

Vancouver Island Party hopeful sees 'sweet spot' in Nanaimo byelection

[Carla Wilson](#) / Times Colonist

NOVEMBER 7, 2018 06:00 AM



Robin Richardson
Photograph By SUBMITTED

The first step in Robin Richardson's plan to separate from B.C. and turn Vancouver Island into a province is to get himself elected in the upcoming Nanaimo byelection.

Should the Vancouver Island Party candidate win the provincial seat, he promises to demand the NDP government hold a referendum in October 2019 asking if voters favour creating VanIsle as a province.

And if a majority say "yes," Richardson then wants the NDP to boost the number of Island ridings to 28 from 14.

From there, he's optimistic that an expected provincewide election in 2021 would give his party a majority, allowing it to begin negotiations with Ottawa.

Richardson, 76, figures he's found the "soft spot" in Nanaimo's future byelection.

He predicts that a Progressive Conservative candidate will take votes from the Liberals, and that the Greens will attract NDP votes. He expects to be able to pick up support from citizens who did not vote in the 2017 election.

"I figure if I can get 9,000 votes, I can win," he said.

Current five-term NDP MLA Leonard Krog won with 12,746 votes in 2017.

Krog was sworn in Monday as Nanaimo's new mayor and has said he will give up his legislature seat.

A byelection has not yet been called. But Premier John Horgan said it would be held before February's budget.

Richardson served in Joe Clark's short-lived Conservative minority government as a federal MP, elected in 1979 for the Toronto Beaches area in Ontario, but lost in the subsequent 1980 election.

A Harvard-educated financial planner and economist, Richardson has households in Nanaimo and in Victoria.

The Island is being shortchanged by federal and provincial governments, he said.

He wants the old Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway route back in service, creating a “safe and environmentally clean commuter and cargo service from Courtenay to Victoria.”

cjwilson@timescolonist.com

© Copyright Times Colonist