

A New Direction



By Nate Smelle

WATCHING THE ELECTION results come in online and on television it didn't take long for Canada to elect a new government. People in British Columbia were actually still in line waiting to vote when the first announcement was made that the Liberals and Justin Trudeau would be the winner. Our local riding however was a much different story. Keeping an eye on the numbers all night as Liberal candidate Mike Bossio and Conservative incumbent Daryl Kramp traded the lead, it was not until well after midnight that Bossio crossed the finish line in first place.

When all the votes were counted Bossio came out on top by a mere 373 votes. Seeing such a tight race locally really emphasized to me just how important it is for each and every one of us to cast an informed vote. Spending much of my free time over the last 78 days soaking up as much information on the federal leaders and candidates as possible I have learned a lot about our country. With so many lines being drawn in the sand on so many different issues throughout the campaign, this election has helped us to identify what we as Canadians value.

Looking back on my notes on election night I found a collection of random questions and thoughts I jotted down, that I believe tell a story about where we stand as a nation in 2015.

The first question asks ?Has there ever been such a loud opposition to our Prime Minister and our government??

Not in my memory. Long before the election even began Canadians were speaking out against the Harper government and the direction they were taking us. Now with Liberal leader Justin Trudeau sitting on the Prime Minister's throne in Ottawa the spotlight shifts away from the shortcomings of the previous government towards Canada's new direction.

The second note was titled Trudeau's campaign promise list. It reads ?I believe one of the best ways for us to catch a glimpse of who we are and what we care about as a country is to take a good look at the promises made by our newly elected Prime Minister.?

I wrote a list of questions for each of the leaders in case anyone of them won, but since Trudeau was the first past the post I will share his list. ?As promised, will you raise taxes on Canada's wealthiest one per cent? Will you add \$515 million a year to funding for First Nations education? Will you place a moratorium on tanker traffic along the northern coast of British Columbia? Will you undo Harper's \$40 million cuts to the ocean science and monitoring program at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans? Will you bring about significant electoral reform so that every Canadian's vote matters? Will you scrap the purchase of the F-35 fighter jets? Will you legalize marijuana? Will you ensure that the 93 First Nations communities on Health Canada's drinking water advisory list will now have clean water??

These were some of the promises made by Mr. Trudeau during the longest, most expensive election in Canada's history that helped him become our 23rd Prime Minister. Reading into these promises we see a Canada very different from the one we have come to know under Mr. Harper over the last 10 years.

With four out of the main five federal party leaders campaigning for change it is no surprise that we have a new leader. What will surprise me though is if Mr. Trudeau comes through on the above mentioned promises.

I have my doubts, but I am hopeful.