

The 2014 Provincial Election in New Brunswick

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Introduction:

New Brunswick's 38th General Election was held 22 September 2014.² Brian Gallant's Liberals defeated incumbent David Alward's Progressive Conservatives (PCs), winning 27 seats to the PCs' 21.³ Three other parties contested the election: the New Democratic Party (NDP), under Dominic Cardy; the Greens, under David Coon; and the People's Alliance of New Brunswick (PANB), under Kris Austin. Opinion polls taken at the outset of the official election campaign period predicted a Liberal landslide. However, the Liberal lead eroded over the course of the campaign, and the final results were much closer than had been predicted earlier. Two hundred and twenty candidates stood for election, 15 fewer than in 2010. Seventy-one of these candidates were women, the same number as ran in 2010, but more than double the number that ran in 2006 and 2003 (see Table 6). The popular vote for the Liberals was 42.5 percent, the PCs 34.5 percent, the Greens 6.6 percent, and the NDP 12.0 percent. The PANB garnered only 2.1 percent; however, the party received 5.9 percent in the 18 ridings where it fielded candidates (see Table 1). Voter turnout in 2014 was 64.7 percent, down from 69.6 percent in 2010 (see Table 5).

Green Party leader David Coon won the riding of Fredericton-South, the first member of the Greens to win a seat in New Brunswick, and for that matter the first Green candidate to win a seat in any provincial election east of British Columbia. PANB leader Kris Austin came very close, losing the riding of Fredericton-Grand Lake by just 26 votes, while NDP leader Dominic Cardy came second in Fredericton-West Hanwell, losing by 469 votes.

² The Legislature adjourned for the summer 29 July 2014, and was dissolved 21 August 2014.

³ See Table 3 for a comparison of party standings, 1999-2014.

Table 1: Popular Vote 1999-2014

Party / Election	1999	2003	2006	2010	2014
Lib	37.0%	44.0%	46.8%	34.2%	42.5%
PC	52.6%	45.0%	47.1%	48.4%	34.5%
NDP	8.7%	9.6%	5.1%	10.3%	12.9%
COR	0.7%	DNR	DNR	DNR	DNR
Green	DNR	DNR	DNR	4.5%	6.6%
PANB	DNR	DNR	DNR	1.2%	2.1%
NLP	0.1%	DNR	DNR	DNR	DNR
Grey	DNR	0.4%	DNR	DNR	DNR

Legend:

Lib = Liberal Party of New Brunswick
 PC = Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick
 NDP = New Democratic Party of New Brunswick
 COR = Confederation of Regions Party of New Brunswick
 Green = Green Party of New Brunswick
 PANB = People's Alliance Party of New Brunswick
 NLP = Natural Law Party of New Brunswick
 Grey = Grey Party of New Brunswick
 DNR = Did not field candidates

Seven ridings were granted recounts: Fredericton-Grand Lake, Carleton-Victoria, Shippagan-Lameque-Miscou, Saint John Harbour, Saint John East, Charlotte-Campobello, and Fredericton North, the most recounts since Elections NB started keeping records of such things.⁴

The closest race took place in Saint John East, where the Liberal candidate, Gary Keating, was

⁴ Section 94 of the Elections Act governs recount provisions in New Brunswick. An election result in which the margin of victory is 25 votes or less is automatically reviewed through a judicial recount. Otherwise, "any elector" of the riding concerned may request a recount if a judge agrees, based on "the affidavit of a credible witness that one of the following has occurred: an election officer or a vote tabulation machine failed to count, improperly counted or improperly rejected any ballots or made an incorrect statement of the number of votes cast for a candidate; or the Returning Officer improperly added up the votes." Judges from the Court of Queen's Bench oversee the recount, which is conducted by hand with representatives of the candidates present (Elections NB [n.d.]).

confirmed as the winner with just nine votes more than his PC challenger, Glen Savoie. The recounts confirmed the results in all seven ridings, although Saint John East ended up producing perhaps the oddest story of the 2014 election, when the victorious Liberal candidate Keating resigned his seat just two weeks after the recount results were announced. In the subsequent by-election, Savoie easily beat Liberal candidate Dr. Shelley Rinehart (who was Saint John's Deputy Mayor). As a result, the Liberals' seat total was reduced to 26 and the PCs increased to 22.

David Alward's defeat at the hands of Liberal leader Brian Gallant marked only the second time in New Brunswick history that a governing party was defeated after just one term. The first took place in 2010, when Alward defeated Shawn Graham's Liberals (Desserud 2011). The certainty that a government in New Brunswick will serve for at least two terms in office appears to be over. Indeed, it may well have been over for some time. As has been the case in several other provinces, governments in New Brunswick often served three or more terms before being defeated: Louis Robichaud's Liberals won three successive elections in the 1960s (1960, 1964 and 1967), Richard Hatfield's PCs won four straight elections in the 1970s and 1980s (1970, 1974, 1978, 1982), and Frank McKenna's Liberals won three straight elections in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s (1987, 1991, 1995). However, a closer examination reveals that the 1995 election may well be the last time that a governing party in the province went into an election with a realistic assurance of victory. Some pundits did assume that the Liberals, then under McKenna's successor Camille Theriault, would easily defeat the neophyte PC leader Bernard Lord in 1999. Nevertheless, the PCs swept that election, winning 44 seats in the 55-seat legislature. Lord would win the next election, held in 2003, but he did so by the smallest of margins (a shift of fewer than a dozen votes in one riding would have meant the Liberals and

PCs were tied with 27 seats apiece, and the NDP, with one seat, would have held the balance of power). The PCs lost the 2006 election to the Liberals, who in turn lost the 2010 election to the PCs. Now the PCs have lost the 2014 election to the Liberals. Therefore, in 2014, it had been almost 20 years (since 1995) that an incumbent party in New Brunswick was assured a victory.⁵

That being said, Alward's defeat was reminiscent of Graham's defeat in 2010: a newly-elected government, initially scoring high in public opinion polls, sees that support drop steadily over the next four years. Policies are not supported, and public protests are rampant. By the time the election is held, the government and its leader are labeled as irrevocably unpopular. Meanwhile, the opposition finds a new leader, who wins the next election primarily by successfully exploiting the government's unpopularity. Opposition parties don't win elections, goes the popular dictum, governments lose them. This bromide seems to be true in New Brunswick.

Players

Two of the five leaders had led parties in campaigns before 2014, with Brian Gallant, Dominic Cardy, and David Coon playing the role of newcomers. The incumbent premier David Alward won the New Brunswick Progressive Conservative party leadership in 2008. Before becoming party leader, Alward had served as minister of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture in Bernard Lord's cabinet (2003-2006). Alward had also been the MLA for Woodstock since 1999. Alward's time as leader of the party will most likely be remembered for his quiet, unassuming leadership, and his willingness to share the spotlight with key cabinet ministers such as Blaine Higgs

⁵ Another interpretation might be that the 2010 election was the outlier, the result of an unusual combination of events that conspired to dethrone the Liberals. Had that result not gone against the Liberals, then the old pattern of successive victories for the same party would stand.

(Finance) and Ted Flemming (Health). During his four years as premier, Alward was notably low key and did not garner much love or hate from New Brunswickers. Rather than focusing on the leader, the PCs tellingly fought the 2014 campaign on issues and the party.

Following in the province's record of finding young party leaders and electing young premiers, Brian Gallant became the Liberal party's leader in 2013. Mind you, it wasn't Gallant's first major foray into provincial politics, even at his young age of 31. When only 24, Gallant ran a strong campaign against Premier Bernard Lord for the Moncton East riding in the 2006 provincial election. Although Gallant sat out the 2010 election, the McGill-educated lawyer remained active in the New Brunswick Liberal Party before eventually winning the party's leadership. Fluently bilingual and politically polished, Gallant's age and boyish looks (while a university student, Gallant won the Mr. New Brunswick pageant)⁶ never really emerged as an issue. In a demonstration of strong linkages to the federal Liberal party, Gallant played up his relationship with federal Liberal leader Justin Trudeau and Liberal MP Dominic LeBlanc (Beausejour) in the lead-up to the election, with Leblanc serving as campaign co-chair.

Another party leader who showed a strong allegiance to the federal wing of his party was NDP leader Dominic Cardy. While the NDP in New Brunswick has struggled to make the same breakthrough that the party achieved federally, Cardy's experience and credentials provided the party with a high profile leader for the 2014 campaign. Cardy spent most of the 2000s working overseas for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a non-governmental organization promoting democracy in developing nations, before returning to become involved in provincial politics. In the 2010 provincial election, Cardy was the campaign

⁶ Richer 2006. Gallant was also once the head coach of the provincial tennis program.

director for the Roger Duguay-led NDP. While Cardy may have been a party insider, he pushed the party's base to consider centrist and middle-of-the-road policy positions (e.g. tax cuts), and tried re-branding the party as the "New" New Democratic Party. A noted advocate of Tony Blair's Third Way, Cardy was acclaimed leader of the party in 2011, and in the summer of 2012, ran and lost in a provincial by-election (for the seat vacated by PC cabinet minister, Margaret-Ann Blaney) in Rothesay. While unsuccessful in winning the seat, Cardy still enjoyed a consistent public profile through media appearances leading up to the general election.

For the second election in a row, the Green Party and PANB leaders played significant roles in the campaign. Co-founder of the PANB, Kris Austin returned as leader of his party, while David Coon ran his first campaign as leader of the Greens. The PANB was created in response to the Liberal government's plans to sell NB Hydro to Quebec in 2009. Running candidates in just 18 ridings (four more than 2010), the PANB is also very leader-centric.

In contrast, the Greens ran candidates in 46 ridings (compared to 49 in 2010). Coon, one of the province's leading environmentalists with over 28 years on the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, was elected leader of the Greens in 2012 (CBC News, 22 Sep 2012). Like the leaders of the PANB and the NDP, Coon's personal profile dominated the Greens' campaign. Propitiously, resource development would become the defining issue of the campaign, and so Coon took on a role of greater significance than would normally have been afforded to a leader of a party that had never won a seat in a New Brunswick election.

Reapportionment

The reapportionment that took effect in 2014 produced one of the more extensive redrawing of NB's electoral boundaries in its history. The result was the loss of six ridings, leaving New

Brunswick with 49 seats⁷ -- the fewest number of ridings that New Brunswick has had since 1949.⁸ The decision to drop the number of ridings was based, in part, on the realization that the population shifts in the province, in which the south was gaining population primarily at the expense of the north, meant that a simple mathematical reapportionment of the 55 ridings would result in a significant loss of ridings in northern New Brunswick and a gain in southern New Brunswick. This would invariably be interpreted in New Brunswick as an increase in Anglophone representation, and a corresponding loss of Francophone representation. Better to simply reduce the number of ridings overall, rather than add to the total number in the south. The new ridings were drawn based on a target population of 11,269, and a variance of plus or minus 10 percent (as stipulated by New Brunswick's *Electoral Boundaries and Representation Act*).

Lead-up 2010-2014

The context of the 2014 New Brunswick election was set in the circumstances of the 2010 election. The 2010 election was historic for a number of reasons. The election broke New Brunswick participation records in terms of number of candidates (235) and female candidates (71). As explained above, it was also the first time that a government in New Brunswick had been defeated after just one term. That year, David Alward led the PCs to victory on the backs of a struggling Liberal government which had stumbled into the general election with a number of public policy misfires and reversals. At the conclusion of his first mandate, Shawn Graham was a

⁷ The Commission divided the province into six districts: Northern, Miramichi, South, Capital, River Valley, and Southeast. The Northern and Southeast region each lost 1.5 seats; while Miramichi, South, Capital, and River Valley lost one each.

⁸ The most was 58, which NB carried from 1967 to 1995.

very unpopular premier and the PCs took advantage of this (Desserud 2011).

Alward had also been the "oldest" premier to win an election since Hugh John Flemming won in 1953. New Brunswick has a notable record of electing young leaders, (Louis Robichaud, Richard Hatfield, Frank McKenna, Bernard Lord and Shawn Graham were all under 40 when first sworn-in as premier), all of whom were initially accused of an excess of youthful exuberance, if not rashness. Alward did not suffer from such maladies and instead was viewed as a principled, steady hand without much flash. Alward's legacy will most likely include his government's attempts at pension reform, introducing a catastrophic drug program and pursuit of greater natural resource development, including the use of hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") for the exploration and recovery of shale gas. Throughout their mandate, the government returned to its main objectives of balancing the budget, reducing the size of government, and stopping the flood of out migration from the province.

The fact that the fracking debate came to dominate the 2014 election campaign should not have come as a surprise to anyone who followed the PC government closely from its election in 2010. By 2011, Premier Alward was making the case that shale gas would generate essential revenue to help the New Brunswick government pay for program delivery in the province. As Alward worked to build his case, protests against shale gas emerged with some companies halting their operations. Nevertheless, and throughout the four years of the PC tenure, New Brunswickers remained firmly divided on the issue.⁹

While the shale gas issue was divisive for the province, there was another resource

⁹ Organized protests, particularly over energy-related issues (such as the attempt by the Graham Liberal government to sell NB Power to Hydro Quebec in 2009), seem to have become a part of NB political life. See Desserud (2015a).

development that had strong support from the public and the major parties – the development of a West-East pipeline. In 2012, the government began its campaign for a pan-Canadian pipeline shipping crude oil from Alberta to Saint John for refining. The proposed pipeline would become a central plank to the government's platform to change the economic direction of the province. However, similar to shale gas exploration, it was a plan with a number of unanswered questions, including whether or not the governments of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan would support the transport of oil by pipeline through their provinces. During this campaign, Alward would have high profile meetings with Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Alberta Premier Alison Redford; the Redford courtship peaking when Alward addressed the Alberta legislature in late 2013.

In 2012, the government faced a by-election to fill a seat vacated by former cabinet minister Margaret-Ann Blaney. The by-election campaign was fought in the shadow of Blaney's appointment as the new head of Efficiency New Brunswick and provided the opposition with a target for accusations of patronage.¹⁰ Still, PC candidate Ted Flemming won the by-election.¹¹ Later in the same year, Fundy-River Valley MLA Jim Parrott was expelled from the PC caucus for questioning the government's support of bilingualism and duality in health care, which he argued was diverting much-needed resources away from patient care. Parrott's criticism stung, as he was a practicing cardiologist in Saint John. Still, other than a few headlines, the Parrott story

¹⁰ In contrast, PC premier Bernard Lord had appointed the former leader of the NDP (Elizabeth Weir) as Efficiency NB's CEO when the agency was first created.

¹¹ Flemming, whose grandfather (Hugh John) and great-grandfather (James Kidd) both served as premiers of NB, won the riding with 38% of the vote, and a margin of 297 votes over the Liberal candidate John Wilcox. NDP leader Dominic Cardy ran for the NDP, and received 27% of the vote.

did not inflict lasting damage on the Alward government. In fact, Parrott sat not as an independent but an "Independent Progressive Conservative" and was eventually welcomed back into caucus, just before the 2014 general election.¹²

Events seemingly beyond the government's control also played a role during the four-year Alward government, including major flooding along the Saint John River including millions of dollars of damage to communities such as Perth-Andover near the American border in central west New Brunswick. Although the government obviously could not be blamed for the natural disasters, it was criticized for its slow response and inadequate offers for compensation and relief.

In the wake of Shawn Graham's disappointing performance in the 2010 election, the Liberal party went through a brief period of renewal, culminating in the 2012 Liberal leadership selection. On 27 October 2012, 30-year old Moncton-area lawyer Brian Gallant won the Liberal leadership race with almost 60 percent of the vote, beating former Graham-era cabinet minister Mike Murphy and former Belledune (a small town in Northern New Brunswick) mayor Nick Duivenvoorden. Setting the stage for the 2014 "fixed-election" date, the first poll released after Gallant's selection showed the Liberals and PCs tied (Huras 2012). Over the next two years, the Liberals and Gallant would enjoy increasing support in public opinion polls and most observers began to predict a Liberal victory in the 2014 election.

Although there were some moments of optimism for the PCs, any momentum the Alward government enjoyed during the 2013 and 2014 was mainly as a result of hope attached to the possibility of the Energy East pipeline. Unfortunately for Alward, the resource-development

¹² Dr. Jim Parrot died 4 October 2016 and the age of 74. He was not re-elected in 2014.

policy momentum the government was attempting to ride was hit with a major speed bump in October 2013. First Nations protesters made national news with road blockades and tense clashes with police. The protests near Rexton (north of Moncton) did catch the attention of Alward, who immediately arranged to meet with officials from the Elsipogtog First Nation. While no clear resolution was reached, the conflict foreshadowed what the government might confront if shale gas exploration continued around the province. Still, the lead-up to the 2014 election was clearly built on resource development and job creation as Alward began to take his message of support for the West-East pipeline across the country.

In general, the Alward government was relatively scandal-free and therefore was prepared to make a case for competent management of the New Brunswick economy. Just over a year before the 2014 election, Alward stood in front of the refinery in Saint John during the announcement of the pipeline partnership between TransCanada and Irving Oil and declared "It's not an overstatement to say that today is a game-changer" (Huras 2013a). Soon after the TransCanada announcement, the government released their first "Say Yes" advertisement, with Alward stating in the ad, "Our economy is improving, exports are up, energy costs are stable, we're building on a solid foundation. New Brunswickers are saying 'yes' to new opportunities, 'yes' to growth, 'yes' to innovation and 'yes' to bringing our young people home" (Huras 2013b). And with that, the race was on.

Polls

Unlike previous election campaigns, New Brunswickers were not inundated with public opinion polls in 2014. However, those polls that were published reveal some interesting, if ambiguous, trends.

May 2014 marked the highest level of polling support garnered by the Liberal Party since choosing Brian Gallant as their leader in 2012. In a Corporate Research Associates (CRA) survey conducted between 12–30 May, the Liberals were favoured by 53 percent of decided voters, compared to 28 percent who supported the PCs (the NDP and Greens polled at 16 percent and three percent respectively).

Thirty-five percent of decided voters polled in May 2014 preferred Gallant as premier, compared to just 20 percent who preferred Premier David Alward. The NDP leader, Dominic Cardy, was preferred by 11 percent, Green Party leader David Coon by six percent, and PANB leader Kris Austin by just one percent.¹³

These numbers changed slightly between May and when the writ was dropped in August, so that the polling numbers at the beginning of the official election campaign period reported that 48 percent of decided or leaning voters supported the Liberals, compared to 28 percent supporting the governing PCs. The popularity of the leaders did not change significantly over this time. Premier Alward's numbers rose slightly (and within the margin of error), scoring a 22 percent approval rating, while Gallant's rating remained at 35%.¹⁴

With polling numbers this high, the Liberals entered the official campaign period with a significant psychological advantage. Indeed, some analysts speculated that New Brunswickers might well be facing a situation similar to that of 1987, when the Liberals won

¹³ Eighteen percent were undecided, four percent refused to answer, and nine percent supported none of the parties, or did not plan on voting. <http://cra.ca/nb-liberals-widen-lead-in-voter-intentions-2>

¹⁴ Fourteen percent were undecided, four percent refused to answer, and seven percent supported none of the parties, or did not plan on voting. Poll conducted 19 August to 31 August. <http://cra.ca/nb-liberals-still-well-ahead-in-voter-intentions-although-gap-narrows/>

all 58 seats in the legislature. However, once the official campaign was underway, the numbers began to shift (or perhaps settle) so that the support for the Liberals dropped to 45 percent, while the PCs reached 36 percent. Meanwhile, the NDP dropped to 11 percent (the Greens were at six percent, and the PANB were stuck at two percent). Premier Alward's personal popularity improved to 27 percent, Gallant' dropped to 32 percent, while Cardy levelled out at seven percent.¹⁵

CRA was not the only survey company publishing opinion polls: Forum Research Inc. also polled during the campaign. Forum's polls reported numbers similar to those reported by CRA, except for its last press release, which came out 21 September, or one day before the election date. In that release, titled "All tied up in New Brunswick: Progressive Conservatives to take most seats," Forum reported that support for the PCs had increased significantly over the course of the campaign so that on the day before the election, both the Liberals and the PCs had the support of 40 percent of decided voters.¹⁶

Alward's popularity had also increased, while Gallant's and Cardy's had both fallen. Forum predicted that the PCs would win 26 seats to the Liberals 23, which would have been a remarkable "save" for the PCs given the dire straits the party was in at the election outset. However, Forum's predictions did not come true, and the final popular vote was quite close to CRA's final polling numbers (see Table 2 below). Nevertheless, the shift in polling numbers over the course of the campaign does suggest that the PCs were gaining strength, and that their

¹⁵ <http://cra.ca/gap-narrows-as-election-nears>

¹⁶ <http://poll.forumresearch.com/data/NB%20Horserace%20News%20Release%20%282014%2009%2021%29%20For%20um%20Research.pdf>

message of economic prosperity based on resource extraction was getting through. It was just too little, too late.

Table 2: Polls

Polling Company	Date Conducted	PC	Liberal	NDP	Green	PANB
CRA	19-31 Aug	28	48	17	4	2
Forum	11 Sep	32	42	13	6	--
CRA	15-18 Sep	36	45	11	6	2
Forum	21 Sep	40	40	12	6	--
Election	22 Sep	35	43	13	7	2

Issues

As one might expect, the economy was the central issue in the campaign. In this respect, the 2014 campaign was like most others in New Brunswick history. The province is a chronic economic underperformer, posting high unemployment rates and a very modest GDP growth, dependent on equalization payments and other federal transfers, suffering from significant and worrying outmigration of young employable people, and burdened by low rates of in-migration and immigration retention. Academic observers made strategic interventions to help shape the campaign debate. As he had done in previous election campaigns, political scientist Donald Savoie wrote op-eds and granted interviews drawing attention to the province's woes (Morris 2014a). Perhaps the most incisive effort was made by l'Université de Moncton's Richard Saillant, whose *Over the Cliff?: Acting Now to Avoid New Brunswick's Bankruptcy* was published in the spring of 2014 (Saillant 2014), well in time to make it into the hands of policy analysts, journalists, party elites, and interested voters. The book is a call to action to address the

interlocking problems associated with demographic aging, economic stagnation, and undisciplined and ineffective government spending. Meanwhile, the media helped frame the election campaign by drawing attention to business owners in the province leaving for Maine where the climate is more business-friendly (CBC News 14 May 2014).

At the centre of the economic issue was shale gas. The province is estimated to possess 67-80 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, most of it trapped in shale rock formations, and retrievable principally by means of hydraulic fracturing. Despite (or perhaps because of) its widespread use across North America, the technique remains quite controversial in Atlantic Canada, as it is elsewhere.

For proponents, "fracking" provides the means to reverse outmigration, create private sector jobs, increase government revenues, eliminate deficits, fund social policies, and allow the province to climb out of chronic "have-not" status as one of the largest per capita recipients of equalization grants. It is also among the "cleanest" of hydrocarbons.¹⁷ In short, it represents an opportunity for the sort of provincial turnaround enjoyed by Saskatchewan and Newfoundland, two provinces whose dire economic circumstances were improved by the exploitation of oil and gas.

For opponents, fracking is a dangerous, environmentally damaging act of violence on the

¹⁷ According to the *International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA)*, natural gas delivers the least amount of carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide or nitrous oxides when burnt, compared to other fossil fuels like coal and oil. See Mokhtab et al. (2006: 620). Others argue, however, that this is offset by the excessive amounts of methane emitted by the burning of natural gas, methane being a more potent greenhouse gas. See Howarth et al. (2010).

earth, threatening the pollution of aquifers, the degradation of surface lands and habitat, and even precipitating earthquakes. More broadly, opponents consider natural gas production to advance global warming and distract us from investment renewable energy development. Furthermore, a succession of New Brunswick governments (both Liberal and PC) have tried to convince the public that the latest large-scale energy project would fix to the province's economic woes. So far, none have worked (Desserud 2015a). Exploiting NB's ample natural gas resources was presented in a similar light: as a single-industry fix for a chronically underperforming economy. Not surprisingly, voters were suspicious.

New Brunswickers have been almost evenly split on fracking from the beginning. Debate has done little to move opinion. Other things being equal, the PCs ought to have benefitted from the issue since they were the only major party to support it while the others expressed varying levels of concern and opposition. Accordingly, the anti-fracking vote was liable to split among the opposition parties while the pro-fracking vote would go largely to the governing party. The Liberals proposed a moratorium (but not an outright ban) on fracking until its risks were more clearly known. This turned out to be a prudent policy. Polls suggest that a "slim majority" of New Brunswickers support fracking, and so the Liberals were able to assuage at least some of the worries of those who did not support fracking, but leave the door open to the possibility of fracking to appease those who do (CBC News, 19 June 2013).

In contrast, the Alward PCs put almost all their eggs in the non-renewable energy basket, promising in election materials and their platform that a re-elected Alward government would facilitate over \$10 billion of private sector investment in shale gas development, new mining projects, Trans-Canada Pipeline's Energy East plan to pipe Alberta oil from the oil sands projects

to refining facilities as far east as Saint John, and a reconfigured liquid natural gas export terminal in the same city (PC NB 2014: 1).

New Brunswick's other resource industry, forestry, also figured in the campaign. According to the Department of Natural Resources' report, *A Strategy for Crown Lands Management* (NB NR 2014), the Alward provincial government would reverse a decline in jobs in forestry, and a decline in the industry's competitiveness, by making new Crown-owned forestry resources available to the industry over a longer period, thereby providing the security of supply necessary to make new investments in forestry capacity profitable. An additional benefit of this plan was to increase jobs in rural and northern New Brunswick where jobs are increasingly scarce. Opponents argue that the increased access to wood would endanger wildlife habitat and cause soil erosion. Furthermore, they complained that the province's patrimony was being handed on a plate to the dominant industrial conglomerate owned by the Irving family of Saint John. Under this strategy, protected Crown lands would be reduced by a quarter to about 23 percent of Crown land. Critics said this did nothing for the more-than 40,000 private woodlot owners. The Liberals promised to review the plan and the deals with industry concluded under its terms, while the NDP and Greens were more stolidly opposed. The opposition parties had public opinion on their side (Berry 2014a).

One of the more controversial initiatives of the Alward government was to address public pension plan unfunded liabilities. Because of poor market performance, very generous pension terms, and demographic change (people retiring early and living longer), public plans in New Brunswick have required topping up from general revenues and this has added to the overall debt. The Alward government adopted a shared-risk model involving higher employee

contributions, a higher penalty-free retirement age, and other cushions in times of poor fund performance.

The plan angered many retired public servants, particularly before the government agreed to shield current retirees from declines in benefits in times of poor market performance. The issue turned out to be something of a damp squib, perhaps because civil servants found it difficult to argue that their very generous plans should be back-stopped by taxpayers who have rather more modest (and vulnerable) plans by comparison or no plans at all.

Another damp squib was health care. Historically, health care has ranked near the top of lists of issues voters declare to be most important. After all, health is a concern for everyone and almost everyone has some contact with the system. In New Brunswick, the evidence of an ailing health care system is undeniable (NB MS 2013). Wait times are long, beds are misallocated, health outcomes are among the poorest in Canada, and costs keep rising, now consuming 40 percent of provincial program spending. The parties largely avoided the issues, putting in their platforms general language about fixing primary care, supporting the growth of better seniors care facilities, and finding efficiencies.

Here is where Kris Austin of the People's Alliance made his mark. The PANB is a populist southwest New Brunswick-based party whose supporters bear an affinity to the old COR party that enjoyed a flash of attention in the early 1990s (and formed the Official Opposition in 1991). For the PANB as for COR, bilingualism is a burr in the saddle. A consociational settlement on language now prevails among the major parties and the province's official bilingualism is unassailable (Wilbur 1989). But the province's health system has two administrative authorities divided on linguistic lines, and during the campaign, the PANB

complained of administrative costs associated with linguistic accommodation totaling \$100 million annually.

Surprising to many was the appearance of abortion as an election issue. Restrictions on the provision of abortion services, including their funding, is covered under the province's Medical Act, specifically Regulation 84-20, Schedule 2, s. (a.1).¹⁸ This was put in place by the McKenna Liberals in 1989 in the wake of a Supreme Court of Canada decision striking down Canada's criminal regulation of abortion (NB GR 2015). Abortions were available, however, for a fee at the private Morgentaler clinic in Fredericton. In April 2014, that clinic announced its July closure due to financial troubles. Appeals for funds to keep the clinic open were combined with calls for the repeal of the restrictions on funding abortions.

While the PCs and the PANB were in favour of the status quo, the other parties sided with the pro-choice movement. Brian Gallant of the Liberals pronounced himself pro-choice and, backed by a Liberal policy convention resolution in favour of repeal of the regulation, insisted that all his caucus members vote for repeal when the time came (Berry 2014b). The PCs ridiculed the heavy hand of the leader, but appeared somewhat defensive when asked if pro-choice PCs would be able to vote *their* consciences.

Late in its mandate, the Conservative government passed legislation requiring greater financial transparency of the government and of political parties. The *Financial Transparency and Accountability Act* imposes "administrative penalties on cabinet ministers who fail to meet

¹⁸ Under Regulation 84-20, Schedule 2, s. (a.1), therapeutic abortions covered by Medicare were to be "performed by a specialist in the field of obstetrics and gynecology in a hospital facility approved by the jurisdiction in which the hospital facility is located and two medical practitioners certify in writing that the abortion was medically required...."

deficit targets, and requires the government to release a fiscal outlook 90 days prior to a provincial election. In a move apparently designed to dampen wild campaign promises, the government's law also requires parties to release audited statements costing out their campaign promises before and during election campaigns. Two other pieces of legislation designed to limit patronage (or the appearance of patronage) were also adopted by the PCs, interestingly both coming from the NDP (who did not have a seat in the Legislature). One requires senior crown corporation officials to be hired by the agency, not the government. The other requires former MLAs to wait one year before they can be appointed to a government position. It is perhaps because of these efforts that patronage and corruption did not become major issues, however much the small parties tried to tar the two old-line parties with same brush.

Campaign

Like most other Canadian jurisdictions New Brunswick purports to have "fixed" election dates established by law (Desserud 2007). Confirming suspicions that fixed election dates effectively lengthen election campaigns, local media began running stories about the run-up to the election on 22 September 2013, or exactly one year before the scheduled date. Government actions taken long before the issue of the writ (August 21) were assessed through the lens of election manoeuvring.

Two important facts framed the campaign. The first is that the Liberals began with a significant lead in the polls. It was understood by all, including the PCs, that the governing party was on the defensive and running as the dark horse. The second is that the 2014 campaign, at least initially, moved more away from a focus on New Brunswick's two main parties, the Liberals and PCs. At times during the last term of government, Cardy and his NDP posted poll

support of over 20 percent. The Greens countered with Coon, widely respected as a thoughtful, serious, and principled player in provincial affairs. Although not particularly visible in the lead-up to the election, the PANB also managed to showcase their leader, Austin, who was particularly strong in the English leadership debates. The three small parties had pockets of support, and the question was how they would exploit their local concentrations of votes, and yet maintain at least a pretension to being provincial political parties.

As the presumptive front-runners, the Liberals ran a traditional, old-line campaign. Brian Gallant did tout his youth, energy, and openness to new ideas; but in fact the Liberal campaign was defined by myriad announcements of plans and policies to strengthen the economy, advance the interests of various select groups and regions, and make government "smarter." At the centre of Gallant's message was that the PCs had four years to put the province's economic and fiscal house in order and failed. The Liberals would stimulate the economy by "investing" \$900 million in new money on badly needed infrastructure renewal. In addition, the Liberals promised a strategic program review akin the federal Liberals' effort in the mid-1990s; this review was supposed to produce \$250 million in savings in each of the four years in its new mandate. As stated above, Gallant supported the Energy East pipeline project and the construction of a natural gas export terminal in Saint John, but proposed a moratorium on shale gas exploration. Gallant tried to stick to broad themes, but when cornered on details of his tax plan by CBC-TV's Harry Forestell on September 12, he bungled his message, misstated his party's position, then later took "full responsibility," all the while blaming a sleep-deprived staffer for poor calculations.

For the PCs, it was "Say Yes" to private sector-led natural resources exploration and development. Emphasizing the positive, Premier David Alward pointed out that the government's

efforts to achieve efficiencies in government operations, develop catastrophic drug coverage for vulnerable New Brunswickers, rein in health costs, and push through public pension reforms, had set the foundation for prosperity.

Never considered a good public speaker, Alward was also never an aggressive politician. Occasionally he would manage to poke at the incongruities of the Liberals ostensible concerns over fracking, all the while heartily supporting the Energy East pipeline (CBC News, 12 Sep 2014). In like manner he occasionally ridiculed the Liberals who oppose a provincial natural gas industry but would import natural gas from the New England states to export through a new Saint John LNG terminal. But these points were rarely made and when they were, they lacked verve and panache.

Alward was perhaps at his best one-on-one and in small groups. But this is exhausting, time-consuming work, and he was hospitalized due to fatigue and illness for a short time during the campaign. Regardless, polls indicated that as the campaign wore on, the PCs narrowed the gap between them and the Liberals; some Liberals privately feared that if the campaign dragged on longer than the 32 days, the Tories might pull off a win. As the election neared, it became apparent that the PCs could hang on to much of their support in the Anglophone areas of the southwest where, incidentally, the province's energy industry is located, but that Alward's party would have a rougher time in the Francophone northeast.

Dominic Cardy called his party "the New NDP," a tag redolent of British Labour Leader Tony Blair's transformation of his union-encrusted party into "New Labour" in the early 1990s. Cardy's New NDP claims to be a socially progressive but fiscally conservative advocate for a "strong private sector" and balanced budgets. "Better government does not mean bigger

government," intoned the party's campaign book (NDP 2014). That this was indeed a new NDP soon became evident when the party revealed its slate of candidates. Stalwarts, perhaps not supportive of the new direction, left to join the Greens, but were quickly replaced by some high-profile candidates from the Liberals and PCs. Long-time PC MLA Bev Harrison, a former cabinet minister and Speaker, announced that he would be seeking the NDP nomination in Hampton, while former Liberal cabinet minister Kelly Lamrock was to run in Fredericton South. Former Liberal MLA Abel Leblanc, who invariably carries the adjective "colourful" in media reports, also ran under the NDP banner (in Saint John Lancaster). Four other NDP candidates previously ran for other parties (Chilibeck 2014). However, it was all for nought, as none were successful.

Looking back, it is reasonable to conclude that the NDP erred in its campaign strategy. Never one to be accused of excessive modesty, Cardy spoke frequently of what an "an NDP government" would do. Driving through the province in an old van, the NDP fostered the impression of a small but mighty force that would go from nothing to government amid collapsing support for the tired old parties. Spreading his resources around, Cardy failed both to highlight the other candidates and to buck up electoral support in those areas where the NDP had a chance of success. In the end, the party's respectable 13 percent of the vote failed to translate into the election of an NDP candidate, including Cardy himself.

The Greens, on the other hand, adopted a different campaign strategy. From the start, the Greens put their meagre resources into Fredericton South, where leader David Coon was running. Fredericton South encompasses UNB and St Thomas University, and so is the home to

many university students and professors.¹⁹ Also, many civil servants and other professionals, whose income does not come from the natural resource industries, were able to vote in the riding. These are demographics favourable to the Green message (in general, see Inglehart 1990). The Greens decided to concentrate their efforts on that riding in which a candidate had the greatest chance of success. So Coon spent most of his time working Fredericton South and left other Green candidates more or less to their devices.

Throughout, Coon calmly unfolded the Green platform, opposing the pipeline and shale gas and indeed any headlong expansion of non-renewable resource extraction. He was thus more consistent than other fracking critics who spoke out to protect New Brunswick's water while supporting other energy initiatives whose environmental consequences are more dire. Coon stressed local and decentralized sustainable economic development and a call for a new, less partisan politics in the province.

Given that Coon won the seat, the Green strategy clearly worked; however, Coon was ably assisted by vote splits, and won his seat with just 31 percent of the vote. His nearest competitor was incumbent Energy and Mines Minister Craig Leonard, who attracted 26.6 percent of the vote. Liberal candidate Roy Wiggins was third at 22 percent and the NDP's Kelly Lamrock was close behind at 20.1 percent.

Kris Austin of the PANB was far and away the face of his party, itself only fronting 18 candidates in the campaign. The PANB's presence on the ground was sparse. Austin campaigned hard in his own riding of Fredericton Grand Lake and came within 26 votes of beating incumbent

¹⁹ Electoral rules allow students living in Fredericton South to declare their school address as their principal residence for purposes of voting.

Pam Lynch of the PCs. As in Fredericton South, vote splits among four of the five parties with candidates in the race almost made the difference. Austin captured 28.4 percent of the vote, ahead of Liberal Sheri Shannon's 27.9 percent but just behind Lynch's 28.7 percent.

Undoubtedly, Austin's prospects in his own riding were bolstered by his effective performance in the televised debates, where he appeared articulate and measured while retaining his credentials as a populist outsider, crashing the meeting of an otherwise exclusive club of familiar parties.

Two late interventions in the campaign are worth mentioning. With less than one week to go, Corridor Resources²⁰ CEO Phil Knoll sent an open letter to the five political parties criticizing the anti-shale gas movement and extolling the benefits and safety of energy development in the province (Huras 2014a). He noted that Corridor has been operating a gas plant in New Brunswick for years and has safely drilled 43 wells and conducted 109 fracture stimulations without incident. Then Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall gave a wide-ranging interview indicating that over 44,000 oil and gas wells have been safely drilled in that province, and that natural resource development has taken Saskatchewan from have-not status to jobs and prosperity. "What are the incidents that we have found relating to fracking?" Wall asked. "[O]ur kids are coming home, they are starting new businesses, we have jobs being created for young people here, and we have a broader tax base in which we can afford education and health care investment" (Huras 2014b).

While potentially effective, these interventions came late in the campaign, perhaps allowing too little time for their messages to reverberate through a skeptical electorate. To the extent that these interventions were coordinated with the PC party campaign, they drew attention

²⁰ For company profile, see www.corridor.ca.

to the maladroit, tentative, halting manner in which the government handled its golden issues from the start. Failing to make a robust case early in its mandate, the government allowed opponents to organize and define the issues. It was unable to catch up and decisively rebut the anti-shale case.

Leaders' Debates

After nineteen days on the campaign trail, the leaders took part in five leaders' debates, none of which produced any campaign-defining moments. There was initial controversy when the PCs threatened not to participate if the Greens and PANB were included. However, that was soon settled. The first two debates were for the French Radio-Canada and English CBC, the second two for *L'Étoile / Rogers* (French) and *Telegraph-Journal / Rogers* (English), and the last was a CTV news-hour debate moderated by Maritime broadcasting veteran Steve Murphy. Alward, Gallant and Cardy participated in all five; however, neither Austin nor Coon is bilingual and so they did not participate in the French-language debates, nor were they invited to participate in the CTV debate.

In the CBC English Leaders' Debate, held on 9 September, Alward appeared flustered, distracted and delivered an uneven performance. It was revealed soon after that Alward and his wife had been in the hospital the night before the debate, suffering from a nasty bout of food poisoning. While Alward struggled to maintain his composure, Gallant played it safe. Cardy, Austin, and Coon pursued more offensive roles. At times during the debate, Gallant was just as much of a target as Alward. In the Rogers' debates, the leaders continued to focus on disagreements over shale gas, abortion and the economy.

The CTV debate was broadcasted 18 September from St. Thomas University in

Fredericton, but it included only Alward, Gallant, and Cardy. The most dramatic exchanges during this final debate had nothing to do with policy and everything to do with personal attacks. The day before the debate, an NDP candidate had tweeted a video clip that depicted Gallant and other Liberals as Nazis. While Cardy acknowledged he was disappointed by the incident, Gallant took issue with his response saying, "I can't believe you are chuckling that someone made a reference to myself and other Liberals as Nazis. My family went through a terrible time. They watched my grandfather carried off to a concentration camp." Cardy responded, "While you were teaching tennis camps, I was working with victims of genocide and war crimes" (Morris 2014b). This was a reference, first, to Gallant's experience as the New Brunswick Provincial tennis coach, and second, to Cardy's experience with the NDIIA. To conclude a bizarre exchange that only became more peculiar, Gallant refused to shake Cardy's hand in a "mutual apology."

Table 3: Party standings and election results: 2003 to 2014

	2003	at diss.	2006	at diss.	2010	at diss.	2014
PCs	28	28	26	23	42	41	21
Libs	26	26	29	32	13	13	27
NDP	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PANB	*	*	*	*	0	0	0
Green	*	*	*	*	0	0	1
IND	0	1	0	0	0	1 ²¹	0
Total	55	55	55	55	55	55	49

* did not run candidates

²¹ The lone Independent at dissolution was Bev Harrison, a former speaker and one-time PC cabinet minister. Harrison resigned from the PC caucus in 27 June 2014 to sit as an Independent, but announced that he would be running for the NDP in Hampton in the 2014 election (under an amendment made in 2014 to the NB Elections Act, a sitting MLA who wishes to change his or her party affiliation must either resign and run in a by-election, or sit as an Independent until the next general election). Dr. Jim Parrott sat as an Independent from 2012 to 2014. Parrott had been elected as a PC in 2010, but was expelled from the PC caucus in 2012. Parrott was welcomed back into the PC caucus 30 April 2014.

Analysis of Results

The Francophone Vote?

On election night, a rather bitter David Alward spoke about New Brunswickers reverting to "old ways" in their voting. This was likely a coded reference to the distribution of the Liberal votes. New Brunswick electoral politics had long been dominated by language, with Francophone voters supporting the Liberals and Anglophones supporting the PCs. Furthermore, the Francophone and Anglophone populations in the province are also (roughly) divided by geography. If a line was drawn from Edmundston in the northwest to Moncton in the southeast, the population north of the line would be predominantly Francophone, and that to the south Anglophone. The Liberals have traditionally elected more MLAs in Francophone ridings, while the PCs have done well in Anglophone ridings. However, since the 1970s, this support for the Liberals and PCs based on language has been diffused, so much so that Cross and Stewart could report in 2001 that the divisions no longer applied. Alward's election-night concern stemmed from the fact that the results showed not only that the Liberals had swept Francophone New Brunswick, they appeared to do so with strong majorities. Was this a Francophone rejection of the PCs, and perhaps of the Anglophone PC leader himself?

This is an intriguing development; however, it is still too early to decide whether Alward's worry has any merit. According to Statistics Canada, northern New Brunswick is home to 127,130 people claiming French as their mother tongue, and who constitute 77.4 percent of the population of that region (Lepage et al, 2011: 15). For the purpose of the Statistics Canada study, northern New Brunswick was defined as the region comprising the counties of Victoria, Madawaska, Restigouche, and Gloucester. These four counties correspond (with some boundary

variations) to ten ridings; that is, Restigouche West, Campbellton-Dalhousie, Restigouche-Chaleur, Bathurst West-Beresford, Bathurst East-Nepisiguit-Saint-Isidore, Caraquet, Shippagan-Lamèque-Miscou, Tracadie-Sheila, Victoria-La Vallée, Edmundston-Madawaska Centre, and Madawaska Les Lacs-Edmundston. Together these ridings had a voter turnout of 69.4 percent (compared to 65.4 percent overall), and Liberal candidates (who won nine of the ten ridings) received 56 percent of the valid votes cast (compared to 42.7 percent province-wide).

These numbers are interesting, but perhaps not as dramatic as Alward's statement would suggest. Furthermore, if the Liberal results are compared to ridings with the highest unemployment rates, then we see a similar correlation. For example, New Brunswick's Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour divides the province into four regions. The Northeast region consists of the counties of Restigouche, Gloucester, and Northumberland, and in 2012 had an unemployment rate of 16.8 percent (compared to 9.3 percent for the province). This region includes eleven provincial ridings; that is Restigouche West, Campbellton-Dalhousie, Restigouche-Chaleur, Bathurst West-Beresford, Bathurst East-Nepisiguit-Saint-Isidore, Caraquet, Shippagan-Lamèque-Miscou, Tracadie-Sheila, Miramichi Bay-Neguac, Miramichi, Southwest Miramichi-Bay du Vin. Note that neither Victoria or Madawaska counties are included, but Northumberland county, which is predominantly Anglophone, is. These eleven ridings returned ten Liberals and one PC (in Southwest Miramichi-Bay du Vin), had a voter turnout of 70.7 percent, and a popular vote for the Liberal of 54 percent. This is not to say that unemployment rates are a better predictor of Liberal support than language; rather, it reveals that the question of why predominantly Francophone ridings seem to

be supportive of the Liberal party remains a complicated one. Perhaps regions that suffer from a chronically poor economy are more likely to blame the governing party for their woes.

Meanwhile, given that the Liberals swept the regions where the most of the seats were lost due to reapportionment (see above), an election held with the previous ridings might have added three to five more seats to the Liberal total.

The Urban and Rural Vote:

New Brunswick's three major cities are Fredericton, Saint John, and Moncton. Together, these three metropolitan areas (so including their suburbs) comprise 18 ridings, and have a voting population of 193,683, or 33.9 percent of the total population of eligible voters.

The greater Moncton area consists of seven ridings: Dieppe, Moncton East, Moncton Centre, Moncton South, Moncton Northwest, Moncton Southwest, and Riverview (81,391 eligible voters). Greater Saint John consists of six ridings: Quispamsis, Rothesay, Saint John East, Portland-Simonds, Saint John Harbour, and Saint John Lancaster (67,074 eligible voters). The greater Fredericton area consists of five Oromocto-Lincoln, Fredericton South, Fredericton North, Fredericton West-Hanwell (45,218 eligible voters).

These city ridings split the Liberal/PC vote fairly evenly. In total, the Liberals elected seven MLAs and the PCs nine. The Greens elected one. Moncton, the home of Liberal leader Brian Gallant, voted in four Liberals and three PCs. Saint John elected two Liberals and four PCs. Fredericton elected one Liberal, two PCs, and one Green.

Overall votes cast for the Liberals in Greater Moncton were 44.7 percent; for the PCs, 35.0 percent; for the NDP, 12.6 percent; and for the Greens, 7.0 percent. In Saint John, the PCs won 42.7 percent; the Liberals 32.3 percent; the NDP 18.5 percent; and the Greens 5.6 percent.

In Fredericton, the PCs won 33.8 percent of the vote; the Liberals 29.6 percent; the NDP 21.2 percent; and the Greens 13.3 percent.

The PANB ran only two candidates (out of seven) in the Greater Moncton area, three in the Saint John area (out of six), and three in the Fredericton area (out of four). In the three Fredericton ridings where they did run candidates, the PANB managed 2.8 percent of the vote.

Volatility and Incumbency:

As explained above, reapportionment reduced the number of ridings in the province from 55 to 49. It is therefore impossible to do an accurate seat-turnover analysis. However, we can look at the electoral volatility, which measures the cumulative shift in popular vote for all parties, compared to the previous election. The higher the score, the greater the volatility; that is, the greater likelihood that voters switched party allegiance. The 2014 election saw NB's volatility score increase again, though it has yet to hit the record levels posted from 1987 through to 1999 (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: Volatility 1987 - 2014

Election Year	Value
1987	19.6
1991	21.3
1995	15.1
1999	22.0
2003	8.4
2006	5.0
2010	12.5
2014	14.1

Due to reapportionment (see above), many MLAs found themselves now running in what was essentially a new riding and so it is somewhat difficult to assess the degree to which incumbency had an effect. Eight MLAs declined to run in 2014, of which seven were PC MLAs, including the Speaker, Dale Graham. Ten incumbents ended up running against each other. Nineteen incumbents were defeated. All were PCs, ten were cabinet ministers.

Turnout:

Voter turnout continues to be in decline (see Table 5). New Brunswick turnout figures have to be regarded with some care, as Elections NB has had to adjust its "eligible voters" numbers, the result of a switch from a door-to-door enumeration system, to a registration system. Elections NB now uses the number of eligible voters as determined by Elections Canada, which has increased the official list total by over 50,000 from the 2010 number, even though NB's population only rose by 9,000 between 2010 and 2014. But if we look at the raw numbers, we can see that in 2010, the total ballots cast, including spoiled ballots, was 374,902, while in 2014, the total ballots were 373,361, a difference of 1,541.

Table 5: Voter Turnout

	Electors				
Year	Net total	Valid	Rejected	Votes cast	% voted
1967	313,685	257,671	-	257,671	82.14%
1970	331,643	265,891	3,415	269,306	81.20%
1974	408,182	310,098	2,485	312,583	76.58%
1978	441,454	330,492	3,269	333,761	75.60%
1982	471,798	384,557	2,694	387,251	82.08%
1987	501,646	408,516	2,620	411,136	81.96%
1991	517,613	411,590	3,138	414,728	80.12%
1995	525,132	389,562	3,688	393,250	74.89%
1999	525,465	394,237	2,942	397,179	75.59%
2003	563,080	383,074	3,583	386,657	68.67%
2006	558,688	374,156	3,091	377,247	67.52%
2010	538,965	371,742	3,160	374,902	69.56%
2014	577,529	371,739	1,622	373,361	64.65%

Female Candidates:

Women candidates did not fare much better in 2014 than they did in 2010, but neither did they do worse. The same number of female candidates were elected: eight (five Liberals and three PCs). However, given that the total number of seats available in 2014 was just 49, then there could be some consolation in the fact that the percentage of female MLAs in 2014 is better than it was in 2010 (16.3 percent versus 14.5 percent). There were no significant increases or decreases in the number of female candidates fielded (see Table 6).

When calculated as a percentage of votes cast in ridings with female candidates (41 in total), women received 29.1 percent of the popular vote. All four candidates in Moncton South were female. Nineteen ridings saw more than one female candidate on the ballot. Lisa Harris, the Liberal candidate in Miramichi Bay-Neguac, received the most votes and the highest percentage of votes, with 4199 votes or 49 percent of the valid ballots cast.

Table 6: Women in NB Elections 2010 - 2014

	2010	2014
Liberal candidates	12	13
Liberal candidates elected	0	4
PC candidates	14	14
PC candidates elected	8	4
Green Party candidates	23	22
Green Party candidates elected	0	0
NDP candidates	17	15
NDP candidates elected	0	0
PANB candidates	5	5
PANB candidates elected	0	0
IND candidates	0	2
IND candidates elected	0	0
total female candidates	71	72
total elected	8	8

Aftermath

This was the first New Brunswick provincial election in which electronic vote tabulating machines were used to count all ballots. Voters marked paper ballots, which were then submitted into a voting tabulator that recorded and calculated the votes. When polls closed at 8:00 pm, the returning officers generated the tabulated results from the machine and telephoned those results in to their central returning office. These results in turn were entered into a database, and then conveyed to various media outlets. Elections NB officials assured media outlets that a few minutes after the polls closed, all advance and special ballot results would appear; then by about 8:30 pm, the reporting of all provincial results would begin. Final results would be available very quickly.

It did not turn out that way.²² Many results did not come in for hours. More worryingly, at times the tallies reported on television screens seemed to be dropping. After midnight, the full results were reported, but the story of the election became not the Liberals' victory but the embarrassing failure of the province to conduct a high-tech election properly. Complaints quickly circulated through social media that the reported results were not to be trusted, and indeed several politicians wondered aloud to the same effect. The PCs, no doubt recalling the Florida debacle in the 2000 American presidential election, were unwilling to concede defeat. Calls were heard for a full manual recount. The problem was made worse by a high number of very close races: if those results were untrustworthy, then the Liberals' victory was not at all certain.²³ After 1:00 AM, a tired Brian Gallant spoke at a hastily-installed podium in a nearly

²² For a full account, see Desserud (2015b).

²³ As noted, judicial recounts in seven ridings confirmed initial results.

empty school gymnasium in Grand Digue, to thank his supporters and declare victory. But by then, most voters had gone to bed and even the CBC had gone off air. It was a weird, anti-climactic end to a night of surprising developments, close races, political drama, and at times complete confusion.

Dominic Cardy, who ended up in second place in his riding behind Brian MacDonald of the PCs, conceded defeat on election night and announced his resignation as leader of the party. Later, a small movement within the party led by Kelly Lamrock (who previously had been "tagged" as the most likely person to replace Cardy as leader) convinced Cardy to reverse his decision. The next day, after conceding the election to Gallant, Alward announced his resignation as leader, though he said he would continue as an MLA. In May of 2015, Alward was appointed Canadian Consul General in Boston.

One of the government's first acts was to act on its promise to address the abortion issue. The regulations dealing with abortion services was repealed by cabinet order, and replaced by a declaration that the two-doctor certification was no longer necessary, and that the procedure itself need not be performed by a specialist. However, the costs of an abortion would not be covered "unless the abortion is performed in a hospital facility approved by the jurisdiction in which the hospital facility is located." Other access questions would be discussed with the health authorities.

The December 3 Throne Speech offered little more than a reprise of the government's campaign platform, but other announcements indicate the government will go ahead with a program review including a public consultation component in which everything would be on the table for discussion. Government rhetoric in the months following the election, chastened no

doubt by yet another report of the Auditor-General expressing grave concern about the province's finances (NB AG 2014), sought to lower expectations and prepare the public for the prospect of increased taxes and closures of under-utilized facilities in depopulating regions of the province.

Conclusion

New Brunswick's political culture appears to be increasingly volatile, with not only new party leaders but now new parties having an impact. The province is burdened with intractable constants: a chronically sluggish economy, a demographic decline amounting to crisis, and continued dependency on transfers. The electorate is increasingly older: young people are either not voting or are leaving the province. This means an electorate resistant to change (at least away from the two mainstream parties), protective of welfare state programs relating to health and pensions and other senior-related services. So the need for change is matched by an electorate stubbornly resistant to change.

If it is indeed the case that governments in New Brunswick cannot expect to serve more than one term, then the Liberals will soon find that they are focusing on winning the next election (scheduled for 2018) fairly soon. This means that they will have to come up with policies that have an immediate and beneficial (read "popular") impact: New Brunswick voters are showing themselves not only to be resistant to change, but impatient. This will be difficult, as addressing the economic and demographic problems facing the province will take patience, fortitude, and considerable political courage: characteristics not conducive to a quick turnaround election cycle.

Meanwhile, the PCs are expected to provide a strong opposition. The party's standing in the Legislature is healthy, and on 22 October 2016, the party concluded a leadership contest with

several high-profile potential candidates. The winner, on the third ballot, was Blaine Higgs, currently the MLA from Quispamsis (outside of Saint John), and who had served as finance minister under Alward. Higgs is well-respected for his prudent fiscal policies, and is very knowledgeable about economic development. His liability, however, is that he does not speak French (he has promised to learn). Furthermore, he was once a member of the anti-bilingual CoR Party, and even ran (unsuccessfully) for its leadership. Mind you, that was in 1989, so twenty-seven years ago. His own party has long dismissed this as an irrelevant youthful dalliance; the Liberals, however, will not be so forgiving.

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