

On us and them



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By Nate Smelle

The most important thing to remember after an election is that no matter who you voted for, or whether you voted at all, each and everyone of us had a hand and ending overpower to our new government. Whatever each of our rolls was in putting Justin Trudeau back into the Prime Minister's office that is on us. Now, it becomes our responsibility to hold him and this new government accountable.

Trudeau along with our new Member of Parliament Derek Sloan, and every other horse to cross the finish line first on Oct. 21, made boat loads of promises to convince us that they are fit to lead. Now it is on them to get down to work keeping those promises. At the same time, we need to be diligent and keep track of these commitments, and make sure they follow through. That way in 2023 we will know whether or not we elected effective leaders in 2019.

There were more than a few of promises made by our incumbent Prime Minister that got my attention during this campaign. For instance, on Sept. 26 Trudeau promised that if re-elected, a Liberal government would pay to plant two billion trees over the next decade as part of a \$3-billion campaign that will work with nature to fight climate change. He also pledged to give protective status to one-fourth of Canada's land and one-fourth of its oceans by 2025, and 30 per cent by 2030. Furthermore, Trudeau said the Liberals will also enhance Canadians quality of life by: implementing the carbon tax and making polluters pay; creating a national pharmacare program; banning military-style assault rifles; creating up to 250,000 more spaces for children in before-and-after-school childcare programs; and eliminating boil-water advisories on First Nations reserves.

Considering many of these commitments roughly fall in line with promises made by the NDP and Greens, the next four years could be far more productive than the last term. Luckily we have a minority government in office so there are better odds that more Canadians will be represented by the party they actually voted for. Some might not like the idea of a minority government because it brings with it the possibility of there being a need for another election in the near future. This may be true, if the parties are unable to work together in serving the best interest of Canadians. But, if by chance they are able to establish common ground to build on, a minority government where there is a wider diversity of representation could allow the interest of all voters to at least be included in the decision-making process.

Under the majority previously held by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau until Oct. 21 the federal government only reflected the interests of the 31.9 per cent of Canadian voters. Under former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's majority government only 39 per cent of voters had politically potent representation. The 338 seats in Parliament will now be filled by 157 Liberals, 121 Conservatives, 34 Bloc Québécois, 24 New Democrats, three Greens, and one independent candidate.

Our new minority government's diversity will either be its strength or its weakness. If our elected officials are willing and able to put aside their differences and find compromises that suit the needs of the majority of Canadians, then there is hope. Then again, if the

opposition chooses to focus on divisions rather than on what can actually be accomplished.

By the tone of this election I have my doubts. Yet, I remain hopeful. A coalition between the Liberals and New Democrats with occasional assistance from the Bloc Québécois and Greens has the potential to bring about positive changes that were not possible with a Liberal majority government.