



## What's an election without issues?

By PETER WORTHINGTON

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Here we go again folks!

As has happened periodically ever since Stephen Harper was elected PM, there's talk of an impending election. Ho-hum.

Last Christmas, into the New Year, in March, then in the spring when Michael Ignatieff was confirmed as Stephane Dion's successor to lead the federal Liberals ... on all these occasions there was talk of forcing the Tories to go to the polls.

Now we're at it again.

Reality is that there is no need for an election.

Yes, Harper has a large minority, and is theoretically vulnerable. But the country is being run well -- petty disputes and embarrassments, but nothing significant.

In this time of world recession, no country is as healthy as Canada -- thanks in part to our solid and safe banking system on which the economy and our future depends.

Compare our profitable five big banks with the U.S. where a record 72 banks have failed this year, 24 of them in July, and 400 others are on the edge. Americans with savings feel perpetually vulnerable.

A recent Nanos Research poll shows 53.9% of Canadians are not only satisfied with a minority government, but actually like minority governments which they feel forces rival political parties to co-operate and tend to business.

What polls indicate is that whichever party Canadians vote to govern them, it'll be a minority government.

Questions are raised by wise-asses -- who are fixated on such things -- as to where Ignatieff has been all summer? Why hasn't he been storming around, making noises and puffing about the need for political change in Ottawa?

An answer might be that Ignatieff is too smart to join the chorus. He probably knows the country is in pretty good shape, that the government knows what it is doing (with a few exceptions), and is doing basically what he'd do if he were PM.

When an election comes, he and his Liberals have an excellent chance to form the next government.

Cuddly

Harper isn't as cuddly a personality as some would like, but he's competent and doesn't fluster. This also applies to Ignatieff. Neither is a fuzzi-ball.

About the only issue Liberals have had is reforming employment insurance (EI). It's true some reforms could make EI more equal across the country, but it's hardly a sexy issue to go to the polls about. Besides, even if Liberals think they'd win an election, they need support from the NDP and Bloc to force one -- and both these parties are likely to lose seats if Liberals gain.

So there's no reason to have a fall election except for media hype and the reality that once the country (and politicians) start talking about one, it becomes self-fulfilling.

Of course, it's the duty of political parties to plan for a worst case scenario. Even so, when Harper states -- as he did on his recent foray into Far North -- "I haven't met a single person out there who tells me we should be fighting an election right now," take the guy at his word.

I suspect if someone asked Ignatieff the same question he'd give the same answer -- maybe more academically framed, but in essence echoing what Harper says.

So let's relax, enjoy what's left of summer and hope those rascals we send to Parliament Hill who think they are our betters, put a cork in it and wear muzzles.