

VOLUME 4

Perspectives and Realities

Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

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A Note About Sources

Among the sources referred to in this report, readers will find mention of testimony given at the Commission's public hearings; briefs and submissions to the Commission; submissions from groups and organizations funded through the Intervener Participation Program; research studies conducted under the auspices of the Commission's research program; reports on the national round tables on Aboriginal issues organized by the Commission; and commentaries, special reports and research studies published by the Commission during its mandate. After the Commission completes its work, this information will be available in various forms from a number of sources.

This report, the published commentaries and special reports, published research studies, round table reports, and other publications released during the Commission's mandate will be available in Canada through local booksellers or by mail from

Canada Communication Group — Publishing
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0S9

A CD-ROM will be published following this report. It will contain the report, transcripts of the Commission's hearings and round tables, overviews of the four rounds of hearings, previously published research studies, the round table reports, and the Commission's special reports and commentaries, together with a resource guide for educators. The CD-

ROM will be available in libraries across the country through the government's depository services program and for purchase from

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Briefs and submissions to the Commission, as well as research studies not published in book or CD-ROM form, will be housed in the National Archives of Canada after the Commission completes its work.

A Note About Terminology

The Commission uses the term Aboriginal people to refer to the indigenous inhabitants of Canada when we want to refer in a general manner to Inuit and to First Nations and Métis people, without regard to their separate origins and identities.

The term Aboriginal peoples refers to organic political and cultural entities that stem historically from the original peoples of North America, not to collections of individuals united by so-called 'racial' characteristics. The term includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada (see section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982).

Aboriginal people (in the singular) means the individuals belonging to the political and cultural entities known as Aboriginal peoples.

The term Aboriginal nations overlaps with the term Aboriginal peoples but also has a more specific usage. The Commission's use of the term nation is discussed in some detail in Volume 2, Chapter 3, where it is defined as a sizeable body of Aboriginal people with a shared sense of national identity that constitutes the predominant population in a certain territory or collection of territories.

The Commission distinguishes between local communities and nations. We use terms such as a First Nation community and a Métis community to refer to a relatively small group of Aboriginal people residing in a single locality and forming part of a larger Aboriginal nation or people. Despite the name, a First Nation community would not normally constitute an Aboriginal nation in the sense just defined. Rather, most (but not all) Aboriginal nations are composed of a number of communities.

Our use of the term Métis is consistent with our conception of Aboriginal peoples as described above. We refer to Métis as distinct Aboriginal peoples whose early ancestors were of mixed heritage (First Nations, or Inuit in the case of the Labrador Métis, and European) and who associate themselves with a culture that is distinctly Métis. The more specific term Métis Nation is used to refer to Métis people who identify themselves as a nation with historical roots in the Canadian west. Our use of the terms Métis and Métis Nation is discussed in some detail in Chapter 5 of this volume.

Following accepted practice and as a general rule, the term Inuit replaces the term Eskimo. As well, the term First Nation replaces the term Indian. However, where the subject under discussion is a specific historical or contemporary nation, we use the name of that nation (for example, Mi'kmaq, Dene, Mohawk). Often more than one spelling is considered acceptable for these nations. We try to use the name preferred by particular nations or communities, many of which now use their traditional names. Where necessary, we add the more familiar or generic name in parentheses — for example, Siksika (Blackfoot).

Terms such as Eskimo and Indian continue to be used in at least three contexts:

1. where such terms are used in quotations from other sources;
2. where Indian or Eskimo is the term used in legislation or policy and hence in discussions concerning such legislation or policy (for example, the Indian Act; the Eskimo Loan Fund); and
3. where the term continues to be used to describe different categories of persons in statistical tables and related discussions, usually involving data from Statistics Canada or the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (for example, status Indians, registered Indians).