

Conservative candidate Daryl Kramp seeking re-election



By Nate Smelle

With less than two months to go before Canadians go to the polls to cast their ballot in the federal election on Oct. 19, many are still deciding which candidate is going to get their vote. Seeking re-election as the Member of Parliament in the riding of Hastings-Lennox-Addington, Daryl Kramp caught up with Bancroft This Week to make his case for why he and the Harper government deserve to lead the country for another four years. Before Canadians make their decision, Kramp says they need to choose how they are going to vote, not just whom they are going to vote for.

"People have to decide, are they voting for the candidate, are they voting for the leader or are they voting for party, because people vote for different reasons," he says.

In his opinion, Kramp says the most pressing issue in this election is the economy. Having added \$150 billion to the national debt while going through the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression in the 1930s, Kramp says he remains confident in his party leader Stephen Harper's ability to manage the economy as the country heads into what economists are calling the second recession in eight years.

"We really try to focus on that we have got to have some economic momentum, despite all of the challenges we are facing; whether it's international turmoil, whether it's oil prices, or whether it is international terrorism which has a huge impact on how the world reacts to so many things," says Kramp.

"It's not just a simple matter of the terrorist blowing up a building and/or attacking an individual, terrorism these days can rear its head in so many ways. It could be eco-terrorism, it could be financial terrorism, it could be communications terrorism. There is such a plethora of challenges out there. I still have to say what's going on in my riding has to be my main focus."

The reason for the faltering Canadian economy is tied to the overall poor health of the global economy, he explained. The bottom line, he says, is that the Baby Boomer generation literally spent more than it produced; which in turn created a legacy of debt throughout the world.

"In some areas it is insurmountable, and in some areas it really creates a lot of challenges for society. It breeds anxiety, it breeds poverty, it breeds hunger; and when you do that it culminates of course in people doing desperate things."

As chairman of the public safety and national security committee, Kramp says it is his job to deal with the root causes of terrorism and actual terrorist activity while ensuring that all Canadians are safe. The committee's controversial Bill C-51 has been criticized

for painting activists from indigenous communities, social justice groups and the environmental movement with the same brush as terrorists and criminals. He claims this is an inaccurate portrayal of a Bill that he believes "actually accents the civil protection that is necessary in society."

"Our civil liberties are absolutely imperative, and trying to find a balance between public safety and protecting our civil liberties is critical. I think we actually moved the bar forward a boat here contrary to public perception that's portrayed by the opposition that says, oh no we are sacrificing public liberties on the altar of public safety."

When asked whether Bill C-51 would do anything to help prevent any more indigenous women in Canada from going missing or being murdered, Kramp responded that the legislation was designed to encourage public safety as related to international terrorism and investigations by CSIS and the international security committee, not with internal crime. From his perspective, the 1,100 plus missing or murdered indigenous women in Canada is not the type of public safety issue this committee is responsible for.

"Everybody says, well not everybody, but a group of people will say we need another national inquiry; well we've had 48 inquiries already on this issue and the problems are clearly, clearly identified... It's getting to the solution," Kramp says.

"We are into a systemic challenge here, and it is not going to change overnight. It's a whole societal development that has taken generations to create this problem and it's going to take a real societal approach to solve it. This is not a terrorism issue per se, it's a human tragedy is what it is; and it is something no one in this country should be proud of."

One thing Kramp says he is particularly proud of however is the Harper government's track record on the environment. Claiming that they are the only government in the history of Canada that has ever reduced greenhouse gas emissions, Kramp also pointed out that although the Liberals promised to reduce greenhouse gas emissions when they were in power by 20 per cent, in actuality emissions rose by 30 per cent under their leadership. Highlighting the environmental degradation caused by high polluting nations such as China and the United States, he says Canada's impact on the environment is minimal.

"We have some serious global problems and this is going to require a global solution," Kramp says.

"We can't be immune to it, we can't just sit there and ignore it. We have to be a part of the solution, but we cannot be the sole solution."

Facing criticism by the scientific community that the Harper government has waged a "War on Science" by muzzling scientists to prevent them from releasing research related to climate change and the environment that they do not want made public; and by closing a number of research stations across the country which have caused more than 2,000 federal scientists to lose their jobs, Kramp says he sees things differently.

"That is BS. That is absolutely wrong and that has not happened," he says.

"Federal scientists have not lost their jobs. They closed the one station and of course that was primarily built and developed to deal with the acid rain."

Declaring that there are more scientific journals and papers published now in Canada than ever before, Kramp believes the scientific community needs to be more aware of intellectual property rights.

"If you work for the federal government it's not a question of a party saying you can't do this; you have a responsibility to that government," says Kramp.

"Now that material should not remain private, that material should go public. But it should go public by the legislative body not by the individual players in that industry. That's where quite frankly some people are at odds. Some of the scientists say, I am the scientist in this and I will publish what I want. Well, excuse me, you don't work for yourself, you're not working for a company. You are working for the people of Canada. What you have is owned by the people of Canada not by you."

The debate whether or not Canada should trade in its first-past-the-post electoral system for one based on proportional representation has been brought up a number of times throughout the 2015 campaign. Engaged in this conversation for years, Kramp recognizes both the advantages and disadvantages to implementing such electoral reform.

"I see first-past-the-post as working, I see first-past-the-post as problematic, the same with proportional," he says.

"Some people will question the government's credibility saying "your government with support from only 34 per cent of the people, so how can you claim government. I can remember when we as a conservative party has 28 per cent of the vote and we got two seats. We were knocked down to two seats after the 1993 debacle. Now there is an instance where first-past-the-post almost destroyed a party. No party is immune from the ups and downs of the political cycle."

Not a fan of referendum politics, Kramp noted that he would be in favour of a non-partisan study in regards to whether or not Canada should transform its electoral system to one based on proportional representation.