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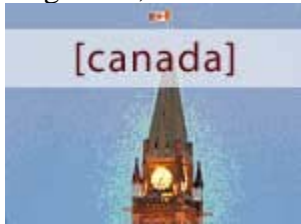
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Angus Reid Global Monitor : Polls & Research

Canadians Back Apology to Aboriginal Peoples

August 20, 2008



(Angus Reid Global Monitor) - Many adults in Canada are satisfied with their federal government's decision to apologize to the country's Aboriginal peoples, according to a poll by Angus Reid Strategies. 67 per cent of respondents agree with the apology issued by Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, several residential schools for Aboriginal children operated in Canada under various religious denominations, and with funding from the Canadian government. Tens of thousands of children were taken from their families in an attempt to assimilate Canada's Aboriginal population into the non-native culture. The residential schools ultimately became infamous because physical and sexual abuse was widespread.

The Canadian government has established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to look into the history of the country's residential schools. The TRC—which is a component of the \$2.2 billion U.S. Residential Schools Settlement Agreement—will hear testimony from victims of physical and sexual abuse.

On Jun. 11 in the House of Commons, Harper declared: "Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools. The treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history. Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country. The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian residential schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on aboriginal culture, heritage and language."

Canadian Assembly of First Nations (AFN) national chief Phil Fontaine said the instance "testifies nothing less than the accomplishment of the impossible," adding, "Never again will this House consider us the Indian problem just for being who we are. We heard the government of Canada take full responsibility for this dreadful chapter in our shared history. We heard the prime minister declare that this will never happen again. Finally, we heard Canada say it is sorry."

Polling Data

As you may know, Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper apologized last month to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system. Do you agree or disagree with the prime minister's apology?

Agree 67%

Disagree 17%

Not sure 16%

Source: Angus Reid Strategies

Methodology: Online interviews with 1,005 Canadian adults, conducted on Jul. 30 and Jul. 31, 2008.

Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.

 [Complete Poll \(PDF\)](#)

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