

[National Post](#)

[Canada.com Network](#)

Browse the Canada.com Network 

[Shop](#) | [Find a Career](#) | [Find a Car](#) | [Find a Home](#)

[Newsletter](#)

- [Log in](#)
- [Register today](#)
- [Email](#) 

[More Blogs](#) | [National Post Home](#) | [Financial Post Home](#) | [News](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Arts](#) | [Life](#) | [Sports](#) | [Multimedia](#) | [Your Post](#)

[Main](#) | [About](#) | [Contact Editor](#) | [Subscribe RSS](#)

Kelly McParland: Dion slips and slides in a field of disbelief

Posted: September 29, 2008, 8:30 AM by Kelly McParland

[Full Comment](#), [Kelly McParland](#), [canadian election](#)



The Liberal party has thrown just about everything it could think of at Stephen Harper in the past three weeks, with precious little to show for it.

It's tried the Green Shift, gambling that Canadians were willing to bet the economy on an untried and hard-to-explain theory for climate improvement.

It's tried the scary routine, with Stephane Dion intoning: "We need to stop this man," as if the Prime Minister was a mutant gene that had somehow escaped a top secret laboratory and was rampaging across the land.

It's tried blaming him for ruining the economy, and warning that no one but Liberals could fix it.

It's attacked him as mean, heartless and narrow-minded. He's taken an axe to arts funding; he's cancelled the Courth Challenges program; he doesn't care about women and has no platform for protecting their rights.

It's gone after Tory candidates: they make cruel jokes about listeriosis; they blame immigrants for crime; they do whatever the Prime Minister tells them to do because he's power hungry and closed to advice and wants to run everything himself.

It's run attack ads; it's reminded Canadians that Liberals defeated the deficit; it's raised the ghost of Chuck Cadman and in a few days it will have Julie Couillard's tell-all book to wave at Canadians as evidence of Conservative incompetence and cover-ups. It's done just about everything a party could be expected to do, and what's the result?

Bad polls, that's what. Everywhere you look, bad polls.

The latest [Ipsos Reid poll](#) for Canwest news shows the party 16 points back of the Tories, struggling to hold onto second place against the NDP.

A [poll in the Globe and Mail](#) -- which calls every Canadian voter every 36 minutes to ask if they've changed their mind since the last call, even just a little -- suggests the Liberals will lose all 45 ridings the paper has been tracking.

An [Angus Reid survey](#) shows the Tories at 40% support, the Liberals at 21% tied -- yes TIED -- with the NDP.

Only Nik Nanos offers any comfort at all, suggesting Mr. Harper's cutting remarks about subsidized gala-lovers aren't playing well in Quebec. Still, unnamed Liberal insiders continue to blab disloyally to reporters about Mr. Dion's failings and the need to cut off the money supply before he blows it all on a losing cause, the kind of treason that used to be a Tory hallmark but has increasingly been co-opted by the Liberals. (It used to be the Liberals only stole popular policies and the occasional MP; now they lift the worst practices of the party they once dominated).

No doubt there will be extensive inquiries within the party if the campaign continues along this path and the Liberals find themselves exiled to another spell in opposition. But here's a guess about the root of the problem: Canadians have stopped believing. They don't believe the Green Shift will work. They don't believe Mr. Dion knows how to halt climate change any more than Mr. Harper does. They don't believe Mr. Harper is scary, that he has a secret agenda to sell the country to the oil industry or that it's his fault that the U.S. housing market collapsed and Canada is feeling the effects. They don't believe it's a betrayal of all that's right and just to have a surplus of \$2 billion instead of \$11 billion; they don't think reducing the GST is evil; they don't believe the government can afford to spend all the money Mr. Dion is proposing without taxpayers having to foot the bill somehow.

They don't believe cutting \$45 million out of a \$3 billion culture budget is all that outrageous. And they don't think Conservative candidates are any worse than Liberal candidates: Gerry Ritz's thoughtless jokes about listeriosis deaths were tasteless; Lesley Hughes' belief that Jews were warned in advance to flee the World Trade Centre is just plain nutty.

It's no surprise that Mr. Dion can't get any traction. Mr. Harper may not be warm and cozy, but he's grounded in reality. Mr. Dion seems to live in a world of his own imagining. Maybe there was a time when we could afford that. These days, things seem just a bit too precarious.

 [BOOKMARK](#)    [Comments \(45\)](#)  [Send to a friend](#)  [Permalink](#)

45 Comments

You must be logged in to post a comment

[Click here to post a comment](#)

by Catherine48 You are really missing the point.
Sep 29 2008
9:00 AM

Harper won the 2006 election with 36% of the vote. During this campaign he has not risen more than a few points above that. This is after spending millions on six waves of anti-Dion attack ads, flooding homes with mountains of flyers attacking Dion, running a whole website devoted to attacking Dion, showing him being shot at, birds sh*tting on him, ridiculing his private life, his pets, etc., flooding the air waves with attack-Dion ads pre-election, etc. Since the writ dropped, Harper has tried to remake his own image as a caring and balanced individual. And all this has only marginally boosted his ratings. There is the real story.

by cardinals
Sep 29 2008
9:20 AM

Will someone buy Harper a new shirt. Different commercials yet same outfit every time. Caring individual? Harper needs a reality check. His kids should be embarrassed by how he drags them into this.

Harper makes a campaign promise, makes it law then breaks that same law. Says hes a man of his word yet breaks his own law anyways. Assures us we will have fixed election dates. All are happy and then his true nature comes out. Not one that is caring, but one that shows his word means nothing. Tosses it around like a baseball. Why is he so afraid of Dion? Both are sinking ships. Harper is in it for his own ego. Says hes a regular guy, god helps us if that ever comes true. Right now his reality needs to be kicked to the curb.

~~~~~

<http://www.speakezforums.com/>

---

by iamnowon  
Sep 29 2008  
9:26 AM

No, Catherine, YOU are missing the point. That number you're floating , plus or minus a few points, determines which party gets to be the federal government in our first-past-the-post system. The Chretien and Martin Liberals had similar