

CANADIAN SHOOTING SPORTS ASSOCIATION / CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

TEAM CSSA E-NEWS - Sept 12, 2013

COMMENTARY: FEDERAL ELECTION CLOCK IS TICKING – WHAT, ME WORRY?

October 19, 2015. This is the tentative date for the next federal election. Will responsible firearms owners vote Conservative? There is growing evidence they may not.

The anger and disappointment percolating through the firearms community due to government inaction could be the beginning of the end. Firearms blogs and industry rumors reveal that many thousands of gun owners will refuse to vote in protest. If that happens, the Conservative majority would be in dire straits in 2015. The Harper government could even be demoted to the opposition benches.

Here is a challenge – name one other single-interest constituency in Canada that can cause candidates as much grief (or joy) as gun owners at election time. Many gun owners stuck together as a unified voting entity in 2011 and Stephen Harper finally won his much-coveted majority. If the prime minister's advisers aren't afraid that gun owners could cause the opposite result two years from now, their naiveté is second only to their arrogance. And egos running rampant can lose an election – ask ousted M.P.s Mark Holland and Larry Bagnell.

Current government owns C-68

Most gun owners are now convinced that Bill C-68 has become adopted policy within the current federal government. Although the *Firearms Act* was a hash of ludicrous gun control laws created by anti-gun Liberals in 1995, it has been allowed to linger by the same Conservative administration that promised to quash it. The Harper government seems to believe that sport shooters will remain satisfied because the long-gun registry was scrapped. They are making a big mistake if they assume that this token gesture will secure them another majority in the 2015 election.

In fact, the government's failure to bare its teeth in the wake of outrageous behaviour by Chief Firearms Offices (CFOs) and the RCMP have many gun owners jumping ship already. In spite of recent federal regulations to destroy on-site sales ledgers at retail outlets, the CFOs have spit on the Public Safety Minister's ruling. CFOs continue to make their own rules at gun shows as they simply lie in wait for a different political party at the helm in Ottawa. Meanwhile, RCMP officers kick down doors looking for guns in High River, Alberta during a flood evacuation, and the federal government merely watches from afar as its employees behave like lawless goons. The next thing you know the government will remove accredited experts from its Firearms Advisory Committee to kowtow to the left-wing. Oops, too late – it's already happened.

Apparently, the Harper government doesn't understand firearms owners. This administration was voted into office by hundreds of thousands of firearms owners because it promised it would tear down the *Firearms Act* in favour of legislation that would actually reduce gun crime. The following scenario is not only possible, it is probable if the Harper government continues to play in the sandbox with anti-gun advocates.

Gun owners will not be fooled

It is not fair to make gun owners criminals for paperwork errors that have no bearing on safety. If the government bails on its commitment to cut red tape for gun owners, they will stay home on election day feeling bitter and betrayed. Gun owners have no use for left-wing gun grabbers, but they really detest a right-wing administration that appears to be misleading them. They are already punishing the Conservative Party of Canada by closing their wallets – spoiling their ballots is next.

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The clock is ticking. The firearms community needs the CPC to deliver solid legislation in time to receive Royal Assent before the 2015 election. Firearms owners will not respond favourably to either being ignored, or seeing proposed legislative improvements die on the Order Paper without getting passed. Gun owners do not seek legislation that would diminish public safety, but they do object to so-called gun control measures like Bill C-68 that are designed to win votes by merely pretending to curtail crime.

If the CPC goes to the polls without the support of firearms owners this time, a majority isn't in the stars. The Liberals and NDP are poised to oppose a CPC minority government and gun bans would be imminent. Good-bye handguns, black rifles, Glock-shaped cigarette lighters, Nerf darts and children who draw politically incorrect pictures in art class. Firearms will become prohibited as fast as the RCMP can scribble a longer list. So far, the Conservatives have done nothing whatsoever to put a dent in the current list.

Last chance to do the right thing

Is this scenario locked in? Yes, unless the Harper government moves very quickly to change the *Firearms Act* by honouring its promise. This government is not suicidal, so it seems likely it has dragged its feet because it mistakenly believes that gun owners will not abandon the Conservative cause. They think the threats to spoil ballots in the next federal election ring hollow. They believe gun owners have no choice but to support them, lest the Liberals and NDP swarm to ban guns until the shooting sports are no longer worth pursuing. We sincerely hope the CPC isn't willing to bet its future on this faulty logic.

Does the firearms community have any options? Again, yes. If you are among the firearms owners who refuse to support a government that has not delivered on its promises, let them know. Write letters, make a date to talk to the closest Conservative M.P., send letters to the editor, make your voice heard. Firearms clubs across Canada must approach the government on behalf of members. Rest assured the CSSA has been sending this message through the government ranks for some time, but we cannot do it alone.

There is safety in numbers – and the firearms community has the numbers. The future of sport shooting lies with sport shooters, and it is not too late. But about six months from now, it will be.

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The CSSA is the voice of the sport shooter and firearms enthusiast in Canada. Their national membership supports and promotes Canada's firearms heritage, traditional target shooting competition, modern action shooting sports, hunting, and archery. They support and sponsor competitions and youth programs that promote these Canadian heritage activities.

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