



New Liberal Leader - First Green PM?

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This is a guest post by [chrisale](#).

In a stunning victory, Stephane Dion is the new Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and has a good chance of being the next Prime Minister of Canada.



Today's Liberal Leadership Convention was truly something to behold. Not only was it full of odd twists and drama, it produced a result that I don't think anyone could have predicted. I believe what has happened here is the Political Establishment has been turned on its head, and in today's modern, mature, western Democracies, that is truly something to behold. I think this also signals a major shift to the Green side of the spectrum for the Liberal Party of Canada.

A little background. Stephane Dion had 3 main rivals. An academic and man-of-the-world (but not Canada), Michael Ignatieff, a former Premier of Ontario and turn-coat Left-wing New Democratic Party Leader Bob Rae, and a charismatic, but relatively unknown, Gerard Kennedy.

What appears to have happened, is that a sort of grass-roots, young, progressive force has taken over the Convention in Montreal. Both Gerard Kennedy and Stephane Dion claimed large numbers of young delegates, and after Kennedy dropped off the 3rd ballot and declared his support for Dion, it propelled Dion to victory over the other two more experienced and far-better-funded teams.

Normally this would be nothing more than a changing of the guard... and we could anticipate more of the same old stay-at-home politics. But with Dion, I expect something different. He is the first leader of the Liberal Party that will make the Environment as important an issue as it is to say, the NDP, or even the Green Party. If his speeches and past record as Environment Minister are anything to go by, Stephane Dion brings a level of young exuberance and political forward

thinking that issues like Sustainability, Environmental Stewardship and Peak Oil need to really get the attention they deserve.

There will be one major issue that Mr. Dion will have to address when he trumpets his environmental record and that is Canada's inability to curb its CO2 emissions in the first years after ratifying Kyoto. However, if he can point to the concrete conservation plans (like the Millenium Plan) and other more ambitious plans that he hopefully has up his sleeve, then he should be able to deflect it very easily (especially coming from the Conservatives).

Basically though, what makes me excited is not the grand plans or the good words... ok it is... but really what it is is the possibility of change. The possibility that there will be an Official Opposition in the House of Commons who's first priority is the environment and sustainability. The possibility that the political party will have at it's head someone who understands the truly revolutionary times that are about to overtake this generation of voters.

Up until this day, I thought I'd have to continue to vote for a party that could only get it's way in a minority environment... or worse, a party who still had to wait for a complete change of the democratic system in order to even have a whiff at the halls of power. Today, there is the possibility that Canadians will have a real choice.

Today, the Liberal Party led by Stephane Dion has, hopefully, taken a step away from the Big Business, Big Establishment past towards a Down-To-Earth, Practical and Independant future. I only hope his actions live up to his words.

My first priority tomorrow will be to draft a letter to the new Leader of the Liberal Party to ask him his position on Peak Oil and Oil Depletion.



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