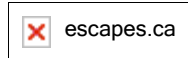


Voters feared NDP, left-wing gov't in charge of the economy: Pollster

BY MICHAEL SMYTH, THE PROVINCE JUNE 13, 2013



Michael Smyth

Photograph by: Ginger Sedlarova, The Province

If there was one thing that gave New Democrats confidence that they would win last month's election, it was the public's apparent desire for change in Victoria.

Poll after pre-election poll showed people in an ornery mood, with most voters agreeing with the statement that it was "time for a change of government."

We all know now how the story ended. Why did voters defy the pollsters and pundits and re-elect the Liberals?

Pollster Greg Lyle says his postelection surveys show voters did indeed want change — but didn't want it badly enough to take a chance on Adrian Dix and the NDP.

In a new survey, Lyle's Innovative Research Group concluded "time-for-a-change" voters actually formed the foundation of the Liberals' upset victory.

"The Liberals won just over half of this group (52 per cent) and they provided 25 per cent of the Liberal votes on election day," the pollster concluded.

Why did voters who wanted change stick with the governing party? Because they "were more afraid of the NDP than the Liberals," the [survey](#) said.

Asked to list the "most important factor" in deciding their vote, Liberal voters answered in this order: "Against NDP" (32 per cent) and "the economy" (26 per cent).

Close to half of all voters agreed with the statement: "The NDP just can't be trusted to run B.C.'s economy."

You don't have to tell defeated NDP MLA Harry Lali that voters turned against his party because they were worried about the economy.

He said he heard it on doorsteps in the Fraser-Nicola riding every day of the campaign, especially after Dix came out against the proposed twinning of the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

"Kinder Morgan was the killer, especially for me," Lali told me Wednesday. "There's a couple of hundred kilometres of that pipeline that actually goes through my constituency and people were looking forward to construction jobs.

"What it basically said to blue-collar workers is: 'The NDP is against my job.' "

So is Dix to blame for the mess? After all, it was his pipeline flip-flop that did the damage.

"I'm not going to point fingers," Lali said, though the post-election poll said 40 per cent of NDP voters want a new leader, compared with just 30 per cent who think Dix should stay. (The other 30 per cent had no opinion.)

Who should replace Dix? The survey placed NDP MLA Mike Farnworth as the top choice, followed closely by Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson.

The results are burning along the NDP grapevine, reinforcing my personal belief that another desire for change has taken hold — and that Dix won't last through the fall.

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