

Editorial ? Trudeau wins, and Mulcair doesn't

It doesn't take a lot of common sense to determine that results of four federal byelections in three different provinces carves nothing in stone.

But they show a couple of indicators that we think our political leaders would be wise to take note of.

The main point is that Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau has a little more going for him than some would like us to believe. Prime Minister Stephen Harper readily springs to mind at this point.

The Conservatives have been on the Liberals in general and Trudeau in particular since he became party leader. There's nothing wrong with that. Trudeau is now in the big leagues when it comes to political hard ball, and if he can't handle the shots, now is the time for us to know. The fact that the party he leads took two of the four seats Monday night, added to the fact that they came close in one of the Manitoba ridings, has to be seen as a big positive from his point of view.

And the Conservatives took the two seats in Manitoba. We are roughly in the middle of the majority mandate voters gave Harper more than two years ago, and it is true that byelections often go against the governing party. True, one of the results was a little close for comfort, but the Tories retained those seats. Considering that Harper has been under fire of late over issues involving the Senate, we would submit that performance was quite respectable.

If anyone, we think it was the NDP that came up short. While we are ready to grant it's premature to draw conclusions, we would have expected Thomas Mulcair and company were hoping for better, riding on the momentum that was started in the last election under the leadership of the late Jack Layton.

As we stated above, Monday offered us but a snapshot in four ridings, and being byelections, they are not the clearest of pictures.

Not surprisingly, the voter turnout was low, on the order of 35.6 per cent across the four ridings. For want of a better term, that stinks. But this was not a general election, so not much better could have reasonably expected.

Harper and Trudeau have come out of this week's byelections in fair shape politically, and they can look forward to the major campaign that's now less than two years away.

But both should bear in mind that a lot can happen in two years.