



Mike Doyle is the President of the CAGC – the Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors - representing the business interests of the seismic industry within Canada. The CAGC website may be found at www.cagc.ca.

By the time you are reading this September will have arrived. The CAGC puts on its annual Alberta Geophysical conference in Red Year – this year Sept. 15 and 16 – consisting of a wide range of speakers from Industry, Government and other Associations. This event has grown each year and now has between 300 and 400 participants. Please see our website for further information.

As well we have scheduled a “Seismic in Motion” Field Trip for October – consisting of at least two separate days and perhaps three if the demand is great enough. We have had a great interest from the regulators in this – lots of representation from BC, AB, and NEB – hopefully a few other jurisdictions will be able to make it also. Seismic is a very linear operation separated by time and distance so much so that unless you are directly involved in such operations, you are unlikely to see all aspects of a seismic job in any one visit. The intention of the trip is to allow participants to see all parts of a seismic job in a day as well as a number of new equipment technologies. You will be able to see line preparation, hand cutting, mulching, drilling, shooting, vibrating, recording as well as see our to steep slopes people, helicopter work while all the while being taken care of by our safety people, medics and caterers. Please see our website for more information.

The federal election has recently occurred and I would like to take this column to comment on some of the nuances and potentially interesting changes which have occurred or may occur over the mandate of this government and how they might relate to us as our Industry.

Significantly with a Liberal Minority Government we would expect a greater level of accountability. It is interesting that the majority of Canadians do not trust Conservatives – whether they are from the West or not. The re-uniting of the right won about a quarter of the seats in Ontario and a handful in the Atlantic Provinces. Harper lives to fight another day but quite possibly the next election will be his swan song. It is an interesting minority in the sense two out of three of the opposition parties voting alone with the Liberals give them a majority and with the third, the NDP, assuring a tie, it is possible even in such a case someone being away of the others will keep intact a majority. What it all means then is likely the Liberals will not count on any one party for its crutch but allow ideologies in most cases to rule the day.

That being said we are more likely to see soft political choices rather than tough ones – spending money rather than cutting back or increasing taxes. It is a government which will spend much time and money on health, a bit on defence, and likely very little on something controversial such as Kyoto. Unfortunately (or fortunately) a Kyoto issue could be a government killer. Following the path of least resistance changes to industry and/or other programs may in fact translate to higher burdens on the consumer and much like the GST the electorate insists someone pay with their elected lives.

The new Cabinet is very interesting also. Most notably, from our standpoint, David Anderson lost his Cabinet post on the Environment. In fact he barely won his seat in Victoria. He has been instrumental in muddying up the BC Offshore issue. We have struggled with him in areas of the DFO and the new SARA legislation. Paul Martin left him in the post after Chrétien had passed the reins and Martin formed a new Cabinet. It was an interesting decision from our standpoint but understandable – the Russians were back and forth on ratifying Kyoto, the Liberals had a strong majority and therefore the ability to make tough changes to the Environmental portfolio if necessary. How the world has changed – BC gives the Liberals a strong showing and is rewarded in Cabinet for it; a minority government signifies the unlikelihood of tough Environmental choices, Anderson's weak showing in Victoria and the general distaste the BC Provincial Government has for him over the offshore issue – equates to lots of good reasons to move him out.

It is a conciliatory government. As an industry we will be unlikely to make any great inroads in terms of positive change however on the other side of the coin it is unlikely we will see anything negative. A minority government doesn't usually last more than 18 months (but we will see with how the numbers worked out this time) and assuming the worst, the Liberals must concentrate on the next election. Concentrate on electorate issues such as health and welfare, cities and other feel good types.

Finally we will likely see an Alberta Provincial election this fall as well. Our deficit will be paid off in short order – Klein has done a tremendous job in the last decade plus. However too long in power for any one person makes government fallible - such is the human condition. Let us hope Ralph will take the Alberta centennial as an appropriate juncture to announce his retirement.

From The Thursday Files:

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcomings, who knows the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at best knows in the end the high achievement of triumph and who, at worst, if he fails while daring greatly, knows his place shall never be with those timid and cold souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.

- Theodore Roosevelt