

The 2011 Provincial Election in Prince Edward Island

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Introduction

Prince Edward Island's 64th General Election was held 3 October 2011, at which time Premier Robert Ghiz's Liberal Party (Liberals) defeated Olive Crane's Progressive Conservative Party (PCs). The Liberals won 22 seats; the PCs won 5. No other party won a seat.¹

Five parties (and one Independent) contested the election, the most in Island history and one more than had contested the election in 2007.² The three other parties running candidates in 2011 were the New Democratic Party of PEI (NDP),³ the Green Party of PEI (Greens) and the Island Party. With five parties fielding candidates, the total number of names on the ballots also increased: 103 candidates ran in the 64th General Election, 14 more than the number running in 2007 and 25 more than ran in 2003. A record 31 women ran in 2011, but only six of them were elected.

The plethora of parties and candidates did little to encourage interest in the election, however, and voting turnout dropped significantly in 2011, down to 76.5 percent from 83.8 percent in 2007. This is the lowest turnout in a Prince Edward Island general election since such numbers were recorded (1966),⁴ and may help explain the fact that, although the Liberals dropped just one seat in 2011, the party saw its total votes fall by 11 percent: 38,315 (51.4%)⁵ votes compared to 43,205 (52.9%). The PCs also saw their total vote drop, from 33,754 (41.3%) in 2007 to 29,950 votes (40.2%) in 2011, or a decrease of 13 percent, and the lowest voting percentage for the PCs in some fifteen years. Meanwhile, both the Greens and the NDP saw their vote totals increase (albeit modestly) from their 2007 results, with the NDP recording a 50% improvement for a total of 2,355 (3.2%), and the Greens increasing their votes by 30% for a total of 3,254 votes (4.4%). The Island Party ran candidates for the first time in 2011 and managed to gather 687 votes or 0.9% of the total vote.⁶

The closest race was in Belfast-Murray River (District 4), a rematch between the Liberal incumbent Charlie McGeoghegan and the PC's Darlene Compton. This seat was once held by the PC premier Pat Binns. But after losing the 2007 election, Binns was appointed ambassador to Ireland and a by-election to replace him was held 15 October 2007. McGeoghegan won easily with 1,259 votes (55%), while Compton came second with 828 votes (36%). However, the results in 2011 were much closer. McGeoghegan managed to hold on

to his seat, but this time did so with a margin of victory of just eight votes over Compton. The largest margin of victory was in Evangeline-Miscouche (District 24) in which Liberal incumbent Sunny Gallant defeated PC candidate Edgar Arsenault by 1,304 votes.⁷ Overall, incumbents ran in 25 of the 27 electoral districts. Two incumbents were defeated, and both were Liberal cabinet ministers: Allan Campbell lost by 30 votes to Colin LaVie in the Souris-Elmira riding (District 1), while Neil LeClair lost by 33 votes to PC Hal Perry in Tignish-Palmer Road (District 27).⁸

Table 1: Party standings and election results: 2000 to 2011

	2000	at diss.	2003	at diss.	2007	at diss.*	2011
PCs	26	26	23	23	4	2	5
Liberals	1	1	4	4	23	24	22

* one seat was vacant

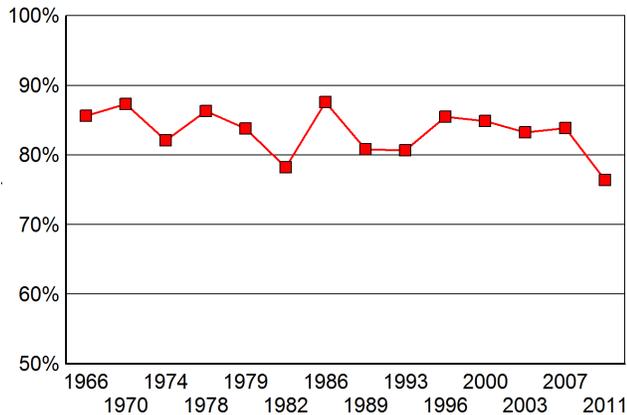
Table 2: Party popular vote (% of votes cast): 2000 to 2011

	2000	2003	2007	2011
PCs	57.6%	54.0%	41.2%	40.2%
Liberals	33.6%	42.4%	52.7%	51.4%
NDP	8.4%	3.0%	2%	3.2%
Greens			3.0%	4.4%
Island Party				0.9%
IND			0.7%	0.0%

Table 3: Party popular vote (% of eligible voters): 2007 vs 2011

	2007 total vote	% of elig. voters	2011 total vote	% of elig. voters
PCs	33,754	34.5%	29,950	30.6%
Liberals	43,205	44.2%	38,315	39.1%
NDP	1,597	1.6%	2,355	2.4%
Greens	2,482	2.5%	3,254	3.3%
Island Party			682	0.7%
IND	594	0.6%	15	0.0%
Total valid votes	81,632	83.8%	74,576	76.5%
Eligible voters	97,810	100%	97,967	100%

Figure 1. Voting Turnout (1966-2011)



The Players

The 2011 election marked Premier Robert Ghiz's first election as an incumbent premier. Ghiz won the party leadership in 2003 by defeating Alan Buchanan and is the son of the late Joe Ghiz, the premier of Prince Edward Island from 1986 to 1993. Robert Ghiz became premier of PEI in 2007, when his Liberal party defeated PC premier Pat Binns by winning 23 seats to the PC's four (MacKinnon, 2007).

This was also the first election as a leader for the PC's Olive Crane, who won her leadership in 2010. Crane was first elected to the legislative assembly in 20 March 2006 in a by-election held in Morell-Fortune Bay (District 2) (CBC, 2011b). She was also the only PC incumbent to run in 2011.⁹

Only the Liberal and PC parties are serious contenders in PEI; however, this has not stopped other parties from mounting a brave offensive. The three other parties who fielded candidates in the 2011 election were the NDP, led by James Rodd; the Green Party, led by Sharon Labchuk; and the Island Party, led by Billy Cann, a former Liberal candidate. In 2007, Cann ran in Montague - Kilmuir (District 3), losing to Progressive Conservative Jim Bagnall by 134 votes. The Island Party's platform included calls for greater transparency and accountability of government and its agencies, and more opportunities for citizen involvement in government decisions. But its chief objective was to stop what it believed to be an imminent incorporation (and so taxation) of the Island's rural districts, a move it referred to as "regionalization" (Island, 2011).

Despite the fact that PEI has a "fixed-date" election law, none of these parties managed to drum up enough candidates to field a complete slate. The Green Party had the most candidates with 22, the Island Party the least with 12. The NDP's total of just 14 is one fewer than the 2007 election and its lowest since the province adopted single-member constituencies in 1996. Only one independent sought office in 2011: Arthur MacKenzie who ran in Kellys Cross-Cumberland (District 17). Mr. MacKenzie picked up just 15 votes.

Women in PEI Politics

While PEI did manage to elect the first female premier in Canada, its legislative benches have been overwhelmingly filled by male MLAs. Still, both the PCs and the Liberals made a concerted effort to increase the number of female candidates for the 2011 election; as Kirstin Lund of the PEI Coalition for Women in government noted: "Both parties have been working to recruit and nominate more women candidates in the past two elections and their efforts have been noticed and appreciated" (Guardian, 2011a). Nevertheless, after the votes were counted on 3 October, only six districts were won by female candidates (roughly 22 percent of the Assembly), and a loss of one from the previous legislature.

In total, 30 women sought office in 2011, with the Greens fielding the most female candidates with 12, and the Island Party the least with none. There was a female candidate in 21 of the province's 27 ridings. Five of the Liberals' six female candidates were elected, while the PCs had just one of their female candidates elected, their leader Olive Crane. All six elected females were incumbents. One Liberal incumbent, Cynthia Dunsford, was defeated by James Aylward in Stratford-Klinock (District 6) by a margin of 779 votes.

Table 4.

	# candi- dates	# female candi- dates	% female candi- dates	# suc- cessful female candi- dates	% succes- sful female candi- dates
Green	22	13	59	0	0
Liberal	27	6	22	5	83
Island	12	0	0	0	0
NDP	14	6	43	0	0
PC	27	7	26	1	14
Other	1	0	0	0	0
Total	103	32	31	6	19

The Campaign

In some ways, the October 2011 provincial election on Prince Edward Island (PEI) was over long before it actually began. And notwithstanding the hard-fought campaign of the PCs, the final outcome was hardly ever in doubt—namely, a majority Liberal government. At the outset, there was even some loose speculation that Ghiz Liberals would sweep the province altogether, and win all 27 seats.

Just one day before the election writ was actually dropped on 7 September, a public opinion survey—conducted by the Halifax-based Corporate Research Associates (CRA)—placed the Ghiz Liberals almost 30 points ahead of the opposition PCs, with the three smaller political parties garnering just 7 percent combined (Thibodeau, 2011a). On the pivotal question of who would voters prefer as their provincial premier, Ghiz had a substantial 24 point lead over Crane. Even on tiny PEI, that is an insurmountable gap for

the PCs, and far too high an electoral mountain for the other political parties to climb.

What those polling numbers also showed was a lukewarm response to the personality and leadership qualities of the PC's Olive Crane. As CRA pollster Don Mills baldly observed: "Crane is having some troubles gaining traction with the population, which means her job is obviously at risk after this election" (Thibodeau, 2011a). For whatever reason, then, Ms. Crane did not resonate with Island voters. While Ms. Crane has promised to stay on to fight the next provincial election, she also called on her party to institute a leadership review process, probably in response to what was an almost-immediate call for her removal (Thibodeau, 2011f). On 3 March 2011, the PC Party granted her request, slating a leadership review for 2015.

It is worth emphasizing that Crane's inability to gain traction was not the result of any lack of effort, or a major campaign gaffe, or a poor TV debate performance. In fact, she did reasonably well in the public debate formats, even in the face of intense pressure to exceed expectations. Indeed, Crane ran a largely error-free campaign and aggressively pushed her platform to the bitter end. She might have given PEI's health care problems more prominence in her campaign platform, but it did seem that the electoral odds were stacked against her.

One area where Crane's judgment was questioned was when she chose to boycott the televised CBC election debate during the second week of the campaign. Ostensibly, the PC leader said that she would not participate in the debate (and there are several on PEI) because the public broadcaster would not permit all party leaders to attend. As far as Crane was concerned, she was taking the democratic highroad and thus an admirable stand for all of PEI. As she explained, "ordinary Islanders are very involved in this particular election. They will see just [how] I have performed over the last four years, standing up for whatever those issues were in the legislature" (Bissett, 2011a). Some political commentators, though, wondered whether Crane, who had nothing to lose and everything to gain, had missed a golden opportunity. A one-on-one altercation would have allowed her to put the Premier on the hot seat, and might have changed the complexion of the campaign that to this point was not going well for the PCs.

For the most part, the central issues in the campaign were similar to those that have dominated PEI elections for decades: jobs and economic development, education, the environment and, of course, health care (or the lack thereof). The shortage of doctors on PEI has been a perennial issue, and the source of much controversy and headache for the governing Liberals (as it has been for other provincial jurisdictions). In the 2007 election, the Liberals had promised to make sure that every Islander would have access to a doctor, but several thousand still remain on a waiting list. One enterprising candidate from the upstart Island Party even promised to negotiate a barter agreement with the Raul Castro government to bring Cuban doctors and health professionals to rural parts of the province (and thus to avoid the closure of emergency wards) in exchange for the prov-

ince's chief export, potatoes, and a cash arrangement. Commentators stopped scoffing when, soon after, Cuba's ambassador in Ottawa made serious inquiries about how to contact both Premier Ghiz and the PEI Health Department.

What was conspicuously absent from the 2011 election campaign, however, was any discussion of federal-provincial relations—as was also the case in 2003 and 2007.¹⁰ In a province that depends heavily on federal transfer payments and equalization funds (accounting for some 40 percent of the province's total fiscal expenditures), it was surprising that relations with Ottawa did not enter the election conversation, especially with the controversial debate looming over the end of the 2004 intergovernmental Health Care Accord in 2014. Nor was there any sign that Stephen Harper's Conservatives, though largely unpopular here on PEI, had any bearing on the 2011 provincial election outcome.

Promises, promises...

Recognizing the fragile state of the province's finances (to say nothing of weak economic indicators nationally and internationally), both mainline political parties kept their respective election promises to a bare minimum. The governing Liberals shot out of the gate with a pledge to increase funding for post-secondary students, including a \$2,000 bursary for students in their final year of studies, to eliminate interest on all student loans, and to provide a bonus cost-of-living increase of \$200 for first-year recipients of the George Coles bursary (Wright, 2011a). That was followed by a proposals to help rural Islanders gain access to trades programs in the province, to create more spaces in early learning centres, to improve student-teacher ratio in Island schools, and a reaffirmation of the Liberal government's commitment to a new rural palliative care centre and manor replacement program (Ross 2011b). Toward the end of the campaign, Premier Ghiz also promised to boost the province's use of wind production to 30 percent of the province's electrical consumption by establishing a provincially-run wind farm, as well as to seek better prices for the fishery and to adopt more appropriate marketing strategies through the creation of a seafood development agency. Finally, a round-about for a tricky intersection in Poole's Corner (eastern PEI) was promised (Liberal, 2011).

The PCs, while cautious and pragmatic with their platform, did strive to win over Islanders by placing more money in voter's pockets. Before the election writ was even dropped, Crane announced that, if elected, her government would offer annual rebates ranging from \$350 to \$500 to low income homeowners to help with their (rising) fuel oil bills. According to party officials, the PCs hoped that their rebate program would reach 30,000 Island households and cost roughly \$10-15 million a year (Ross, 2011a). Added to that was a centerpiece promise to reduce the provincial sales tax (PST) to 8 percent (from 10 percent) by the end of a Conservative government's first term in office (PC, 2011). The party's platform also pledged to implement a catastrophic drug plan (to cost an additional \$3 million annually) and to provide its share of funding to clean up the historic Hillsborough River, which is being threatened by periodic sewage

discharge from the City of Charlottetown. Curiously, though, the PCs included nothing substantive on health care—always a top-of-mind issue on PEI—until the end of the party's tiny 14-page blue booklet, "The Blueprint." Party supporters had to be satisfied with a line in the platform that stated: "Improving localized access to health care services for all Islanders" (14).

The three other provincial parties also shied away from making costly election promises given the state of the province's challenging financial situation. The Island New Democrats, under the leadership of area-farmer James Rodd, promised to scrap the Public Service Commission, ostensibly because of the "politicized" nature of its appointments and hiring practices (Wright, 2011b). In addition, Rodd stated that his party would turn the privately-owned Maritime Electric into a public utility, increase fines for fish kills, dismantle Health PEI, and end the "e-health boondoggle." Green Party leader Sharon Labchuk pledged that her party would lessen the province's carbon footprint, bring in a new Clean Water Act, support organic farming, renewable energy and preventative health care, and impose stricter regulations for pesticide use (Bissett, 2011b). The fledging Island Party struggled to pull a comprehensive platform together. Nevertheless, it promised to put more focus on education, rural development, and health care. Rural areas would receive full-time emergency services, and government patronage would be limited (Guardian, 2011b).

After a slow beginning to the 26 day campaign, PC leader Crane did seek to exploit what opportunities presented themselves, such as attacking the "city-slicker" Ghiz for neglecting the province's agricultural/farming communities. The PCs also circulated a bright red flyer in the first week of the campaign, entitled "Seeing Red," signaling the negative tone that this election was likely to take.¹¹ Scattered throughout the small 14-page flyer were several observations about Liberal mismanagement, broken promises, charges of political patronage, and policy mistakes. The booklet ended with a final parting shot: "We cannot afford another 4 years of Robert Ghiz and his Liberals putting select Islanders first."

Provincial Nominee Program

The 2011 campaign turned somewhat noisier (or perhaps more interesting) in mid-September when a story broke on the front pages of *The Globe and Mail*, entitled "Ottawa calls for probe of immigration program." The article referred to unsubstantiated allegations of fraud and envelopes of money changing hands between PEI government bureaucrats and well-heeled Chinese immigrants, under PEI's Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) (Curry, 2011). There was talk of an RCMP investigation and the involvement of the Canada Borders Services Agency. It was not long, of course, before rehashed charges of bribery and fraud were front and centre on the hustings, with the provincial Liberals bearing the brunt of the accusations. There were even some unproven intimations that Premier Ghiz and his family had personally profited from this same program, though the premier would vigorously deny any such benefit in subsequent media inter-

views and in fact tried to turn this accusation to his advantage by questioning the ethics of those who would stoop so low as to attack a politician's family.

Nevertheless, the accusations clearly rattled the Liberals, and so the party quickly went into damage control. The strategy was simple: blame the messengers or, in this case, the three former provincial officials who witnessed firsthand some of the questionable business surrounding the PNP. There's a fine line between reacting and over-reacting, and in this case it appears the Liberals overreacted, unwisely leaking confidential e-mail correspondence from one of the whistle blowers (Wright, 2011c).

Indeed, perhaps the most significant difference in the 2011 election from previous campaigns was the negativity and personal attacks. Speaking the day after the campaign ended, Steven Myers (Georgetown-St. Peters, District 2) explained his victory this way: "My win had more to do with the premier. I was hearing at the door people hate Robert Ghiz and I believed them and they showed that tonight" (Guardian, 2011c). Myers' remarks, valid or not, were symptomatic of an unusually rough and tumble campaign with attack ads, a negative undertone, and a personalization of electoral politics—the likes of which Islanders have not seen before. During his victory party at a downtown Charlottetown hotel, Premier Ghiz admitted as much and made a point of criticizing the PCs for their hard-edged tactics. He was obviously upset by the personal attacks and the suggestions that he and his family had profited from the Provincial Nominee Program. Even Robert Ghiz's mother, Rose Ellen, who has witnessed many elections on PEI, entered the fray by saying, "This was probably the dirtiest campaign. I have no problem attacking someone on policy. It doesn't bother me one bit. But when you get personal and, when the personals [sic] are lies, that is what really is upsetting" (CBC, 2011c).

The three smaller parties kept the harsh rhetoric mostly in check, but whether this had a positive or negative impact on their results is difficult to say. PEI is still a tight, two-party system; indeed, only one MLA from another party has ever secured a seat in the provincial legislature.¹² Third parties all have significant difficulties attracting credible candidates, crucial volunteers, critical media coverage, and sufficient financial resources to run full-scale election campaigns, in no small part because they never hold the reins of patronage on PEI.¹³

NDP leader James Rodd put it succinctly: "We don't have the resources other parties have." As a part-time leader of the party and full-time farmer in York, Rodd singled out the timing of the election as part of the problem for his failure to secure a full slate of candidates. "September is a big month for our farmers and our fishermen. It's a time for people getting back to school" (Thibodeau, 2011b). In some ways, these parties are not taken seriously on PEI and the Island Party is not likely to make it to the next provincial election.

In the dying days of the campaign, a second and larger opinion survey (this time with some 1,000 respondents) was conducted by Corporate Research Associates for the main newspaper on PEI, *The Guardian*. While the results showed a slight decline in support for the Liberals, Ghiz still had a

comfortable lead of 17 points over the Crane-led PCs. The Greens did manage to increase their poll numbers by 2 percent—largely at the expense of the NDP—but these two parties could barely break the 10 percent mark combined. When Islanders were asked which individual they would most prefer as premier, Ghiz garnered 44 percent and Crane 28, up 6 percent from the early September poll. But as CRA's Mills concluded: "The gap before was pretty large, it was 28 percentage points. Now, it's down to 17 but that's still a big gap in a two-party province" (Thibodeau, 2011c).

What was equally interesting was the release of a second CRA poll the next day that indicated which issues were occupying the minds of most voters. To the surprise of many, it was not the controversial PNP program, which the PCs had essentially made the cornerstone of their attack-minded election campaign. That issue ranked a tepid fifth, outranked by such concerns as education, unemployment, the economy, and the environment (Thibodeau, 2011d). Forty-two percent of those polled believed health care was the top election issue, while the PNP attracted the interest of just 5 percent of voters. Obvious questions were thus being raised in both parties over whether the explosive mid-campaign issue of the PNP was having any electoral impact at all.

The late-campaign polling results were good news for the Liberals, bad news for the PCs. PC insiders started to wonder whether they had focused too much on the PNP at the expense of other, more pressing issues like health care and education. Perhaps Islanders grew tired of hearing about the PNP; some were likely confused by it, while others blamed both the Liberals and the PCs for mismanaging the program from its beginnings in 2000-2001, when the PCs were in power. Nor did the polls reveal any division between rural and urban voters (which the final results demonstrated well, as the Liberals won every seat but one west of Charlottetown.) Still, the Liberals received almost 5,000 fewer votes than it did in 2007 and voting turnout overall hit a historic low. Either complacency or disgust convinced a substantial number of voters to stay home.

Conclusion

By Monday's voting day, none of the "dirty politics," promises or mud-slinging really mattered. In fact, some pundits suggested that the *Globe and Mail's* intervention may have actually worked in favour of the governing Liberals, arguing that strongly independent-minded Islanders did not take kindly to "outside" interference in their political affairs. One other factor working in Ghiz's favour was the failure of the smaller third parties to register in any meaningful way on the political radar screen, and thus pose little challenge to the two dominant parties, even by way of vote-splitting. Meanwhile, the notorious ability of the first-past-the-post electoral system to skew results certainly favoured the Liberals. PC candidates lost by less than 200 votes in six ridings. A mere two percent increase in the PC's overall vote, distributed amongst these six ridings, would have given the PCs 11 seats to the Liberals' 16. Neither was there a clear urban-rural split in the vote. Having said that, Charlottetown is

home to five ridings, and all five elected Liberals, including Premier Ghiz who represents Charlottetown-Brighton (District 13). The Liberals were also successful in six of the seven ridings surrounding Charlottetown, losing only Stratford-Kinlock (District 6) to the PCs. The Liberals also won Summerside-Wilmot (District 21). Eastern PEI seemed to favour the PCs, who won the three most eastern seats: Souris-Elmira (District 1), Georgetown-St. Peters (District 2) and Morell-Mermaid (District 7). But the party also picked up Tignish-Palmer Road (District 27) at the western tip.

Possibly the most shocking development on election night was the early reports of a low voter turnout across the province. PEI regularly garners over 85 percent participation rates in provincial elections, and in 2003 eighty-three percent of Islanders turned up at the polls, the day after the island had been hit by a damaging hurricane. As reported above, the paltry 76.5 percent voter participation is the lowest turnout number since such records were kept. But when the dust had settled, the Liberals had lost just one seat from their 2007 total of 23 and the PCs had picked up one to give them a total of five. The one bright spot for the PCs was the fact that Olive Crane won her seat handily: some pundits had predicted that she would have trouble holding it.

Speculation continues on why voter turnout was down. Perhaps voters were merely turned off by the general negative tenor of the campaign, which neither the Liberals nor the Progressive Conservatives shied away from. Liberals supporters may have been put off by the over-reaction of the Ghiz government to the PNP controversy, while diehard PC voters may have stayed away from the polls because of their displeasure with Crane's aggressive and accusatory tone. However, PC campaign chair George Macdonald dismissed any suggestion of a negative campaign turning voters off, arguing: "I don't believe there was negative advertising. They were accusing us of negative advertising. That wouldn't result in nearly 5,000 Liberals staying home. That would make them come out twice as fast" (Thibodeau, 2011e). Provincial Liberal party president Ewan Clark, who was unsure about what accounted for the low voter participation numbers, noted: "It may have been a factor of the political realm that we're in right now. It's been very active politically in federal and provincial politics over the last number of years." It could simply have been the fact that Islanders have caught up with Canadian voters in other parts of the country who cannot be bothered to show up at the polls—or seemingly have better things to do.

Of course, it remains to be seen whether the low voter turnout in 2011 marks the beginning of a long-term trend on PEI or whether it is just an incidental, one-off occurrence. Nevertheless, it is difficult not to connect the impact of the PNP scandal, and how it played out in the campaign, with the drop of votes for both the Liberals and the PCs. Perhaps, then, the real cost of the scandal was civic disengagement and cynicism in a province that has always prided itself on its high voter participation.

In any case, the 2011 general election was a resounding victory for the Robert Ghiz Liberals. In the end, PC leader Olive Crane was defeated not by her campaign or her party's

platform, but by the ineluctable forces of electoral history and Island political culture. Over the last 75 years, almost every government on PEI that secured a first mandate was given a second (and even a third) in the succeeding provincial elections.¹⁴ A good many Islanders no doubt said to themselves over the course of the 2011 campaign: "It's still the Liberals' turn."

However, that sentiment may dissipate quickly if the Liberal government has to cut widely and deeply—especially in terms of social services and the civil service itself—to balance the provincial books in the short term. Therefore, if the PCs can get their act together going forward (which may yet require a change in party leadership), all bets will be off for the next election slated for October 2015.

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Endnotes

- 1 At dissolution, the Liberals held 24 seats (the 24th won in a by-election), the PCs held two, and one seat was vacant.
- 2 In 1979, in addition to the Liberals, PCs and the NDP, voters in the 5th electoral district (Queens) could cast a ballot for the Draft Beer Party. Two hundred chose to do so.
- 3 Formally known as the Island New Democrats.
- 4 Up until 1996, Prince Edward Island used a multi-member riding system (16), and voters cast ballots for both a Councillor and an Assemblyman (a hold-over from the old bicameral system consisting of a Legislative Council and a Legislative Assembly).
- 5 Bracketed numbers refer to the votes received as a percentage of valid ballots cast, not of eligible voters.
- 6 When calculated as a percentage of votes cast in ridings where they ran candidates, the results for the Greens was 5.3%, the NDP 6.1%, and the Island Party 2.2%.
- 7 In 2007, Sonny Gallant (Lib) received 1,311 votes, Wilfred Arsenault (PC) 935 and Manny Gallant (Green) 103.
- 8 Campbell had defeated PC Andy Mooney in 2007 by winning 1,422 votes to Mooney's 1,212. LeClair had defeated PC Gail Shea in 2007 by 293 votes. Shea would run successfully as the federal Conservative candidate for Egmont in 2010, and is currently the federal Minister for National Revenue.
- 9 Mike Currie, PC MLA for George-Town St. Peters (District 2) resigned his seat to run (unsuccessfully) for the Conservative Party of Canada in the 2010 federal election. Pat Binns, PC leader and former premier resigned in 2007 to become Canadian ambassador to Ireland (see text). Jim Bagnall, MLA Montague-Kilmuir (District 3) declined to re-offer in 2010. (www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/story/2011/07/07/pei-bagnall-not-reoffering-election-584.html)
- 10 Of course, there was bitterness in the Liberal camp over the feeling that the Harper Conservatives—via the leak about a possible RCMP investigation of PEI's immigrant program—had improperly interfered in the election campaign to boost the flagging fortunes of Olive Crane.
- 11 Even before the election writ was dropped, campy attack videos against Allan Campbell, the Minister of Innovation (and responsible for the PNP file) appeared on *YouTube*, attacking the MLA for not doing enough in his constituency. There appeared to be no evidence to suggest that these ads had the imprimatur of the provincial PC party.
- 12 In 1996, family physician and NDP leader Dr. Herb Dickieson won the West Point-Bloomfield seat (District 25).
- 13 In early December, the NDP sought to reduce its election debt by selling meat pies to Islanders.
- 14 Thirty-one provincial elections have been held since 1900 on PEI. The Liberals have won 20 and the Conservatives/PCs 11. In 1919, the Liberals defeated the Conservatives, only to lose to that party in the next election (1923). In subsequent elections, the parties traded victories with the Liberals returning to power in 1927, the Conservatives in 1931, followed by the Liberals in 1935.

This was followed by five straight victories for the Liberals. Since 1935, no government has been defeated after just one term.