

Claire Hoy ? Trudeau's popularity may soon fade

Now that the clowns have put away their props and the Ottawa circus as moved off to the rest of the country for the summer, we learn once again how silly public opinion polls really are.

The latest, alas, purports to show that newly-minted Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau is considerably more popular than either Prime Minister Stephen Harper or NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair.

Of course he is. The question is: so what?

But the media loves polls. To be sure, it's pretty easy journalism. You don't have to actually do much journalistic snooping to write the story. All you do is hire a pollster to phone a bunch of people ? the vast majority of whom, by the way, don't talk to the pollsters ? and presto, you've got a ?story.?

The latest ?story,? according to a Canadian Press Harris-Decima telephone survey of ?just over 1,000 respondents? ? which means they had to call several thousand people in order to get 1,000 to respond (a reality that distorts all polls more and more as people give up land lines and immigration means more Canadians who speak neither French nor English) tells us that 56 per cent had a ?favorable impression? of Trudeau, compared to 39 for Harper and 37 for Mulcair.

Of course they do. They don't really know much about him other than his name. He's still basking in the generally glowing press he got during his recent leadership bid.

Unlike both Harper and Mulcair, who've been in the thick of many issues for a long time now, Trudeau hasn't really done enough yet to be judged. That's not a knock on him. It's just reality.

It's pretty well a given that the longer politicians are around the more people they're bound to tick off, particularly when there is no election on the line.

So just because people claim to like the brash new suitor on the block, doesn't mean they're about to rush out and buy a Liberal membership.

It doesn't really mean much at all, which raises the question again about why the media spends so much time and resources running these stupid polls to begin with.

Give him time and Trudeau will get involved in major issues and many Canadians will not like his approach. Many will. Many won't. That's the way it works.

While Harper and Mulcair spent the last couple of years duking it out on Parliament Hill, Trudeau has been riding above all that and flitting about the country flashing his nice teeth.

Mind you, perhaps people will eventually get past the superficial attractiveness and pay a little more attention to what a greedy person the millionaire Liberal leader has been. Not to mention the fact that he's been telling flat-out lies about his speaking engagements.

You will know, of course, that Trudeau has made a small fortune over the past few years being paid to speak at various functions, many of them charities to which he charged huge fees just to offer a few pearls of wisdom, often not drawing a big enough crowd to cover his fee let alone raise money for the charity in question.

After much ado about this, Trudeau ? who claimed that he had the advance approval from Mary Dawson, the Parliamentary ethics commissioner (a bit of a stretch, since he never ran a single speech past the commissioner in fact) ? has reluctantly repaid some of the 10s of thousands of dollars he was paid.

He has also said ? and again, this is a lie ? that he never gave any paid speeches in his capacity as an MP. The reason this is important is because the public, quite rightly, expects not to have to pay to hear their elected representatives speak on the issues of the day. We already pay them a handsome salary for being a politician. No need ? or desire ? to pony up even more.

Turns out that our popular Liberal leader did speak as a Liberal representative at a March, 2010 conference organized by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. He was joined there by Conservative Gary Goodyear, the Minister of State for Science and Technology, and by NDP MP Perry Nash, who was then NDP president.

The only difference between Trudeau and his two fellow politicians is that he was paid \$20,000 for his speech, while Goodyear and Nash didn't get paid.

His office ? and Dawson ? say he wasn't presented to the conference as an MP, but OPSEU hired him through his speaking agent. Really? Why do you think they hired him? Why did the program feature ?key federal politicians,? if Trudeau supposedly appeared, what, as a private citizen? Oh please.

Is this really the ethical standard people want in a leader? Let's hope not.

