

SENATE REFORM: A STEP TOWARDS BECOMING A MORE DEMOCRATIC NATION

On November 22, 2004 Alberta had an election to nominate their choice of candidates to fill their three vacant Senate positions. The successful candidates were Betty Unger, Bert Brown, and Cliff Breitkreuz, all of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party.

In spite of Alberta's efforts to fill their vacant Senate seats, the Prime Minister has been reluctant to acknowledge the results of the election by appointing them to the Senate. The Prime minister has stated in the House of Commons during question period, "I have long been an advocate of Senate reform. However, I do not believe that doing Senate reform piecemeal would really bring us the desired result." The problem lies in the fact that the Prime Minister has not taken any significant steps toward that end, and in a recent television interview he stated that it was not a priority of his at this time. This is another instance of the Prime Minister stating the right things but taking no action.

The Prime Minister stated in the House, "The way to deal with western alienation, or any kind of alienation, is to deal with the fundamental issues that people in western Canada want to see us address." So why isn't the Prime

Minister taking steps to appoint elected Senators?

At the present time, there are fifteen vacancies in the Senate. One in Nova Scotia, one in New Brunswick, one in Prince Edward Island, four in Quebec, two in Ontario, one in Manitoba, one in Saskatchewan, three in Alberta, and one in British Columbia. Saskatchewan will have another vacancy in January of 2005 when Senator Herbert Sparrow of Prince Albert retires meaning that two of its Senate positions will be open.

These sixteen vacancies account for just over 15% of the Senate, leading many to think that this may be an opportune time to appoint provincially elected Senators, especially when the Prime Minister can as a matter of practice appoint elected Senators without a constitutional amendment.

So why isn't the Prime Minister taking steps to appoint elected Senators?

Do you favour the election of Senators by province now and the immediate appointment of such Senators by the Prime Minister? Yes _____ No _____

Do you favour holding an election for your Senators in Saskatchewan? Yes _____ No _____

Response and comments attached to questions raised with respect to agriculture. Yes _____ No _____

Please note any brief comments or suggestions below:
