

Tuesday, November 30, 2010

A Battle Lost, A War to Win

Julian Fantino wins:

Julian Fantino's snatching of the Greater Toronto riding of Vaughan in Monday's federal by-election will further cloud Michael Ignatieff's troubled leadership and offer a glimpse of a possible Conservative majority government after the next election.

The loss of their long-held seat in Vaughan to the Conservatives is disquieting for the Liberals on several fronts. For one thing, the party is 1-for-7 in by-elections under Mr. Ignatieff, after they took Winnipeg North away from the NDP Monday. Every loss deepens the hole the Liberals must climb out of to form even a minority government.

But the Conservatives inherit a liability:

The Liberals smell blood on Fantino. If he wins, now that the Libs have begun attacking Fantino as did Justin Trudeau (think of that – federal Libs attacking McG's OPP commish!), they will continue to hound the government for embracing of a guy who openly spits (figuratively) on the Charter, and the issues of Caledonia will get even bigger play in the House, and media.

Stephen Harper has gotten his prize. Let him pay for it. The Prime Minister wanted to burnish his law and order credentials, let the rest of Canada discover just how well he, and Julian Fantino, grasp the concept. A party with any touch of principle would have refused to nominate Fantino. There is every likelihood that the former OPP commissioner will find himself in cabinet shortly. He must become the CPC's highest profile liability.

In the set piece of a police press conference, Fantino performs well. In the cut and thrust of the House of Commons, where opposition MPs will be far less deferential, he will have a much tougher time. If Michael Ignatieff had any sense - which is doubtful given his tin-eared leadership of the Liberal Party - he would use Caledonia as a club to beat the Harper Tories: Questions in the house. Witnesses called before House and Senate committees to give testimony. Election campaign ads showing the anarchy of Caledonia with a simple caption: "Is this Stephen Harper's idea of law and order?"

The Tories have made inroads in the 905 region by beating the law and order drum. Go negative on their strength, deny them the ability to make a credible claim to being the guardians of public safety. Julian Fantino won through name recognition. But recognition can be turned into infamy. Some have questioned whether Fantino will be able to accept the PMO's micromanaging tendencies. Given how readily he caved into a non-entity like Dalton McGuinty, he'll fit in perfectly. Another trained seal for the CPC benches.

Posted by PUBLIUS on November 30, 2010 | [Permalink](#)

Comments