

Pundits post-mortem election

Former NDP MLA for North Van 'totally shocked' by result

BY JANE SEYD, NORTH SHORE NEWS MAY 19, 2013

PUNDITS and pollsters from both sides of the political spectrum were wiping the proverbial egg off their faces in the wake of Tuesday's unexpected Liberal victory.

"I was totally shocked," said David Schreck, a commentator, NDP supporter and one of only two people to ever win an NDP seat on the North Shore. Prior to Tuesday night, Schreck said he thought the only thing hanging in the balance was the size of the NDP victory.

How a one-time 20-point lead predicted by pollsters turned into a complete reversal on election night is something everyone is wondering, said Schreck.

"I bet Angus Reid and Ipsos would like the answer to that question," he said.

Schreck said there was a lot that went wrong for the NDP.

"The Liberals had a very tightly targeted message aimed at their supporters," he said, while the NDP campaign was overly cautious and didn't reinforce their message about why change was needed.

"It presumed it was in the bag," said Schreck. "It wasn't in the bag."

Greg Lyle, a political strategist, Liberal supporter and pollster for Innovative Research, said several factors likely contributed to the polls being wrong. A lot of polls are done online, which tends to favour certain types of responses, he said. Not all polls take into account that certain demographic groups are much more likely to vote than others, he said.

Voters may have also simply changed their minds in the ballot box, he said. "People are thinking about a large number of things when they answer a poll . . . when they are in the ballot box, they are thinking about what's top of mind." For many voters, he said, that was the economy.

Lyle added the result boiled down to "the wrong leader and a bad campaign on the part of the NDP, and the right leader and a good campaign on the B.C. Liberals' part."

"Adrian Dix is the poster boy for everything the Liberals say was wrong with the NDP in the 1990s," said Lyle. "As a symbol he worked for the Liberals and not the NDP."

Voter turnout on the North Shore ranged from a low of 52 per cent of registered voters in West Vancouver Sea to Sky to a high of 60 per cent in the most hotly-contested riding, North Vancouver-Lonsdale. North Vancouver-Seymour saw a turnout of 55 per cent while 54 per cent of voters cast ballots in West Vancouver-Capilano.

Provincially, voter turnout was 52 per cent of registered voters and 49 per cent of eligible voters.

Those numbers are expected to be higher E and the ballots cast in district offices and in other districts are counted, said Don Main of Elections B.C.

Schreck said he's not convinced a higher turnout would have boosted the NDP's numbers. "Everybody likes to pretend if more voters turn out they would have voted for their party," he said. But it's just as likely the numbers would be split, he added.

Schreck said he also doesn't buy the Green Party-as-spoilers argument.

"Some New Democrats like to pretend if the Greens weren't there a substantial portion of the vote would go to the NDP," he said. Schreck said it's equally likely those voters would just stay home on election day.

Regardless, "There's no question Christy Clark has a mandate to govern," he added. "We'll see how she uses that mandate."

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