

## **A Compendium of My Prime Minister Layton Posts**

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Thursday, April 28, 2011

<https://politicsrespun.org/2011/04/a-compedium-of-my-prime-minister-layton-posts/>

I've enjoyed writing four pieces about the Prime Minister Layton concept in the last 2.5 years.

Originally, it was a wishful thinking hyper long-shot in a prorogation crisis at a time when the Liberals had no firm leader.

Then in June 2010 it was a curiosity when polling indicated a Jack Layton-led coalition with the Liberals would defeat the Conservatives 43-37.

Then it was an analysis last week after the first few days of the NDP surge, spurred by gains in Quebec, but still too early to truly see how Layton could overtake the Liberals to be the leading force in a coalition or voting arrangement with the Liberals and the Bloc.

Finally, it was a review of a week of NDP surge polling moving through the advanced voting days. It was still unclear that the NDP would get more seats than the Liberals.

Here are these previous pieces:

1. November 28, 2008: [Prime Minister Layton and Proportional Representation](#)
2. June 2, 2010: [Prime Minister Layton, Redux](#)
3. April 21, 2011: [Prime Minister Layton](#)
4. April 23, 2011: [The Democratic Rebirth of Canada](#)

And where are we today, four days before the general election? The NDP is closer to the leading Conservatives than they are to the third place Liberals. Jack Layton has pulled ahead of Stephen Harper in composite leadership polling, not just in the trust category. There are worries that vote splitting between the NDP and the Bloc in Quebec and the NDP and the Liberals in the ROC [Rest of Canada] will allow the Conservatives to steal a majority.

Personally, I think with the continued softness of some of the NDP support [vote parkers], and with the abundance of strategic voting discussion and websites designed to prevent a Harper majority, I suspect enough NDP supporters will slide back to the Liberals and the Bloc in critical seats to ensure vote splitting doesn't lead to a Harper majority.

The only question is which party comes in second place: the NDP or Liberals. If the NDP does, it will be Jack Layton leading a delegation to Rideau Hall soon after May 2, or after the House of Commons fires Harper for a second time in two months, to form a coalition or government with explicit voting support. Then it will be Prime Minister Layton.

I've sat in that seat in the House. It has a great view--not as good as the speaker's chair, but hey, it has its

perks. And through all this, Ignatieff will lose his caucus support as leader of a humiliated "natural governing party." Then we will see Goodale, Rae, Kennedy and some others go after the leadership position. And we'll see a similar surgical removal of Steve Harper as Conservative leader and likely Gilles Duceppe as Bloc leader.

If the Liberals win more seats than the NDP, we'll see Prime Minister Ignatieff, despite how many sharpened knives are hidden in the desks of Liberal MPs. In that case, we'd still see Harper and Duceppe leaving their positions, and possibly Layton depending on his attitude and health.

In the end, living in Twitter and musing over every national poll released every day is living in an echo chamber of pseudo-scientific attempts to predict the behaviour of the electorate. Last night, Chretien played a card. The attack ads from the Liberals and Conservatives against the NDP will have some traction to mobilize their base. The impending election day will also affect some voter intentions.

May 2 is unpredictable. And while no national poll will be correct in predicting popular vote support or seat distribution, they're all competing to be the closest since profound notoriety comes with winning the closest to the bulls eye.

What we also know is that BC seat results will definitely determine which of three aging white men will become prime minister.

But as the final days of the campaign settle upon us, we see the final power plays. The Globe and Mail embraces deluded lunacy in its explanation of [its endorsement of Stephen Harper](#) with phrases like the Conservatives being the "only truly national party" despite it being the Alberta reform party, and how "he has not been the scary character portrayed by the opposition; with some exceptions, his government has been moderate and pragmatic." That's just bats.

This absurd endorsement should mobilize voters to be strategic in their voting. While the idealist in me thinks no one should ever vote strategically, the pragmatist in me recognizes that with a patently unjust electoral system like first-past-the-post, strategic voting is morally legitimate and can be deemed quite useful. Luckily, I live in Vancouver Kingsway where the strategic vote is also the principled vote: I already voted for the NDP's Don Davies on Monday.

But we also see [Crawford Killian's interesting inclusion of some poll analysis](#) of the Prime Minister Layton meme/concept/possibility in the context of what the governor-general ought to do if the Conservatives "win" another minority, according to the people of Canada:

- 43% say the leader of the opposition should be invited to form a government [after all, the House already fired Harper last month]
- 19%, a relatively dwarfish percentage, think Harper should have another chance [which would be pointless since he said he'll submit the same budget as in March and he'll be fired again by the House]
- 38% undecided [after all, this is a complicated thing with very little constitutional convention to lean on and 2.5 years of Harper's disinformation campaign about legal/valid/credible forms of non-majority governments in parliamentary systems]

Then Killiiian quotes EKOS on the Prime Minister Layton concept:

If anyone had trotted this scenario out as a likely outcome at the outset of this campaign, they would have been dismissed as a lunatic. Yet this unimaginable outcome is arguably the most likely outcome of the current political landscape.

I think if not the most likely outcome Monday night, it is the second most likely outcome. Either way, I would welcome being dismissed as a lunatic for having written about this 2.5 years ago.

In the end, democracy wins and Canadians will get even more used to more effective and participatory political debate and dialogue in the country. Unless Harper eeks out a majority. Unlikely.

So. Make sure you vote on Monday. Something is afoot. Your vote will be part of it.