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# Voter apathy factor in loss: Lui

BY DAVID FLEISCHER  
 Staff Writer

The loss of three York Region seats is part of an electoral collapse that has left the federal Liberal party reeling.

Just like their colleagues across the country, local Liberals are pondering where the party should go next and whether Stéphane Dion should stay on as leader.

In Markham-Oak Ridges, Lui Temelkovski lost a close race to Paul Calandra and things were more decisive in Thornhill, where Susan Kadis, a two-time incumbent and longtime local councillor, lost to Conservative Peter Kent by more than 5,000 votes.

Former defence minister John McCallum held his seat in Markham, as did Richmond Hill's longtime representative Bryon Wilfert.

"I think it's irrational and disrespectful to be calling for anyone's head," Mr. Wilfert said.

"I don't think it would be reasonable to blame any one issue or any one individual."

Mr. Temelkovski pointed to voter apathy as a factor. Many people told him he would win, no problem, and then concluded they did not need to vote.

"The 'no problem' turned out to be the problem," he said. "They couldn't see their vote having much weight, no matter who they chose."

"I think Canadians are realizing he's more of a leader than he was drawn to be by the other side," Mr. Temelkovski said of Mr. Dion.

He was among the many local Liberals who pointed out even Mr. Harper seems to admire the Liberal leader, based on the resemblance between his post-election economic plan and what Mr. Dion was proposing all along.

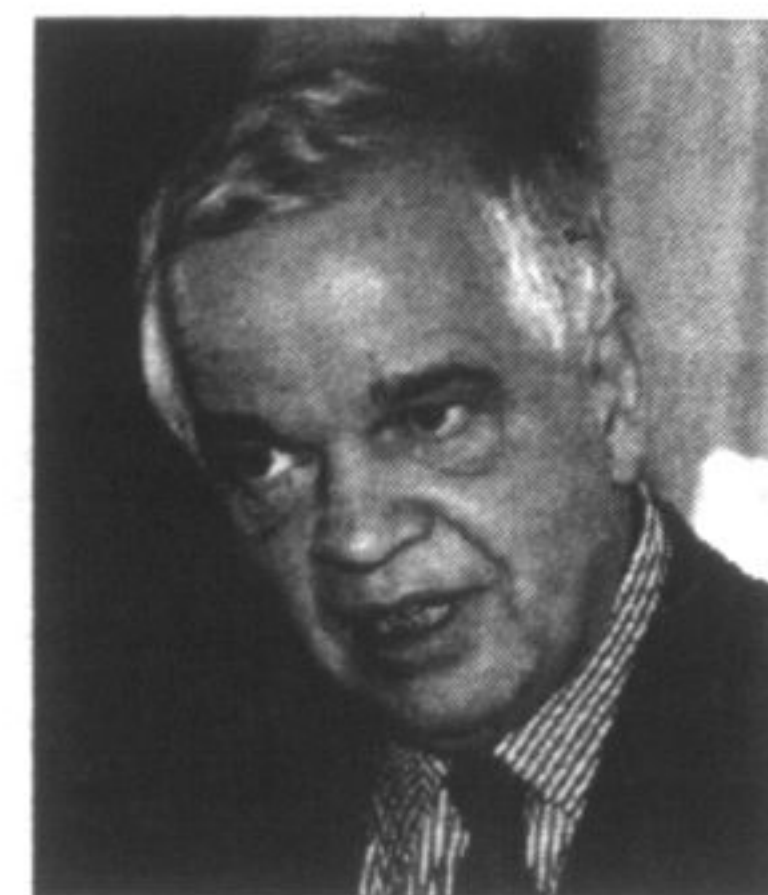
Mr. Temelkovski and Mr. Wilfert both pointed out that, despite the cries for him to step down, Mr. Dion is hardly the only national leader to fail to meet his goals.

Markham's John McCallum held his own riding but said the national campaign had problems communicating the party's main messages.

He does not want to second guess whatever Mr. Dion will say Monday but thinks the economy will be the focus for whoever is in charge in the coming months.



**LUI TEMELKOVSKI:** Liberal loses close race.



**JOHN MCCALLUM:** Holds onto Liberal seat.



**BRYON WILFERT:** Longtime Liberal gets another term.

"Whether Mr. Dion is leader, or whether it's another person, I think we see a way forward to rebuild the party," he said.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has run twice without achieving a majority and NDP leader Jack Layton finished fourth in his second kick at the can, the Grits reminded us.

So what does the future hold for the Liberals?

Reports indicated a devastated Mr. Dion was ready to step down Thursday before being quickly refuted.

A Liberal convention and leadership review takes place in May, making Mr. Dion's status an imminent issue one way or another.

Two Toronto MPs, Bob Rae and Michael Ignatieff, are considered likely successors.

None of York Region's Grits seem ready to give it a try just yet, but, as Mr. Dion said two years ago, anything can happen and you should never forget the dark horse.

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