

Subject: On the upcoming provincial (federal?) election ;

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

Judging by the many questions people asked me during the recent provincial election campaign, despite their cynicism, voters seem to sense that Tuesday's election is serious business. I predict a high voter turnout. It also appears that the STV voting system will be defeated.

The distance between provincial and local politics is on the surface only.

Gordon Campbell, when Mayor of Vancouver and leader of the opposition under the NDP government, did promise a Community Charter. The idea was to make Municipalities more independent so that they can do their job more effectively. Gordon has indeed delivered, but not an eagle as promised but a duck. Municipalities are still prisoners of the BNA Act which is as outdated as the horse and buggy.

While facing staggering problems, their powers are still virtually non-existent. Under Canada's Constitution Municipalities have no rights IN ANY CASE except those given to them by the province which does not count for very much. Senior levels of government can do anything they like and they do. The Feds continue to steal gasoline money and the Province, through its Assessment Appeal Board for example, imposes hardships at its whim.

Campbell's Municipal Charter was to give municipalities more powers and it did, but not powers to access gasoline, tobacco or liquor taxes or a slice of the provincial budget based on population as is the case in most European countries and even in the US, but by "allowing" municipalities to make deals with the private sector and engage in Public/Private Partnerships. The Municipal Charter is a Trojan Horse and anyway you slice it it is nothing more than a document paving the way for the continuation of downloading by other means.

When people asked me who they should vote for I told them that as far as municipalities are concerned all parties are duds. Not one of them talked about the need to truly reform Municipal - Provincial relations. Not one of them talked about 21st Century issues at the local level which is where the staggering problems not only exist but also have to be addressed.

However, there are some rock hard rules which I live by and it applies to any level of government Federal, Provincial or Municipal.

Never at any time and regardless of conditions, circumstances or personalities will I vote for a party which has become corrupt and never ever will I vote for a politician who has an aura of corruption about him or was a failure as a municipal leader. Incompetence like corruption is catching and the stakes are far too high to take a chance.

Ernie Crist

