

Local Liberals celebrate Trudeau's victory as party leader

A good time was had by all over the weekend, as the Dufferin-Caledon Federal Liberal Riding Association held their own Leadership Convention in Bolton.

About 30 enthusiasts, young and old, watched the proceedings on CBC. As the designated time drew near, this sometimes-boisterous crowd was joined by the other patrons in the restaurant.

And those assembled seemed to like the way things turned out, as Justin Trudeau was handily elected party leader.

'I think he's going to make a great leader,' commented Alton resident Bill Prout, who was Dufferin-Caledon's Liberal candidate in the last federal election.

'At the Dufferin-Caledon Federal Liberal Riding Association luncheon event in Caledon last June, we had several private hours together to discuss the state of Canadian politics,' Prout added in a statement he released Tuesday. 'Our discussion included several topics, from Arctic sovereignty to agricultural policy, but I was most impressed as to how he explained he would lead and govern. We were in harmony with respect to creating a whole new environment in Ottawa and across Canada.'

'Positive' was a key word in the discussion,' Prout added. 'Honest and open, inclusive and forthright,' were others. From watching his campaign over the past eight months, nothing has changed.

Prout also took on some comments that Trudeau is inexperienced for the job, pointing out Trudeau has been an MP longer than Prime Minister Stephen Harper had been when he became Conservative leader.

It was almost a spontaneous celebration that was arranged on short notice by Riding Association President Danita Cramp.

The association reported that Dufferin-Caledon in particular had one of the better success rates in signing new members and supporters during the leadership campaign. At the end of the campaign, the member and supporter numbers stood at 778, and the number of 'likes' on the riding's Facebook page was triple the number on the page for the local Conservatives.

While most Liberals in the riding favoured Trudeau, the association reported no one expected the overwhelming Canada-wide count of more than 80 per cent on the first ballot.

'Now come the Conservative attack ads,' Prout commented. 'We will be able to tell how concerned Harper is about Trudeau by how vicious the ads are.'

'But this is really a great day for our riding,' Danita said. 'You need to remember that Justin came to Dufferin-Caledon last June for our major fundraising event. He had not yet put himself forward as a candidate, but we think the tremendous turnout and the keen interest that afternoon had an effect. The citizens of Dufferin-Caledon can rightfully say they played a part in convincing Justin the time was right.'

There were also compliments from the other side of the floor.

Dufferin-Caledon Conservative MP David Tilson extended his compliments.

'He's obviously what the Liberals want,' he told the Citizen Monday, although he too expressed the thought that Canadians are looking for more experience in their prime minister. 'He did well becoming leader,' he added.

Tilson said he got to know Trudeau when he sat on the immigration committee he chairs in the last session of Parliament. He called Trudeau a 'very likeable, personable fellow,' adding he always made good presentations.