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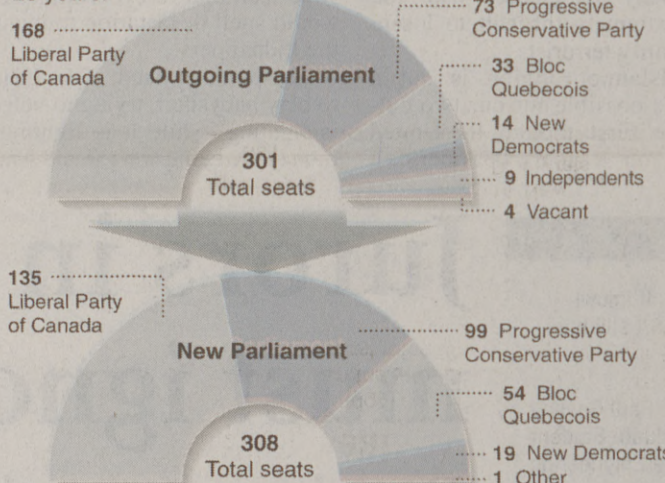
DAVE MORRIS • THE BATTAL

In spite of the rainy weather, punk rock fans gather in a moshpit Monday during New Found Glory's performance at the Vans Warped Tour at The Reliant Center in Houston. An estimated 10,000 fans decided to give the show a second chance after the rain-out last Friday. More

than 60 bands, including headliners Bad Religion, Yellowcard, Taking Back Sunday, along with seven mobile stages, continued U.S. tour as they made their way to Las Cruces, New Mexico for Tuesday's show.

Liberals win most seats in Canada

Canada's Liberal Party lost its outright control of Parliament in Monday's election, but easily won the largest share of seats and will now try to lead the country's first minority government in 25 years.



Liberal Party loses majority but wins most seats in Canada

By David Crary
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OTTAWA — Relieved to still be prime minister, but chastened by his Liberal Party's heavy election losses, Paul Martin said Tuesday he would move quickly to replace defeated Cabinet members and then assess whether his minority government can tackle the issues on Canada's national agenda.

"What we have is a stable minority government," Martin said in his first news conference following Monday's election. "I do believe we have a mandate from the people to act on the issues we set out."

The Liberals won 135 of the 308 seats in the House of Commons, a net loss of 33 seats, to lose their majority for the first time since 1993. To pass legislation, the Liberals will need support from other parties, but Martin said he would seek their support issue-by-issue rather than negotiating to form a formal coalition.

The Conservative Party, which had nursed hopes of replacing the Liberals in power, won 99 seats. The separatist Bloc Quebecois won 54, gaining at the Liberals' expense in Quebec, while the left-leaning New Democratic Party won 19 and an independent won a seat in British Columbia.

Turnout was an all-time low of 60 percent — a signal, according to commentators, that many voters were unenthusiastic about their choices.

Andrew Cohen, a journalism professor at Carleton University, wrote in the Ottawa Citizen that the election was "shallow, cynical and mean-spirited." He faulted Martin for "failing to offer the country imagination or inspiration."

The most clear-cut winner was the Bloc Quebecois, which entered the election holding 33 of Quebec's 75 seats. The Bloc's gains fueled talk of holding a vote in Quebec on whether the French-speaking province should secede.

However, Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe said the first step would be for separatists to take over the Quebec government from the Liberals, who do not need to call a provincial election until 2008. "Step-by-step we'll see what happens," Duceppe said Tuesday.

Martin said the Liberals' setback in Quebec stemmed largely from a recently revealed financial scandal involving diversions of tens of millions of dollars in government funds to Liberal-allied advertising firms in Quebec.

However, the prime minister said he expected the Bloc Quebecois — and the New Democrats — to work with him on the Liberals' top priority of strengthening the troubled national health insurance program.

First on his agenda, though, is replacement of five defeated Cabinet members — including Defense Minister David Pratt.

Defense policy could become a contentious issue for the minority government, especially if it needs support from the New Democratic Party.

The New Democrats' leader, Jack Layton, said he would pressure Martin to stay out of any discussions with the United States over a possible Canadian role in a new continental missile defense system.

"Mr. Martin made promises — keeping health care public, being involved in 'Star Wars,'" Layton said. "We intend to hold him to those promises."

Layton said all the parties should try to put partisan feuds aside, at least for the short term.

"No party received a blank check," he said. "We must put common good ahead of our own."

Harper, the only leader who had a chance of replacing Martin as prime minister, said he would take time off with his family before re-engaging in the political arena. Though the Conservatives lost to achieve their needed breakthrough in Ontario, the most populous province, he said his party did well enough "that the Liberals obviously now have to listen."

Among those relieved at the outcome were gay-rights and abortion-rights activists who had been wary of a Conservative victory. Bob Gallagher of Canadians for Equal Marriage said the Bloc Quebecois and New Democrats now had enough influence to push for nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage.

"The Liberals were trying to hide from this issue," Gallagher said. "I think they will now do what is finally the right thing."

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