation into non-Aboriginal society.

Second, voting in Canadian elections would mean participating in a system of government that was quite alien to the traditions, conventions and practices of governance of many Aboriginal peoples. Further, electoral participation would have been essentially redundant – Aboriginal Canadians already had their own systems for choosing leaders and governing themselves.

In short, Aboriginal people were unenthusiastic about having the right to vote, if it meant giving up their individual and group identity. Thus, until the government of Canada extended the vote to Status Indians unconditionally, there is little evidence that Aboriginal people wanted it or sought it.

### WAR RECORD BROUGHT RECOGNITION

A great many Aboriginal people served with distinction in the Canadian forces during the Second World War, and this was among the factors leading many Canadians to realize that full rights of citizenship for all Aboriginal people were overdue. A parliamentary committee recommended in 1948 that Aboriginal Canadians be given the right to vote.

Finally, on March 10, 1960, after a debate marked by virtually unanimous support, the House of Commons gave Status Indians the vote without requiring them to give up any rights in exchange. Two years earlier, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker had appointed James Gladstone to the Senate, where he was the first member of Aboriginal origin.

## In Parliament

"I was treated well as a parliamentarian, but I took a few cheap shots from my own people, which really hurt," recalls Marchand. For his historic, maiden speech in the Commons, he was given the honour of seconding the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. He became Parliamentary Secretary to the then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Jean Chrétien. Marchand remembers them being invited for lunch with Trudeau at 24 Sussex Drive, where he helped convince Prime Minister

Trudeau to commence First Nations land claims negotiations. "If I weren't in Parliament, I could not have done that," says Marchand. One of his chief satisfactions was helping to devise federal policies that recognized the rights of Status Indians to negotiate compensation for loss of Aboriginal rights.

Marchand was twice re-elected, in 1972 and 1974. Of the British Columbia Liberals first elected in 1968, he was the only one to retain his seat at the 1974 election. In 1976,

Trudeau appointed Marchand to his cabinet as Minister of State (Small Business). As the first Aboriginal Canadian to attain that level, Marchand scoffed at the suggestion it was his heritage that got him the post. "If Mr. Trudeau had wanted to make me a token, he would have done it a long time ago," the newly named Minister told an interviewer.

When Joe Clark and his Progressive Conservatives came to power in 1979,



They wanted somebody new and young to contest the Kamloops–Cariboo riding.



*Leonard Marchand and Pierre Trudeau addressed the huge crowd at a Liberal rally on June 3, 1968, when the Prime Minister visited Kamloops, British Columbia, to assist Marchand's first election campaign.*

work for was Arthur Laing, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

When Pierre Trudeau announced to the House of Commons that he was launching the 1968 election, Marchand was watching from the gallery of the Chamber. He thought that this election would bring an end to his working days in the capital; he planned to go home and perhaps pursue a career in scientific research. But, he says, Liberal friends began to phone him and send telegrams. They wanted somebody new and young to contest the Kamloops–Cariboo riding. They wanted Leonard Marchand.

## The 1968 election

"Who, me? I can't beat Davie Fulton," was Marchand's first thought. Fulton, who had held the riding for over two decades, was a former Minister of Justice in the Diefenbaker cabinet and had sought the leadership of the Conservative Party himself. But Marchand

went to Kamloops and, at a coffee party, he was amazed to find almost 300 people looking for a new candidate. "It was incredible, the number of people in that group who wanted me to run."

Marchand decided to seek the Liberal nomination. There were two other prominent candidates, but they both backed out and Marchand won by acclamation. And then on June 3, 1968, "Trudeaumania" hit town. Nine thousand people, almost one-third of Kamloops' residents, turned out to see and hear Pierre Trudeau. Marchand won the riding by more than 3 000 votes. He thinks he might have been elected to Parliament on his own, but Trudeau's visit certainly helped. Marchand remembers John Diefenbaker expressing surprise that he was elected so soon after Status Indians obtained the right to vote.

Marchand was defeated. He blames an anti-Trudeau trend, his own personal stand on gun control and the fact that he had voted in favour of abolishing capital punishment. Marchand decided not to run again in the 1980 election. He says his wife didn't want him to contest the seat again, and he had the responsibility of teenage children. For five years, Marchand then became the administrator for the Nicola Valley Indian bands.

## Senator Marchand

Another appointment came from Prime Minister Trudeau in June of 1984: this time, to the Senate of Canada. Marchand became the fifth Aboriginal person in Canada's history to sit in the red chamber. Pierre Trudeau had invited him to take the position just the day before announcing his appointment, and in the conversation said, "Sorry for taking so long." Marchand was instrumental in the establishment of the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and served as its Chairman. He says his most important Senate work for Aboriginal Canadians was in producing a report on Aboriginal veterans which recommended an Aboriginal Veterans Scholarship Trust for students. Several hundred students have benefited from it so far. Many of his years in the Senate were on the opposition side, and Marchand says that left him very frustrated with what he could accomplish.

## Aboriginal electoral reform

While he was a Senator, the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party

Financing asked Marchand to lead a series of preliminary consultations with Aboriginal peoples on the concept of Aboriginal electoral districts. He consulted with national and regional leaders and found they enthusiastically favoured the idea. Senator Marchand then chaired the Committee for Aboriginal Electoral Reform, composed of three sitting members of Parliament and one former member. The committee's consultations were based on the proposal that Aboriginal constituencies would be contained within provincial boundaries, but they would geographically overlay other electoral districts within a province or even cover an entire



Two years ago, at the age of 64, Marchand resigned from the Senate.

province. Aboriginal constituencies would thus form part of a province's total number of seats, rather than forming a separate group. Aboriginal electors would have the choice of registering as Aboriginal voters or on the regular list of electors. Among Aboriginal leaders, the committee found general support for its proposal, including a majority view that this would not detract from, but rather complement, the objective of self-government and other Aboriginal political objectives.

The Royal Commission recommended that the *Canada Elections Act* provide for the creation of Aboriginal constituencies and that the name of each one be in an Aboriginal language. As well, to make the concept a reality, it stated that Aboriginal electors should have the right to register on an Aboriginal voters list in their province. Parliament did not enact those 1991 recommendations and Marchand remains "terribly disappointed."

## Retirement

Two years ago, at the age of 64, Marchand resigned from the Senate. By law, he could have served for another decade but, after 28 years of flying between British Columbia and Ottawa, he was tired of the long journeys. He also didn't want to stay on in the Senate if he could not attend regularly.

When Senator Marchand retired, his colleagues in the upper chamber had warm words of praise for him and his work. Senator Alasdair Graham, Leader of the Government in the Senate, stated, "Through his presence over three decades on the national stage, he has done what he set out to do. He has brought the voice of Canada's First Nations to centre stage." Fellow British Columbia Senator, Gerry St. Germain, added, "Senator Marchand had a dual responsibility, not only to represent the people of Kamloops and that area but also Aboriginal Canadians from across Canada. Honourable senators, Senator Marchand did so with great dignity, pride and humour."

Marchand remains an Honorary Chief of the Okanagans and in recent years has raised funds toward the building of a war memorial for the thousands of Aboriginal Canadians who served and died for their country. He believes that their voluntary participation rate in World Wars I and II was greater than that of any other group in Canada. Marchand hopes that some day a memorial to them will stand in a park located near Canada's national cenotaph in Ottawa.

Last year, Leonard Marchand was awarded the Order of Canada, and also received an honorary doctorate from the University College of the Cariboo. His autobiography (written with Matt Hughes) will soon be published by Caitlin Press in Prince George, British Columbia. ✕