

All candidates are optimistic about the Blue Jays' chances

By Bill Rea

Federal Candidates in Dufferin-Caledon in the Oct. 19 federal election agree on at least one thing.

All four are hoping for good things from the Toronto Blue Jays as they enter the playoffs.

They were contacted last week for their spontaneous responses to certain predetermined questions.

Their replies are presented here in alphabetical order.

Are Canadians well served by the CBC?

‘I listen to the CBC almost all the time,’ commented Liberal Ed Crewson. ‘Certainly in my vehicle.’

‘I think we’re well served,’ he added, noting the Liberals plan to invest an additional \$150 million to reverse cuts from the Conservatives.

‘I think the CBC is performing a service that’s acceptable,’ commented Conservative incumbent David Tilson. ‘I question sometimes when the reporting is a tad biased.’

But he also said the CBC needs about \$1 billion from the government annually.

‘They’ve lost the NHL hockey, which I think is too bad,’ Tilson added. ‘The CBC are having their troubles. They’re having difficulty properly serving the public.’

‘I think the CBC is essential to Canada and helps weave the fabric of what Canada is,’ commented Green Party candidate Nancy Urekar. ‘It helps us retain our culture.’

‘Yes,’ declared New Democrat Rehya Yazbek. ‘That’s the only news I trust and that’s the only programming I really like.’

She added the CBC is an integral part of the Canadian fabric. ‘We need to preserve it.’

She added some of the CBC shows have become part of Canadian culture, and the news reporting there is much less bias than other sources.

Would you favour term limits for MPs?

‘I don’t see that that’s necessary,’ Crewson commented. ‘I think it’s up to the individual and the electorate.’

‘I don’t think so,’ Tilson said. ‘I think we need fresh faces. We also need experience. I think we need a mix.’

He added the problem with fixed terms is ‘you’d lose some good experience.’

‘I’ve never thought about it before,’ Urekar said, offering no other comment.

‘I’m not sure what my party’s stand is on this,’ Yazbek commented.

‘When you do anything for too long, you get complacent,’ she added. ‘I really think it’s up to the voters to decide that.’

Does Canada do enough for its veterans?

‘I’m really disappointed with the Harper Conservatives,’ Crewson remarked, adding one on five veterans have to wait eight months for mental health care. ‘It’s a travesty.’

Crewson said a Liberal government will hire the support workers veterans need and provide more funding, as well as benefits for their families. The government will also re-open the Veterans’ Affairs offices that have been closed.

‘We’re going to do a lot more for our veterans and so we should,’ he declared.

‘Yes, they do,’ Tilson said. ‘You can always do more for veterans.’

Tilson said he respects what they did in the Second World War, Afghanistan and on peace-keeping missions.

‘They’ve served us well,’ he observed. ‘They’ve kept our democracy free.’

Tilson also said spending on veterans is up 13 per cent, denying suggestions from other parties that spending in this area has been cut.

‘We haven’t cut,’ he said. ‘You can always spend more. We need to.’

‘No,’ Urekar said. ‘Canada’s failing its veterans.’

‘We need to open the Veterans’ Affairs offices that have closed,’ she added. ‘We have to roll back the cuts.’

She also pointed to the importance of addressing the needs of veterans, both physical and mental.

‘Whoever needs it needs it, whatever they did,’ Urekar maintained. ‘They served our country.’

‘No, it doesn’t,’ Yazbek replied, pointing out more veterans have committed suicide after coming home than were killed in the line of duty.

‘It’s a shame what they have done in Veterans’ Affairs,’ she added. ‘Calling a 1-800 number doesn’t do anything.’

Yazbek said the government needs to re-open the Veterans’ Affairs offices that have been closed, and expand the health benefits to veterans and their families, making sure they get the supports they need.

How far do you think the Blue Jays are going to go in the playoffs?

Crewson said he used to be a big baseball fan, but hasn't been able to watch it much this year because he's been too busy knocking on doors.

He recalled during the 1993 federal campaign, he was knocking on doors for Liberal candidate Murray Calder. Calder, the Liberals and the Blue Jays all won that year. "I'm hoping for a repeat," he said.

"They're going to win it," Tilson said. "They're going to be the champions."

"The Blue Jays make us feel good," he added "Everybody's a Toronto Blue Jays fan."

"And they're blue," he observed.

"All the way," Urekar declared. "I'm an optimist."

"All the way, I'm hoping," Yazbek said. "Go Jays go, even if they're blue."