

## **The Conservative-Liberal Coalition ALREADY Rules Us**

by Stephen Elliott-Buckley - Wednesday, March 30, 2011

<https://politicsrespun.org/2011/03/the-conservative-liberal-coalition-already-rules-us/>

British Columbia has been ruled by a Conservative-Liberal coalition for almost all of living memory. So why are we allowing Stephen Harper to get any traction at all with his coalition fear-mongering? His hypocritical opposition is a stunning continuation of his contempt for legitimate democratic structures.

Harper can bluster on all he likes about the coalition bogeyman. Others can invoke his 2004 coalition work and call him a liar or hypocrite. The truth is that Harper is against the coalition because it is the democratic political structure he fears most in our post-majority world.

But why are we still tolerating it, especially in BC? Harper and Ignatieff/Dion have participated in a passive coalition for years. Harper has played chicken with the Liberals by threatening confidence status of various bills/motions, trusting the Liberals to back down because they weren't prepared for an election.

Other times, the Liberals have actually agreed with Harper policies, but spend their energy opposing them, only to ensure just enough MPs don't show up to vote them down.

Harper has also received support from the Bloc on budgets.

Before Harper, Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin had his minority government propped up by reasonable commitments to the NDP that he ignored, dismissively, much like last week's budget tossed some crumbs towards the NDP policy demands for support of the budget.

And none of this is a constitutional crisis. It is, rather, the nuance of parliamentary democracy that in minority situations, there are structures to facilitate compromise and policies that reflect the majority of

voters' or MPs' will.

But I cannot understand how when addressing Harper's anti-coalition rhetoric, media, especially in BC, seem blind to the Conservative-Liberal coalition that has ruled BC for most of our living memory. That coalition has been a backroom arrangement in the Social Credit or Liberal party, not on the floor of the legislature, and has been the core issue in their party leadership race in recent months. And only time will tell if the new flavour of coalition leadership will hold.

This should be a blatantly obvious sign that Conservatives have spent generations in coalitions in various places in Canada, and Harper's opposition to coalitions is ludicrous.

And yesterday, former Conservative MP John Cummins declared his intention to be leader of the BC Conservative Party. How have former Conservative MPs Stockwell Day and Jay Hill responded to the rebirth of this provincial party? [They both characterized](#) the BC Conservative Party activities as threatening to the Conservative-Liberal coalition in the ruling BC Liberal party, with Hill even saying,

hopefully the vast majority of conservatives will stay with the B.C. Liberal Party as the coalition party and reject what John is doing.

The media, in BC and Canada, and the citizens of the country, and especially BC, have ample example of Conservative participation in coalitions. We cannot bestow any legitimacy on Harper's objections.

And truly, we should not limit our impatience with Harper's rhetoric. Ignatieff's federal Liberal party is part of the BC Liberal coalition with the Conservatives. His rejection of a potential coalition is crazy. His party has been as involved in them as the Conservatives, in BC and nationally.

A pox on both houses, if you ask me.