

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? Tough living up to his promises

Promising, as they say, is much easier than delivering.

Just ask newly minted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

During his highly successful election campaign, Trudeau and his Liberals made somewhere around 200 promises to an electorate eager to bounce the sitting Tories from government.

But that was before they had to face the reality of living up to those promises, a regular occurrence with any new government, particularly when it was a party who began the campaign with very little expectation of actually having to deliver.

One of his major promises, of course, was to get the Canadian jets out of the war zone in the Middle East, a promise he repeated to U.S. President Barrack Obama shortly after becoming prime minister. But, as you know, the jets are still there.

His notion of getting out of the war no doubt pleases many, but it was muddled from the outset since he wasn't really getting out of the war at all, he was going to simply bring our jets home and send advisors or who knows what to take their place. In any event, he hasn't done any of it yet, despite his high-sounding rhetoric.

And speaking of war, he has given his personal blessings to a mammoth \$15-billion contract with Saudi Arabia for light armoured vehicles ? a contract sealed under the former Tory regime ? despite the Saudi's recent high-profile public execution of 47 prisoners, a move that has put the Saudis and the Iranians on a war footing against each other.

During the campaign itself, when in London where the vehicles are being built, Trudeau sloughed off criticisms of selling arms to a major human rights abuser by saying they were simply selling ?jeeps.? Well, they're a far cry from Jeeps with their 25-mm. cannons mounted on turrets.

What's more, Gerald Butts, now Trudeau's principal secretary, dispatched a nasty tweet at the time accusing the Tories of ignoring Saudi's human rights abuses by agreeing to such a contract. Trudeau has since argued that the contract has nothing to do with his government but is a private deal, an absurd statement since governments have to sign off on deals of this nature before they can be consummated.

You may also recall that before the election campaign began, Trudeau told a group of women when asked which country's government he admired the most that for him, it was China. Since then, the Liberals have announced they intend to seek a free trade deal with China, a country which ranks right up there with the Saudis and Iranians as serial human rights abusers.

Indeed, when the Harper government, citing China's appalling human rights record, refused to have truck or trade with the Chinese, they were attacked openly by the premier of China, much to the delight of Liberals who sided with the Chinese premier against Harper.

To muddy the waters even more, Trudeau has subsequently announced his intention to create closer relationships with Iran. Iran? Arguably the world's biggest exporter of terrorism, that somehow doesn't seem to matter to Trudeau and the Liberals.

It certainly mattered whenever the Tories were dancing with human rights abusers. But apparently what is unethical and outrageous for a Tory is just business as usual for a Liberal.

The other promise that Trudeau included in his cornucopia of platform ideas was that this recent election would be the last one held under our highly-successful and historic first-past-the-post system.

Here again, Trudeau has himself in a box of his own construction, being unable or unwilling to explain a)- why the current system needs fixing and b)- what his solution to this imaginary problem is.

What's more, despite overwhelming evidence that despite its' shortcomings most Canadians are happy with the system ? three provinces have already said ?no? in referendums to changing the system ? Trudeau is steadfastly rejecting the idea of actually asking the people if they want change and, if they do, to what.

All this in just a matter of weeks. Certainly gives us something to look forward to over the next four or five years.

