

Ed Crewson acclaimed as Liberal candidate to big cheers

By Tabitha Wells

Nearly 100 supporters of Ed Crewson gathered at the Mono Community Centre for his nomination meeting Tuesday night as the Liberal candidate in Dufferin-Caledon in the next federal election.

Crewson, who served as Mayor of Shelburne for 17 years, has led a passionate campaign for the position over the last several months.

The meeting, however, was more of a formality and celebration, as Crewson was the only person to file for the position by the deadline in January. Bill Prout, who formerly stood against current Conservative MP David Tilson, recently withdrew from the race, pledging his support behind Crewson in the campaign.

"In an article in September, it was said that 'it is an end of the Crewson era in Shelburne'," Prout commented in a short speech Tuesday night. "Well, I am here to tell you it is the start of the Crewson era in Dufferin County. We need someone who will truly represent our needs to the government, not who represents the government's needs to us. Because of Ed Crewson, Dufferin-Caledon is now a swing riding."

Crewson was welcomed to the podium with a standing ovation and thunderous applause from his supporters, who are excited to see his election campaign move forward.

"I want to thank the Liberal Party of Canada for arranging this meeting and for approving of me as a potential candidate," he said.

"Being a Liberal in Dufferin-Caledon has not been an easy or popular choice."

He added that he was recently asked, as he often is, why he chose to be a Liberal. The reason, he said, "lies less in who I am and more in who I was."

For him, the impact of the Liberals began in his childhood. When he was eight, his father (a man who had survived the depression, two conflicts in the Second World War and worked hard to provide for his family) was diagnosed with bone and prostate cancer. At the time, government funded health care had not yet been introduced, and his family felt the pressure of medical bills for his father, "greatly increasing the suffering of an already sick man."

"I remember the relief felt by my parents in 1970 when the federal Liberals finally succeeded in implementing government funded, universal health care, so that people wouldn't lose everything just because they got sick," Crewson said.

He continued, citing other examples of Liberal actions that helped him in his life, such as the Canadian Pension Plan, which supported he and his mother after his father's death in 1973, and having 80 per cent of the cost of his education paid for by the federal and provincial governments.

"Today . . . graduates face crippling debt loads because governments have virtually eliminated subsidization of post-secondary school education," he said. "And so I am a Liberal today, because when my mother and me were in need, the social safety net that was carefully constructed by successive Liberal governments was in place to support us. I am running to become the Liberal (MP) in Dufferin-Caledon to fight the Harper government in its war against that social safety net."

In his speech, Crewson identified several issues he has with the current Harper government, including take-it-or-leave-it ultimatums provided to provincial partners in funding programs that make up Canada's social safety net, an over expenditure of \$100 million a year on partisan ads about action plans that might be operating in the country, and criticisms of the free trade deal with China.

"Economist Diane Francis, a self-described 'small-c' conservative . . . concludes 'there is not a single gain for Canada here whatsoever: no market access, no reciprocity, zero rights for our investors here,'" Crewson commented. "It is not free trade when Canadians lose their jobs ? when Canadian entrepreneurs and manufacturers are placed at a disadvantage because of the actions of their own government."

His reasons for running, however, are not limited to the issues where he believes the Harper government has failed, but also include his passion for being able to represent the riding's needs to the federal government, instead of the other way around.

"We need a federal government that also cares about our environment and our farmland, so that our children will have safe and healthy futures," he said. "For the past 26 years, I have worked hard to serve the people of Shelburne and Dufferin County by listening and caring, by providing progressive, positive and activist leadership."

Crewson will face long-time incumbent David Tilson in the federal election late this year, which could prove to be a difficult task, considering the fairly recent history of voters in the riding.

"Historically, the majority of voters in Dufferin-Caledon have not supported the Liberals," he observed. "We have a lot of work to do over the next few months if we are going to defeat David Tilson. We have to convince those Progressive Conservatives who are unhappy with the uncaring, right-wing Harper government that they will have a fiscally responsible, socially sensitive representative

serving them in Canada's Parliament by voting for Ed Crewson.?

?I am dedicating myself to this cause, and I pledge that I will work hard every day to provide you with local, vocal and vigorous representation in Canada's Parliament,? he said. ?In return I am asking you to dedicate your time and effort to getting me elected. Will you do that for me, for us? Together, with hope and hard work, we will do better.?



Ed Crewson was acclaimed Liberal candidate in Dufferin-Caledon for the next federal election Tuesday night.