

Higher Modern Studies

2011 Scottish Parliament Election

This was an unusual election because it produced an overall majority for the SNP – the first overall majority the Scottish Parliament has seen. The final result was:

SNP: 69 (a big swing toward them – they gained +23 seats)

Labour: 37 (a swing against – lost 7 seats)

Conservatives: 15 (a swing against – lost 5 seats)

Liberal Democrats: 5 (the biggest swing against – lost 12 seats)

Greens: 2 (+1 seat)

Margo MacDonald: 1 (kept her seat)

Labour faced a difficult task because opinion polls show they are still unpopular at UK level with many voters (even many of their own supporters) blaming them for the economic difficulties facing the country. Their leader Iain Gray, along with the other party leaders, was up against an experienced leader in Alex Salmond who most experts agree is extremely good in his use of the media.

After the election Alex Salmond was once more sworn in as First Minister of the Scottish Parliament but this time his party is in a much stronger position. Previously, the SNP was a minority government with only 1 more seat than the next largest party, Labour. Now with 69 seats, the SNP have a majority of 9 over all the other parties put together!

This gives the SNP real power to push its policies through as it no longer depends on the support of other parties to win a vote.

Already, the SNP has confirmed it will hold a referendum on Scottish independence. In fact, opinion polls show that even among those who voted for SNP in the 2011 election there is no great appetite for independence ... it was simply that many felt the SNP were a better choice as government for Scottish Government. This may explain why the SNP has said it will not hold the election until the second part of its four year spell.