

Federal campaign expected to start heating up

By Bill Rea

With Labour Day in the past and youngsters back at school, it's expected that the federal election campaign is going to increase its pace.

'I think the real serious part is just starting,' Dufferin-Caledon's Conservative incumbent David Tilson said this week.

Although there has been some activity among the four declared candidates seeking to represent the riding in the House of Commons, they also seem to have been biding their time until after the summer vacation break.

'We're starting up,' commented New Democrat Rehya Yazbek, who commented the plan of her campaign all along has been to really get started around Labour Day.

'We're off to the races,' she declared. 'The signs are going up.'

Yazbek said she's been detecting a mood for change, commenting she's been getting warm reception in traditionally Conservative areas.

'I feel like there's a big change,' she observed. 'I think change is in the air. People are looking for that change.'

Yazbek added she's done a lot for the party in previous campaigns, largely helping NDP incumbents in other ridings (she was the NDP candidate in Dufferin-Caledon in last year's provincial election). But this time, she's working on generating a riding association here.

'We're not the big parties with the big money,' Green party candidate Nancy Urekar commented. 'We have a good group of volunteers.'

She also said things have been rather slow on the election trail up until now, with her campaign trying to use money and resources wisely.

'We're just really getting launched locally,' she remarked.

Urekar has few problems with the reception she's been receiving.

'People always like the Green party because they know it's about the future and their kids,' she remarked. 'This could be the election we elect a Green MP. It's looking pretty good.'

Things have been busy on Ed Crewson's Liberal campaign.

'Every day, we're knocking on doors and attending events,' he said, adding he too is detecting a mood for change. 'Many people we talked to are looking for someone other than Stephen Harper to be Prime Minister,' he remarked, adding he has been hearing a lot of people say, 'Anybody but Harper.'

Crewson also maintained he's got the best chance to take the riding away from the Conservatives, citing his 26 years in public service. He said the problem with Harper is the trust factor, over matters like the scandal involving Senator Mike Duffy, which has implicated the Prime Minister's Office.

'No one knows who to believe,' he remarked. 'It's just the whole trust issue.'

There are also lots of people bringing up the economy, Crewson said.

'Harper only seems to be offering more of the same,' he commented, adding people seem to be looking more toward Justin Trudeau. 'A lot of people seem to be saying, 'He's a fresh face.''

Crewson agreed the Conservative attack ads against Trudeau, stating, 'He's just not ready,' have been 'very effective.'

'My response to that is Justin is ready and he's got a good team of candidates behind him,' he remarked. 'He's got a great team of experienced people. The Liberal team is experienced and knows what to do and will do a good job.'

Tilson pointed out campaigns normally last about 36 days.

'Thirty-six days are about to begin,' he observed Tuesday. 'The campaign has been sleepy up until now.'

'Campaigns are always challenging,' he said, 'but we're looking forward to it.'

Tilson said he's been receiving a good reception so far on the hustings.

'People seem to be appreciative of the work that I've done in the riding,' he said.

Tilson also said voters haven't appeared to be in an election mood up to now, seeming to have been thinking more of the summer.

'Now I think people are going to start getting interested in what the issues are,' he observed. 'Now I think the campaign is starting.'