

David Tilson to step aside as MP in 2019



Written By SCOTT TAYLOR

Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson will not seek re-election in the 2019 general election.

"After much reflection and discussion with my family and close friends, I have made the decision that I will not be putting my name forward for re-election in October of 2019," he said. "There comes a point when it is time to step back and let others serve our community. I have reached that point now and wish to thank all those who have supported me over the years."

Mr. Tilson spent 4 years as a school board trustee with the Dufferin County Board of Education and then two terms (six years) as a town councillor with the Town of Orangeville. In 1990, he was elected to the first of three terms as the Member of Provincial Parliament, first for Dufferin-Peel, then for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey. Mr. Tilson was then elected for the first of five consecutive terms as the Member of Parliament for Dufferin-Caledon in 2004.

He said he made the announcement now to allow for the time to choose a successor for the riding and to give whomever that might be ample time to get their name out to the people of the riding.

Mr. Tilson declined to say whether Conservative prospects in the next federal election, expected to be held in October of 2019, held any sway in his decision to step back from politics.

"I think the prime minister will get a bump with this NAFTA (now called the United States Mexico Canada Agreement) thing. It looks good on the Liberals."

But he cautioned that no one has seen the exact language of the agreement and that he questioned what the dairy farmers might think of it. Still, he sees it auguring well for the Liberals, at least in the short term.

"Mr. Trudeau seems to be like the Teflon man," he said of the prime minister. "Things seem to roll off of him."

He added he thinks Conservative leader Andrew Scheer is "doing reasonably well" as leader of the opposition.

A minor flap was caused not long ago when he told media that he didn't ask a single question in Question Period in the House of Commons because he wouldn't get a straight answer back. Mr. Tilson was the only Conservative MP not to have asked a question since Trudeau was elected. He said his answer then stands today.

"Maybe 90, maybe 95 percent of the questions asked of the prime minister are never answered," he said. "The prime minister has his message and that's it. It's an absolute joke. It's embarrassing."

He couldn't pinpoint one particular highlight from his long career, but did say he's proud of the way he carried himself through it all.

"After close to forty years in elected office, I can say with confidence that I have always kept the interests of all of my constituents firmly focused in front of me. It has been a singular privilege to have served the residents of my community in the various capacities to which they elected me. To have had that trust placed in me for so many years is truly an honour."