

## A Stunning Reversal of Fortune



MHCA President Chris Lorenc

In a politically stunning reversal of fortune, Justin Trudeau's Liberals moved from distant third place in seats in the House of Commons to strong majority during a 78 day campaign (the longest in Canadian history). To put that in perspective, the last time an opposition party moved from third to government in the course of one election happened in 1923.

While many likely sensed a growing momentum favoring Trudeau about 10 days prior to the October 19, 2015 election date - speculating perhaps a Liberal minority or bare majority - no one predicted what happened: Liberals 184; Conservatives 99; NDP 44; Bloc 10; and Green 1.

In Winnipeg, aside from the Winnipeg Elmwood Transcona riding which went NDP all others went Liberal. Churchill stayed NDP in northern Manitoba and the remaining rural seats stayed Conservative.

Get used to hearing about Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre), Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South), Doug Eyolfson (Charleswood-St. James-Assiniboia-Headingley), Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North) MaryAnn Mihychuk (Kildonan St. Paul), Robert-Falcon Ouellette (Winnipeg Centre), Dan Vandal (Saint-Boniface-Saint Vital) for they now form the front bench of governing Liberal MPs representing the all but one ridings in Winnipeg and by extension Manitoba's interests in Ottawa. They also reflect potential cabinet choices for the Prime Minister to select from.

What all of the above means for Manitoba and Canada will make for very interesting politics. Prime Minister-Elect Justin Trudeau will be sworn in on November 4, 2015 with some ambitious plans to introduce and high expectations to meet. He will no doubt start with enthusiastic support from those Canadians who voted for his 'Real Change' message and likely a 'wait and see' attitude from those who didn't.

While there may exist deep divisions on the propriety of budgetary deficits, foreign policy, taxation levels and other areas of substantive public policy, hopefully all Canadians will wish success for the 43 year old Trudeau, one of Canada's youngest Prime Ministers and son of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliot, for his government's success translates into Canada's success.

As Canadians, we owe a deep debt of gratitude to out-going Prime Minister Stephen Harper. He was both elegant and classy in his concession speech. He congratulated Trudeau's success, offered immediate and full support during transition and accepted responsibility for his party's fortunes. In a separate concurrent release, Harper indicated that he would step down as leader simultaneously asking his party to appoint an interim leader and begin the search for his replacement.

Say what you will about Harper who at times exhibited both uncanny political finesse and harsh partisanship, but he did leave for his successor a united country whose finances, banking system, taxation levels, balanced budget and economy - notwithstanding the challenges of depressed oil prices - in a globally envied and remarkably strong state of affairs.

We also owe sincere gratitude and thanks to all candidates regardless of party affiliation who offered to serve Canada's interests as parliamentarians.

Elected office is a noble calling but with it comes no easy life. Rather it is an unforgiving, pressure packed, stressful, tough on family, merciless arena where positions are cross-examined, intentions are questioned and reputations hard to gain but easily tarnished or lost under the glare of more often than not unfair and/or ill-informed criticism and scrutiny.

We cannot change the direction of winds, but we can and will adjust our sails to meet the new federal reality. Our responsibility is to work with whomsoever the public elects, offering advice, collaboration, criticism and insight from an industry association always focusing on the broader public best interests.

So we salute all who were elected, all who ran and were defeated, all who served and all who volunteered their time, energy and capital in support of whatever party they endorsed.

The beauty of Canada is that we can all do all of this, and witness without bloodshed, a calm, seamless, open, democratic transfer of power based only upon the strength of 'pen to ballot.'

We truly are blessed to live in this wonderful country of Canada. Let's all make sure we keep it that way.

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