

Redecorating the House

BROCK'S BANTER

By Brock Weir

Have you ever decided to spruce up your living space with a new coat of paint?

Of course, you have. After all, we've spent the better part of a year-and-a-half almost invariably looking at the same four walls as we wait for that elusive light at the end of the tunnel to come into blinding reality.

It sounds like a simple task, but anyone who has ever set foot in a paint store knows, it can be a decidedly overwhelming mission. After all, how many different shades of beige can you leaf through before finding the right one?

The answer? Far more than I could ever anticipate.

If you can see the difference between cream, ivory, and that picturesquely-named 'Amish linen,' I salute you. If you were able to easily make that decision, I'm sending even more kudos your way.

But these kudos are in particularly limited supply this week because I had to spend Monday and Tuesday sending them around the country as Canadians from coast-to-coast slapped a subtle, but fresh coat of the same ol' paint onto the House of Commons.

Perhaps a CBC commentator said it best as the numbers rolled in at the start of the week: that this has been tantamount to a \$600 million cabinet shuffle for Justin Trudeau.

Was it worth the final price tag?

Of course not. As a nation, we have very little to show for it.

On the other hand, this might hold us for at least another year-and-a-half while all political parties debrief, break down the results, and see whether their respective leaders can stand the test of time after failing to deliver on any of the successes they had hoped for at the outset of this campaign. Maybe, just maybe, focus can be placed on the task at hand: working together once again to get us through one of the most challenging times in recent memory.

'The moment we face demands real, important change,' said Justin Trudeau on Monday night. 'And you have given this parliament, and this government, clear direction. You made a choice. You gave parliamentarians a clear mandate so that we can put an end to this pandemic once and for all, and build a better future. You have elected a government in Ottawa that will fight for you, and deliver for you every day. We hear you. We hear you when you say you want more daycare spaces, a stronger health care system, affordable housing, and good green jobs; to continue moving forward on the path to reconciliation [and] investments for the middle class and for all those who are working hard to join it.'

Canadians certainly made a choice on Monday night, but whether or not they gave a returning Liberal government 'a clear mandate is yet to be determined.'

A majority government is the outcome of any Prime Minister who pulls the plug on a minority prior to its Sell By date. Canadians as a whole did not go along with that objective. They elected a minority on October of 2019 and evidently that's what the country collectively wanted because that's more or less what they've returned to Ottawa.

'Canadians did not give Mr. Trudeau the majority mandate he wanted,' said Conservative leader Erin O'Toole on Monday night. 'In

fact, Canadians sent him back with another minority at a cost of \$600 million and deeper divisions in our great country.

?A few months ago, I told Conservatives that our party needed the courage to change because Canada has changed. Over the past 36 days, we have demonstrated to Canadians that we have set out on a path to engage more Canadians in our Conservative movement. One that addresses the challenges of today while advancing the dreams of tomorrow. Ours is a conservatism that dwells not in the past, but learns from it to secure the future. It's a conservatism that reveres strong communities and compassion for one another, for our environment, and for those in need at home and abroad. It is a conservatism that respects hard work and character, and the fact that millions have come to this great country for liberty and opportunity.?

Yet, the principles of strong communities, compassion, protecting the environment and helping those in need is not the exclusive bailiwick of ?conservatism? or Canada's ?Big C? party. These are areas in which most parties find common ground. At least, I hope so.

?I know you don't want to hear any more talk of elections and politics, but you want us to concentrate on the work that is necessary for you,? said Trudeau. ?You just want to get back to the things you love, not worry about this pandemic, or about an election, that you just want to know that your Members of Parliament of all stripes will have your back through this crisis, and beyond.?

Perhaps in this statement Trudeau's finger was closer to the pulse of Canadians than on any of the previous 35 days of campaigning.

All parties that achieved at least one seat in the House of Commons this week share those values.

I suspect he is right: most Canadians are sick of elections ? whether the one we just weathered or the constant threat of one in a minority ? and certainly all Canadians want their elected representatives to concentrate on the work that is necessary to bring us out the other end of that tunnel.

In short, it is time to stop playing politics and partisanship and get back to work for Canada as a whole.

To all those who stepped up and put themselves forward to be a part of our national recovery, whichever political stripe you belong to, thank you for being a part of our democratic process and sacrificing so much of yourselves over the last 36 days to further your vision.

To all those in whom voters placed their trust this week, congratulations and best of luck in navigating these difficult waters.

To all those who came out on Monday to mark their ballots, thank you for exercising your civic duty ? but just tell me if we're looking at cream, ivory or Amish linen!