



PHIL HEAD

THE FRENCH CONNECTION Stéphane Dion says there is no reason the Federal Liberals cannot garner votes in Alberta.

Federal Liberals setting their sights on Albertan ridings

CHLOÉ FEDIO
Managing Editor

Alberta may exist federally in a sea of Tory blue, but Stéphane Dion isn't conceding defeat. Hinting that an election is just around the corner, the leader of the federal Liberal Party was in Edmonton on Saturday, 24 February to let an intimate crowd of supporters know that his party was including the province in its campaign strategy.

"We don't know when the election will come, but let's assume it's a matter of weeks," Dion said, pointing to the fact that federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty will deliver the nation's budget on 19 March. As the budget is a confidence bill, a failure to pass could force the minority government into an election.

"Some will say, 'Don't go in Alberta, focus on Toronto and the areas of the country where we have seats.' No, no... We want to think of our party as a national party, not the party only of some provinces, but of all the provinces," he added.

In the 2006 federal election, the Conservatives took all of Alberta's 28 seats with 65 per cent of the vote, while the 15 per cent of Albertans who voted Liberal were left without any Members of Parliament elected.

"I know it's difficult when we say we're a Liberal in Alberta; I know it's strange for many people. But don't look at [it] this way—look [to] the future," Dion said. "Don't look [at] the polls of the past and the results—each election starts from scratch. What you will have to face at the next election is not the same situation as the next one."

Despite the lack of Liberal MPs from Alberta, the Alberta Liberal Party is

alive in the province, with 15 of the provincial Legislature's 83 seats.

Bryant Lukes, a University of Alberta philosophy and political science student, pointed to Pierre Trudeau's legacy of the National Energy Program—which is still a sore spot for many Albertans—as pushing voters toward the Conservatives during federal elections. He opined that the provincial Liberals were "more right wing."

"I know it's difficult when we say we're a Liberal in Alberta; I know it's strange for many people. But don't look at [it] this way—look [to] the future."

STÉPHANE DION,
FEDERAL LIBERAL PARTY LEADER

Since the Liberal sponsorship scandal came to light, the leader of the Alberta Liberals, Kevin Taft, has worked to distance himself from the federal party.

"I think that Kevin Taft has a different responsibility, being a provincial Liberal, to sort of look after Alberta's interests," said Lukes, clad in a red-and-white Stéphane Dion T-shirt. "I don't really think we even have an idea of what an Alberta Liberal government might look like [were they ever to win a majority]—I think it's just something that we can imagine what it might be like."

Still, Dion was hopeful that Liberal representation in the Alberta Legislature would translate to support at the federal level.

"The fact that you have Liberal seats at the provincial level should be an inspiration for us to have Liberal seats at the federal level; it's possible, it's doable," Dion said. "A lot of the seats that we think are out of touch for us, completely too Conservative that we [don't] think to take them, we may have a big surprise."

However, some of the younger members of the crowd were skeptical of the Liberals' chances in Alberta, arguing that there are flaws in the first-past-the-post electoral system, which gives victory to the candidate with the most votes, but not necessarily the majority.

"We have this very small Liberal minority in Alberta that doesn't get a voice—it's all or nothing," said Duncan Taylor, President of the Young Liberals at the U of A.

"I think [first-past-the-post] is kind of back-dated," echoed Pablo Seto, a self-identified blue-Liberal who graduated from the U of A in 2005. "The problem with that system is that people get apathetic... you don't vote anymore because you feel that your vote is useless."

He proposed reform to move to a system of mixed proportional representation that would see seat distribution reflect the popular vote, quelling the tendency for strategic voting and giving a voice to the minority.

"Even though all the seats were Conservative in the last [federal] election in Alberta, there's actually a lot of us who vote Liberal," Seto said.

Dion admitted that there were flaws in the current electoral system, but said it will have to do for now.

"[Electoral reform] will not be possible for the next election but after we may think to engage in debate in Canada," Dion said.

done for actually nursing the disease itself," said Dr Neil Eves, the lead author of the study. "Exercise and rehabilitation is one of the best ways of [increasing the lung capacity of COPD patients]. It slows down [the] progression of the disease."

The term COPD describes two lung diseases, chronic bronchitis and emphysema, that obstruct airflow within the body and interfere with normal breathing patterns. The diseases are primarily caused by smoking and symptoms include increased mucus and coughing.

The study on helium-hyperoxia was conducted by Eves, now an assistant professor at the University of Calgary, under U of A staff Dr Stuart Petersen and Dr Dick Jones. They administered

four different mixtures of gases to ten clinically stable men. Helium-hyperoxia results showed an exercise capacity double the results of using pure oxygen, which was the next most successful test. The pure oxygen allowed for a capacity double that found in room air.

Currently, COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in men and the fifth of women in Canada. Eight per cent of Canadians are believed to have the disease. The figures for the United States are similar.

"COPD has increased by 103 per cent in the US since 1970, which is far more than any other disease," Eves said, explaining that COPD can be treated but not cured.

Jennifer Huygen, News Writer

NEWS BRIEF

LUNG DISEASE PATIENTS FIND RELIEF IN NEW HELIUM TREATMENT

Most famous for its ability to raise the pitch of your voice and help decorate gymnasiums with balloons, helium is now being applied in a clinical setting to make patients with lung disease breathe a little easier.

University of Alberta researchers have discovered that a gas mixture called helium-hyperoxia—40 per cent oxygen and 60 per cent helium—can increase the exercise capacity of patients suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) by up to 245 per cent.

"There's not a great deal that can be

www.su-venues.ca

A SERVICE OF YOUR STUDENTS' UNION FOR U OF A STUDENTS, STAFF AND ALUMNI.

NEW 2007 MENU AND FOODS

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>RATT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MON - WED 11 AM TO 1 AM LAST CALL AT MIDNIGHT • THURS 11 AM TO 2 AM LAST CALL AT 1 AM • FRI 11 AM TO 3 AM LAST CALL AT 2 AM • SAT 3 PM TO 3 AM LAST CALL AT 2 AM | <p>THE POWERPLANT</p> <p>BAR HOURS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THURS - FRI 11 AM TO 2 AM • SAT 8 PM TO 2 AM <p>RELAXATION SPACE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MON - WED 8AM - 8PM POWERPLANT BREAKFAST • 8AM TO 11AM POWERPLANT DINNER (MENU SERVICE): • 2PM TO 6PM (MON - WED) • 2PM TO MIDNIGHT (THURS-FRI) POWERPLANT COFFEE HOUSE • MON TO FRI 8AM TO 6PM |
|--|--|

oh...and don't forget
happy hour:

RATT >> MONDAY TO FRIDAY >> 2-6 PM
draught pint and jug specials >>>>>>

powerplant >> THURS and FRI >> 2-6 PM

>> UPCOMING @ RATT OILER GAMES

DON'T FORGET:
RATT GIVES AWAY A PAIR OF TICKETS 1/2 HOUR BEFORE EVERY HOME GAME.
ALL PAY-PER-VIEW OILER GAMES WILL BE SHOWN AT RATT.

THURSDAY, MARCH 1ST 7PM
OILERS VS. THE WILD. BIG GAME.
TICKET DRAW AT 630 PM.

SATURDAY, MARCH 3RD 8PM
BATTLE OF ALBERTA NIGHT.
EDMONTON VS. CALGARY.
TICKET DRAW AT 730 PM

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7TH 8PM
OILERS HOST TAMPA BAY
TICKET DRAW AT 730 PM

>>> RATT AND MOLSON CANADIAN WILL BE GIVING AWAY A PAIR OF TICKETS TO EVERY HOME GAME. DRAWS ARE MADE 1/2 HOUR BEFORE EACH GAME <<<

MOLSON Canadian jugs are \$9.75 during the game, Canadian bottles are \$3.

POWERPLANT BUFFET STILL GOING STRONG AT LUNCH

EVERY DAY FROM 1130AM TO 2PM

DON'T FORGET ...

TUESDAY IS ROAST BEEF DAY!

GREAT, HOT FOOD YUMMMMMMMY!!!

WATCH FOR IT!
ST. RATTRICKS DAY \$ FRIDAY, MARCH 17
JUST LIKE ST. PATRICK'S DAY, BUT ONE DAY EARLIER