

Keep hoisting those elbows

by BROCK WEIR

Is Canada broken?

That is a question that was bandied about a great deal during the Federal election that was ? and, let's be clear, it was bandied about a great deal as well in the prelude to the Federal election as well.

Answers varied depending on who you asked.

Some had lived through highly individual experiences that may have led them to answer the question in the affirmative. Others, with different experiences under their respective belts, might have shuddered at the very idea of Canada's amour being dented let alone broken.

Then there are ? and were ? others who would have answered a resounding yes simply out of partisanship and efforts to undermine whatever opponent was in their crosshairs.

More people might have answered ?yes? before the resignation of Justin Trudeau earlier this year. Others may have been emboldened to continue on with that line of thinking in the heat of a campaign. Given the results of Monday's election, some might still subscribe to this hue and cry, convinced that only one person could have re-assembled a nation that had, in their view, less structural integrity than Humpty Dumpty at his worst.

As an observer of this year's campaign, however, I came away Monday night surer than ever that reports of the country being on the fritz were greatly exaggerated.

Simply look at the electoral process itself. In contrast to the prolonged and questionable saga our southern neighbours routinely embrace in electing their leaders and governments, our election ran fairly smoothly, we had a reasonable idea of the overall outcome at a reasonable hour, and with the exception of a few squawks from the usual suspects, very few cries of shenanigans at the polls.

Regardless of how you voted and what the ultimate results turned out to be, that is a testament not only to the thousands of volunteers who dedicated their time to ensure it was a smooth process, but also a testament to the strength of our institutions.

At a time when our country is under an existential threat, that is nothing to sneeze at ? and these election workers, and, of course, the dedicated, community-minded, and community-driven individuals who put themselves forward to make a difference as candidates.

You all deserve our thanks.

For some, it was an election about affordability. For others, housing. For still more, it was about the very idea of Canada itself.

Given the resignation of Justin Trudeau earlier this year, the subsequent race to lead his party and government, the Ontario election, and, most recently, the resulting Federal Election campaign, for far too long it's felt like we've been without a rudder in the choppiest waters of our existence. Whether you're happy with a returned Liberal government or not, I'm happy with a greater degree of stability and predictability in our day-to-day and in the unprecedented and unpredictable fight we collectively have ahead of us.

?Humility underscores the importance of governing as a team in cabinet and in caucus and working constructively with all parties across Parliament, of working in partnership with the provinces and territories and with Indigenous peoples,? said Prime Minister Carney in his victory speech. ?And at this time, it underscores the value of bringing together labour, business, civil society, to advance the nation-building investments we need to transform our economy. ?Humility is also about recognizing that one of the

responsibilities of government is to prepare for the worst, not hope for the best, as I've been warning for months, America wants our land, our resources, our water, our country ? never.

?But these are not idle threats: President Trump is trying to break us, so that America can own us. That will never, ever happen but we also must recognize the reality that our world has fundamentally changed. There is also, for me, as I stand before you this evening, humility in recognizing that while many have chosen to place your trust in me, trust in the Liberal party, millions of our fellow citizens preferred a different outcome. And my message to every Canadian is this: no matter where you live, no matter what language you speak, no matter how you voted, I will always do my best to represent everyone who calls Canada home.?

That is, in my opinion, a good start ? but it's a two-way street. In these unprecedented times, it's important that Carney not only be a Prime Minister for all Canadians by reaching across party lines, but for everyone ? including those who might bleed any other colour but red ? to do the same and work together for the common good.

But Carney has his work cut out for him, as do we all.

As much as Trump's threats have been a boost for Canadian patriotism, the bread-and-butter issues of affordability and housing have not magically disappeared simply with the conclusion of a hard-fought campaign.

There's a lot of work to be done and, if this ultimately turns out to be a minority government, probably not a heck of a lot of time to achieve relevant goals by the time we're next at the polls, so time will be of the essence for Carney and his government to prove their mettle.

It will be interesting to see how seriously the current occupant of the White House will take the new occupant of 24 Sussex Drive ? or Rideau Cottage ? and that will, indeed, be the first litmus test.

Canadians are not generally known to be boastful about their country, its achievements, and its place in the world, but, if anything, Election 2025 has been a shot in the arm for patriotism, whatever position we place our respective elbows.

That will only go so far as we, as Canadians, can only control so much.

Once these very important issues are addressed, a top priority for the new government needs to be restoring the public's trust.

I sense a few pairs of eyes that lit upon that last sentence rolling back at the very thought, as if that proverbial horse may have left the barn sometime in the Stephen Harper era, but that doesn't have to be the case. A good start, in my opinion, would be to ditch the personality politics that have taken root in this country, one of the less savoury imports we've imported tariff-free from the United States.

We're well past the era where comments on Justin Trudeau's apparently enviable locks and colourful socks were an apparent substitute for substantive debate on issues.

We're well past the time when the word ?Trudeau? somehow became a seven-letter four-letter-word in some circles, uttered as if it was at the heart of all rot people were seeing.

We're well past time when the same word can be used to paint anyone who had any association with him as if it is the broadest brush available at the paint store.

In a definitive era for our country, we're in a time where we need adults to sit down at the table, behave as such, and work towards the betterment of this country.