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ANALYSIS

Many Liberals push for vote, but don't bet on it

With neither major party enjoying an advantage at the polls, officials try to quell election fever

Aug 29, 2009 04:30 AM

Comments on this story (101)

LINDA DIEBEL
 NATIONAL AFFAIRS WRITER

Remember last June's hullabaloo when it briefly appeared there might be a summer federal election?

Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff was unhappy with the government's economic report card and warned he might be ready to support a non-confidence vote against Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government.

"It will be clear: up or down," he told reporters, before the PM blinked and the two struck a compromise that included a bipartisan committee to study employment insurance.

Prepare for yet more days of dare-doubledare when Parliament returns next month. Behind the scenes, many Liberals are pushing for Ignatieff to take them to the promised land. It's a question of party pride after what they see as the humiliating tenure of Stéphane Dion.

"Michael is not going to sustain the government and he's made that perfectly clear," says a well-placed source. "The leader gave us an ultimatum to be ready for an election by Labour Day and we have followed his instructions."

There's no doubt in his mind – nor in the mind of many others interviewed by the *Toronto Star* – the party will invoke a non-confidence motion at the first opportunity, roughly a couple of weeks after the Commons resumes on Sept. 14.

Says a Liberal backroomer: "I think some people are very keen on going. They're tired of saying, 'No, wait until next time,' but they just aren't too vocal about saying it publicly right now."

To trigger an election, all three opposition parties would have to vote to defeat the government.

But don't bet the farm on a fall election.

Why? Looks like there's nothing in it for anybody in going to the polls.

"It's a dumb idea to have an election; I don't see any issue that anybody would want to fight an election on," says Ralph Lean, a Toronto lawyer and top Conservative fundraiser. "We're all tired of elections."

Senior Liberals hastened this week to dampen election fever in Liberal ranks before next week's annual caucus meeting in Sudbury.

"The government hasn't even been in a year. At some point, yes, but you can't be pushing to get them out every blinking week," says Senator David Smith, Liberal campaign co-chair. "There could come a breaking point and the (deciding vote in the House) could come to us but we don't need a shoot-out at the O.K. Corral right now."

Further, Liberal House leader Ralph Goodale also suggests there won't be an election on EI, noting there's reason for cautious optimism at the committee struck last June. He said Conservatives are listening to Liberal concepts "instead of dismissing them out of hand."

Goodale says his party will judge the government's "demeanour ... and personality" when the House resumes, as well as measure other issues, including deficit-reduction proposals and plans for infrastructure spending.

But say there were an election. What are the experts from the two major parties saying about the political landscape?

"Sure feels like Groundhog Day," says Vancouver Liberal strategist Mark Marissen, adding little has

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changed in terms of polls, election teams and caucus positions since last fall's vote – with neither party apparently in majority territory.

Veteran Conservative strategist John Laschinger believes "Ignatieff is not doing well right now, he's not pulling ahead. I keep reminding myself that governments get defeated and nobody expects opposition parties to win."

However, Laschinger points out that in an August Nanos Research poll Ignatieff is in a virtual tie with Harper when people were asked who'd make the best prime minister. "That's a huge number for Ignatieff. ... If those numbers stay close, it should be of concern to some of the Conservatives."

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Sort By

Coalition

Don't you just love this new Liberal Conservative coalition on EI reform etc. Two globalists (Micheal and Stephen) walking hand in hand together in brotherly love. Don't they make a nice couple? Wake up people. There's no difference between either of these clowns. Ignatieff had his chance and blew it all for the sake of a summer recess. Too bad for you Iggy

Submitted by Ted999 at 7:30 PM Sunday, August 30 2009

[Agree](#) 2 | [Disagree](#) | [Alert a Moderator](#)

While Iggy said: "I spent the better part of ten years walking around getting shot at..."

Wow, the Libs have a gansta-rappa as their leader...so cool.

Submitted by Red Dwarf at 1:07 PM Sunday, August 30 2009

[Agree](#) 4 | [Disagree](#) | [Alert a moderator](#)

Love these left-lib whoppers...keep em coming

Sen. Clinton said that she landed in Bosnia under "sniper fire," adding: "There was supposed to be some kind of a greeting ceremony at the airport, but instead we just ran with our heads down to get into the vehicles to get to our base." While Iggy said: "I spent the better part of ten years walking around getting shot at..."

Submitted by R99 at 12:06 PM Sunday, August 30 2009

[Agree](#) 3 | [Disagree](#) 1 | [Alert a Moderator](#)

Well Iggy care to prove your falacious statements?

I spent the better part of ten years walking around getting shot at....!?, this whopper needs some clarity from the Lieberals!!!!http://www.goodreads.ca/lectures/ignatieff/

Submitted by Red Dwarf at 11:04 PM Saturday, August 29 2009

[Agree](#) 3 | [Disagree](#) 1 | [Alert a moderator](#)

looting

"Neither Martin or Chretien managed the Adscam program or were implicated." If you're willing to blame Harper for passports being trashed in Kenya, then you have to blame Martin and Chretien for looting the public purse.

Submitted by abba at 8:04 PM Saturday, August 29 2009

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stick with Ignatieff

"because he has some real brains to work with". Based on his performance as party leader, his brains apparently work only in an academic setting. I'm certainly not complaining -- the Liberals should stick with him. Please.

Submitted by abba at 7:33 PM Saturday, August 29 2009

[Agree](#) 3 | [Disagree](#) 4 | [Alert a moderator](#)

Time for the Liberals to ignore the polls and call an election, IF

most of the comments on this story are anything to go by. The ignorance or deliberate misinformation exhibited here are appalling. High time we had Ignatieff as Prime Minister because he has some real brains to work with, a much needed change from the petty guile and bile that are Harper's trademark. To judge by a lot of theses posts, guile and bile are catching.

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