

Liberals win majority Government

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After 10 years in office Stephen Harper's Conservative government was swept from power. The federal Liberal Party led by Justin Trudeau won 185 seats and elected Members of Parliament in every province including Alberta. To win a majority you needed 170 seats. The Conservatives won 98 seats, the NDP 44. The Bloc won 10 seats in Quebec. Green Party Leader Elizabeth May was re-elected in her British Columbia seat.

The Liberals were very strong in the urban areas and where there was a multicultural/ethnic population winning many seats in Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal. The Liberals swept the Maritime Provinces winning every riding. The Conservatives won the majority of rural ridings and kept their base in Alberta and the other Western provinces.



In terms of popular vote the Liberals earned 39.5%. The Conservative had 31.9%, NDP 19.7%, the Bloc 4.7% and the Greens 3.5%. The total voter turnout was 68.5% up from the 61.1% in the 2011 election.

The desire to defeat Stephen Harper was very strong and resulted in strategic voting to defeat the Conservatives which greatly assisted the Liberals and drew support away from the NDP and Greens. The Conservatives were hoping that the split in the opposition vote would benefit them as it did in the 2011 Election and see them win re-election. However, this time the divide the opposition strategy did not work

A total of 88 women were elected across Canada. This number is up from the 76 who were elected to Parliament in the 2011 election. In total, the proportion of women MPs will be 26 per cent. Green Party Leader Elizabeth May was re-elected.

The Liberals had 50 women elected as MPs. The Conservatives elected 17 women, the NDP elected 18 and the Bloc elected 2 women. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has said he plans to appoint women to half of his Cabinet.

The House of Commons will also have 10 indigenous members of Parliament, three more than after the 2011 election. The Liberals elected eight indigenous MPs, and the NDP elected two.

Most Canadians were tired of Harper's authoritarian ways and divisive politics. As a long time Liberal I am happy that Justin won the election. I spent the night celebrating the local Liberal victories and the Red Wave that swept across Canada.

Justin's Trudeau's "sunny ways" approach to politics is a breath of fresh air compared to Stephen

Harper's doom and gloom tactics. Harper targeted Muslims and tried to distract Canadians with fear tactics about ISIS and the niqab ban, and "terrorism." Harper was also dogged by the Duffy scandal and allegations of election fraud.

Harper's Conservatives also took a very hard line on refugees, on parental sponsorship and toughen policy on Immigration and Citizenship. Harper also took a hard line on a number of foreign policy issues and gave unquestioned support for Israel. Harper learned the hard way that these policies are not the Canadian way.

I have met Justin Trudeau a few times and shared a few beers with him at the Montreal Federal Liberal Leadership convention. He is very approachable and withstood pressure to have him not speak to a Muslim youth convention. He is an excellent speaker but lacks some of the leadership skills, intellectual rigour and charisma of his father Pierre Elliot Trudeau, the late great Prime Minister of Canada and a world renown and respected political leader. No doubt he will grow into the job.

Justin Trudeau is not perfect. His views on Boycott Divest and Sanction against Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians need to be brought in line with the international consensus. His support for Bill C-51 was unfortunate but he has promised to fix the bill. I also do not like his support for the XL Pipeline to send Tar Sand oil, Alberta water and jobs to the US. There are better options in my opinion.

Justin Trudeau shone at the debate on foreign policy and has already taken steps to distance himself and Canada from Harper's militarism. Trudeau has told US President Obama that he intends to withdraw Canada's fighter aircraft from the campaigns in Iraq and Syria. This signals a return to Canada's past policy of constructive engagement and peace keeping. Under Harper Canada lost the election to seat on the Security Council at the United Nations as a reaction to his harsh foreign policy stands.

In my opinion it is a much brighter day under Justin Trudeau then under Stephen Harper. Justin will have his work cut out for him to undo the damage that the Harper Conservatives have done.

Justin spent his first morning as Prime Minister elect greeting surprised commuters boarding subway trains in Montreal. He is off to a good start. Let us hope that Justin can repair the damage Harper has done to Canada's international reputation and to Canadian society.

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