

Jim Murphy says change is coming

by Scottish Labour Leadership candidate Jim Murphy MP

'For the second time in less than a year, the UK's future will be in Scotland's hands'

This is an exciting time to be in Scottish politics. Never has our great nation had more confidence in itself or more hope about the future. With the delivery of the devolution Vow on more powers for the Scottish Parliament, change is coming to Scotland.

The challenge for the Scottish Labour Party is to be accepted again as the drivers of that change.

Later this week we will know the result of the Scottish Labour Party leadership contest (online voting closes tomorrow at midday). I've enjoyed campaigning alongside Sarah Boyack and Neil Findlay. It has been a good advert for a fresh start for Scottish Labour.

Saturday's result will be the verdict of Scottish Labour Party members and trade unionists on how best to revitalise our movement north of the border. Immediately after that we need to get moving. We have no time to waste in getting out across the country listening and talking about the change Scotland needs.

After we return from the Christmas holidays there will be just three months until the start of the UK General Election campaign. That's no time at all to prepare. This evening I will be speaking at an event hosted by Ipsos Mori. We will reflect on the momentous year that's coming to a close and discuss the decisive year ahead.

The role of Scotland in the evolving story of the United Kingdom is remarkable. For the second time in less than a year, the politics of the entire UK will rest in the hands of Scots. Just under three months ago Scotland decided whether the United Kingdom itself would continue to exist. By a convincing majority, Scots backed unity over division. On 7 May next year in the General Election, Scotland's votes will help to determine the politics of the UK for years to come.

To paraphrase the nationalists, it will be the UK's future in Scotland's hands. A Scottish electorate of just over four million people will again determine so much about the collection of nations that makes up the UK.

For so many reasons, we can't afford to get this wrong.

Most Scots I know want rid of this Tory Government. Whether referendum No or referendum Yes voters, what will motivate many Scots is the chance get rid of David Cameron from Downing Street.

In Scotland the debate isn't about 'whether' or 'why' we should rid ourselves of a Tory government. Instead the predominant question is 'how?'.

Despite the increasingly fragmented nature of the UK's politics, an election to the House of Commons under a First Past the Post system remains a two horse race. Only Labour can replace the Tories and form the next UK Government. Not the Liberals, Greens, UKIP or the SNP.

A vote for anybody but Labour in many Scottish constituencies makes it more likely that David Cameron would remain Prime Minister. Bluntly, all that the SNP's efforts will achieve will be to risk Labour being able to be big enough to replace Cameron.

I know that isn't what most people who vote SNP, Green or Lib Dem want. As Scots go back to the polls for the second time in

eight months the majority are hoping to see the back of the Tories. My message to my fellow Scots is straightforward – our votes really can make the difference. Just as in the referendum, the simple act of voting really does matter again.

And my message for my Party is that in Scotland we have to celebrate and share in our nation's renewed sense of patriotic self-confidence. I am determined we will.

That work starts this Saturday morning when the leadership result is declared. I'm up for it. I'm confident that Scottish Labour is too.