

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Prime Minister Trudeau needs to separate fact from fiction

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently gave a press conference where he made several fact-free claims about his own performance and that of his Liberal government.

The claims ranged from the deficit, cutting taxes and that Canadians didn't 'feel good' about their economic future. Unfortunately, in making these claims, the Prime Minister has failed to separate fact from fiction. The reality is something very different and at the end of the day, Canadians have been left with little to show for the current Liberal government's tax-and-spend policies.

Prime Minister Trudeau held a press conference June 27 to reflect back on the spring parliamentary session, following the House of Commons rising for the summer. During his address to members of the Canadian media, the Prime Minister stated, 'In our election platform, the promises we made was about \$10 billion of additional spending. We went from a floor where the budget was balanced because supposedly, the Conservatives had balanced the budget to what was the reality of our budget being about \$18 billion in deficit, the end of that first year.'

The Prime Minister's claim about the deficit and the reality are quite different. The fact is, backed up by the Department of Finance and the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), our previous Conservative government left the current Liberal government with a balanced budget when we left office. This can be found in the PBO Economic and Fiscal Outlook (October 2016) where it states, 'Absent these new initiatives (Liberal spending plans), the government would have reported a \$2.9 billion surplus in 2015-16.' Such claims on economic policy made by Prime Minister Trudeau aren't surprising. This is same Prime Minister who said back in February 2014, 'the budget will balance itself.' He's also broken an election promise to Canadians when he said, 'We're committed to . . . getting to balance in 2019' (CBC, Sept. 9, 2015).

During the June 27 press conference, Prime Minister Trudeau also claimed, 'Since taking office, we cut taxes for nine million Canadians.' However, once again, the reality is something different. Since coming to power in 2015, the current Liberal government hasn't met a tax hike it didn't embrace, including:

- ' cutting TFSA contributions by half;
- ' ending the Transit Tax Credit;
- ' ending the Family Tax Cut;
- ' ending the Child Fitness Tax Credit;
- ' ending the Children's Arts Tax Credit;
- ' ending the Textbook Tax Credit;
- ' ending the Education Tax Credit;
- ' introducing a federal carbon tax;
- ' raising beer, wine and spirit excise tax and scheduling it to keep rising ever year;
- ' adding new tax to Uber rides;
- ' cancelling planned small business tax reductions;
- ' cancelling EI tax reductions;
- ' increasing CPP tax payments;
- ' imposing higher taxes for companies that donate medicine to charities;
- ' increasing user fees and scheduling those fees to rise every year; and
- ' eliminating the first-time donor's super credit for charitable donations.

Lastly, Prime Minister Trudeau also stated that, 'Canadians didn't feel good about their economic future, didn't feel good about their kids' economic future' during his recent press conference. The reality is that it is well-known the Prime Minister favours making economic policy decisions based on 'feelings.' We can recall this is the same Prime Minister who stated he wanted to, 'grow the economy from the heart out' during a press conference Aug. 12, 2015. This is not a responsible approach to economic policy.

The reality of the current government's performance since taking office is wasteful spending on ministerial office renovations, moving expenses for the Prime Minister's staff, and the Prime Minister's tropical vacations after running billions of dollars in deficits and raising taxes on everything from kids' sports to beer and wine. Prime Minister Trudeau and his government are failing to show results for the Canadian middle class they purport to be helping. Canadians deserve better from their government. The Conservative Official Opposition is the voice of hardworking, taxpaying Canadians and their families. We will continue to hold the current Liberal government accountable on its tax-and-spend policies. We will also continue to separate fact from fiction when the Prime Minister makes questionable claims about his government's performance for Canadians.

