

Conservative candidate Gerry Labelle exchanges a look with incumbent Liberal Sudbury MP Diane Marleau.



"Liberals have taken the Sudbury riding for granted for too long."

Glenn Thibeault NDP candidate for Sudbury MP

Incumbent Diane Marleau attacked in debate

BY BILL BRADLEY

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Cracks are appearing in the supposed safe Liberal riding of Sudbury.

Incumbent Liberal Diane Marleau received only lukewarm applause and many jeers from the packed public gallery at Tom Davies Square during the Chamber of Commerce federal election debate Monday night.

On the other hand, NDP candidate Glenn Thibeault scored highest on the applause meter for stressing he will stand up for Sudbury riding residents.

Conservative candidate Gerry Labelle, Green Party candidate Gord Harris, and to a lesser extent First Nations Peoples Party candidate Will Morin, also received strong kudos for their speeches and attacks on the policies of other candidates.

By contrast, Marleau only received more applause than independent candidate David Popescu, who said such outrageous things as "people who do not put their faith in God deserve to be exterminated."

Marleau said her party was middle-of-the-road, where most Canadians are comfortable. She emphasized her experience as a former cabinet minister and the many projects she had been involved in over the years, including the Centre

for Excellence in Mining Innovation.

"We were close to an announcement on the Centre For Excellence in Mining Innovation (CEMI) in 2005 when our government fell," said Marleau.

Labelle countered that he worked on the CEMI file as a consultant and that the centre did not have its final business plan in place until 2007. This meant Marleau was nowhere near making an announcement in 2005. "FedNor Minister Tony Clement said the request was more than his budget could handle at the time. I will, if elected, take the project back to him and see if we can make it happen," said Labelle.

Thibeault denounced Marleau for not showing up for 18 votes in the House of Commons. "I plan on showing up and speaking up for CEMI. Liberals have taken the Sudbury riding for granted for too long," he said.

Marleau noted that Gerry Labelle has failed to show up for public debates such as the one at the university earlier in the day. "Why did you not come to the debate at the Northern School of Medicine? We waited for you to show up."

Labelle shot back that he had a previous engagement and had never promised he would participate.

Marleau's office has been suggesting Labelle is being muzzled by the

Conservative party for earlier critical remarks he made of recent Conservative budget cuts to arts groups.

Thibeault, responding to a question on mining resource revenue sharing, said the North needs to tap into this source of funds.

"We need our fair share, considering the city's take of mining revenue taxes has decreased by 4.5 per cent recently while that of the federal government and province has increased greatly," he said. "This city's infrastructure is crumbling."

Marleau said she was concerned that, in an economic downturn, the city might lose out if the funding formula was tied to company profits. "We are all well aware the mining booms can be followed by busts," she said.

Harris argued that Sudbury ore still is richer than the tar sands of Alberta, though that will change shortly and that the city deserved a better deal on infrastructure.

"Sudbury is the greatest natural resource engine in Canada. We need a green centre of excellence along with the mining centre," he said.

Morin said his party was all for sharing the wealth, but so far his people had not benefited much from the country's immense resource wealth.

He said when the first white settlers arrived in this area, it was the sharing values of aboriginal peoples that helped the new immigrants survive the harsh environment. "Our values are that no one is to be left out. But historically speaking, it is the aboriginal people who find themselves now left out," said Morin.

The public debates continue for Nickel Belt on Wednesday, Oct. 1 at Centennial Arena in Hanmer starting at 7 p.m. Another debate takes place at the Social Planning Council, Thursday Oct. 8.

Sudbury riding contact information:

- Diane Marleau can be reached at 109 Durham St., 673-6141 or www.dianemarleau.com.
- Glenn Thibeault's office is at 768 Barrydowne Rd., www.glennthibeault.ca, 669-1110.
- Gord Harris's office is at 149 Lorne St., 222-6974, we2greens@persona.ca.
- Gerry Labelle's office is at 62 Froot Rd., 222-2555, www.ElectGerry.ca.
- Will Morin's campaign office can be reached at 561-8004 and is located on Elm Street in the aboriginal centre, west of Durham Street.



MORIN



POPESCU



HARRIS