

Predictions

Dan McCaffery - September 2019

Look for the Liberals to win a minority government in the upcoming federal election. At the time of this writing (late August) the Grits and the Conservatives were essentially tied for first in opinion polls.

The government has been rocked by scandals and there is widespread disappointment in the performance of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The simple fact is that Trudeau had nowhere to go but down after all the hype and excitement that came with his election to the top job four years ago. Now, however, there's a feeling in some quarters that he's all style and no substance. Or at least that he's far too politically correct for his own good.

Although he's certainly a youthful looking fellow Trudeau is, at age 47, the oldest of the leaders of the three traditional main parties. And he's the most experienced, having been in Parliament for 11 years. By way of contrast, Conservative Andrew Scheer and NDP leader Jagmeet Singh are both only 40 years of age.

But that's not why Trudeau will likely squeak through with a minority. It's because Singh is virtually unknown. His party has fallen so far in the polls that it wouldn't surprise me if it finishes in fourth place, behind the Green Party.

Singh is something of a rookie, having sat in the House of Commons for less than a year. I suppose if the position of prime minister was an entry level job he might be more credible but of course that's not how sensible people view things.

In any case, the NDP collapse will be a big boost to the Liberals. Socialist voters who abandon the NDP are far more likely to turn to the Grits than to the Conservatives.

Green leader Elizabeth May, who is 65, has plenty of experience. And she is a more effective campaigner than Singh or Scheer. I suspect she's also better known than either one of them. But she has no hope of forming a government and everyone knows it. She might do a little better than in the past because a great many people are concerned about the environment. The planet may be dying but, truth be told, not enough people care about that to vote for the Greens.

The other party in the race, Maxime Bernier's right-wing People's Party of Canada, could do some damage to the Conservatives but they, too, have no hope of winning.

So it's all down to the Liberals and the Conservatives. If I were a betting man I would say that the government will get a minority, if only because Trudeau is the best known of all the leaders. And despite the many scandals that have rocked his administration he's probably still the most popular of all the federal politicians.