

Is the 600-million election really meaningless?

By Noah Huang

Soon after the election closed, the overwhelming comments on the early vote criticized that Trudeau lavishly spent 600 million and got a meaningless result. There's no change in the composition of the House of Commons, and the Liberals still form a minority government.

Is the 600-million election really meaningless? Can we appraised this election simply based on the seat tally and the emotional vents of some losers of the election? Or we need to review it from multiple angles.

Liberals get a clear mandate based on the new platform

Let's understand Trudeau's statement in his victory speech, Canadians are "sending us back to work with a clear mandate to get Canada through this pandemic and to brighter days ahead."

While the pandemic hit Canada in early 2020, Liberal's 2019 platform was completely impossible to implement. For more than a year, the Liberal government has taken various emergency measures to fight against the pandemic, ensure the economy working, and maintain Canadian livelihoods. Now the peak of the pandemic has passed, and Canada's economy has gradually recovered.

However, a minority government without a clear mandate is very hard to govern in much different political and economic conditions now than in 2019.

When debating emergency measures in response to COVID-19, the opposition parties voted in favor even knowing this would cause the national debt to soar rapidly. But they attacked the Liberal government for massive spending in public. All administrative measures need tedious debates. It was compelling for the minority government to call an early vote.

As the election situation changed, the polls was up and down. At the end, the Liberals won the most seats. Although it is still a minority government, the boat has passed thousands of mountains. The Liberal government has got a clear mandate based on its new platform, and can govern more smoothly in days ahead. This result is of great significance.

British Columbian votes Matter

Canada's political landscape is very distinct. The Liberals dominate in East Canada where industry and commerce are more developed, and the Conservatives dominate in West Canada where energy and agriculture are

the pillar industries. British Columbia is somewhere in between, and is a key area for the Liberals and the Conservatives to compete for votes.

Superficially, the election made no change in Canada's politics. The Conservatives still has 119 seats and the Liberals has 158 seats, just two more seats. However, the change in British Columbia is larger. During the early time of the campaign, O'Toole expected to gain more seats in British Columbia. At the end, the Liberals increased from 11 seats to 15 seats, and the Conservatives decreased from 17 seats to 13 seats. The Liberals gained 4 seats from the Conservative.

During the election campaign, the Richmond Chinese community leader told Trudeau that Chinese voters in British Columbia had more swing votes and suggested that he should come to British Columbia more to canvass for the Liberal candidates. The effect is obvious. British Columbia Chinese voters contributed at least two seats to the Liberals. Due to its great contribution in this election, British Columbia has increased its political influence in Canada.

British Columbia is Canada's Asia-Pacific gateway, with huge potential for economic diversification and export growth. The Liberal government should vigorously promote the economic development of Western Canada. If an innovative energy development strategy can be implemented, the disadvantageous position of the Liberal Party in the west will be changed forever.

Chinese Canadian votes matter

The Chinese Canadian votes gave the Liberal Party all two seats in Richmond, which shocked Canadian politics. Howard Anglin, senior adviser of legal affairs and policy and deputy chief of staff to former prime minister Stephen Harper, commented on the losers and winners of this federal election in the "National Post": "The Communist Party of China is one of the winners." Organized false propaganda campaigns and unfounded rumors on the Chinese social media platform WeChat affected the election of the Conservative Party.

Such comments are indeed laughable! Canadian mainstream media really don't understand Chinese culture. WeChat does have fake news and rumors. Some influencers used to recklessly concoct for clout chasing, and spread falsehoods. On WeChat, there are fake news targeting the Conservative Party and O'Toole, as well as fake news targeting the Liberal Party and Trudeau. The two are evenly matched. The Chinese have long been accustomed to this phenomenon and dismissed it. It is an exaggeration to say that WeChat's false propaganda and rumors caused the Conservative Party to lose the election.

Let the numbers do the talking. The following tables compare the total votes, turnout rates, and the vote increase or decrease of the Conservative and Liberal candidates in the two ridings of Richmond in the 2019 and 2021 elections.

**Comparison of the total vote and turnout rate changes of Richmond ridings
in 2019 and 2021**

Name of Riding	2019 Election		2021 Election	
	Total votes	Turnout%	Total votes (+/-)	Turnout% (+/-)
Richmond Centre	38,142	52.84	34,161 (-3,981)	39.60(-13.24)
Steveston - Richmond East	41,084	56.40	38,944(-2,140)	48.40 (-8.00)

Comparison of the two parties' vote changes of Richmond ridings in 2019 and 2021

Name of Riding	2019 Election		2021 Election	
	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative (+/-)	Liberal (+/-)
Richmond Centre	18,791	10,824	12,668 (-6,123)	13,440 (+2,616)
Steveston - Richmond East	17,193	14,397	13,065 (-4,128)	16,542 (+2,145)

The turnout rate of Richmond Chinese voters has always been relatively low. It set a new low in this election. Comparing 2021 with 2019, the total votes dropped by 3,981 in Richmond Centre, and by 2,140 in Steveston-Richmon East; the turnout rate dropped by 13.4% in Richmond Centre, and by 8% in Steveston-Richmon East.

Comparing 2021 with 2019, the Conservative candidate lost 6,123 votes in Richmond Centre, 65% of which was due to total vote drop; and lost 4,128 votes in Steveston-Richmond East, 51.84% of which was due to total vote drop.

More than half of the vote loss of the Conservative candidates were due to their supporters not coming to vote because they were too disappointed with the unrealistic Conservative platform.

The vote increase of the Liberal candidates basically comes from the higher turnout rates of their Chinese supporters. The Liberal platform looks better than the Conservative platform in developing the economy, maintaining Canadian livelihood, addressing climate change, and handling Canada China relations. Coupled with a large number of volunteers actively supporting elections, Chinese voters enthusiastically vote for the Liberal Party.

The votes are the most powerful. The full support of the Chinese voters for the Liberal Party will surely make the Liberal Party government pay more attention to the concerns of Chinese Canadians, thus greatly enhancing the political influence of Chinese Canadians in Canada!