

The Liberal-NDP conveyor-belt to socialist oblivion



by Conrad Black

The complacency of the general reaction to the announcement of the Liberal-New Democratic agreement to maintain the government in office for another 3½ years illustrates the torpor and mediocrity of our public life and most of the people in it. In straight political terms, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau should be complemented for cementing his ability to become the sixth-longest serving of the 16 people who have been elected to that office. This arrangement secures his position until late 2025, unless he joins Jean Chrétien as the only elected prime minister to be pushed out of office by his own party. This is a remarkable achievement for someone who is not remotely as substantial a leader in his ability, convictions or the value of his policies of those who have served 15 years or more in that office: William Lyon Mackenzie King, John A. Macdonald, Pierre Trudeau and Wilfrid Laurier.

Despite all the gratuitous disparagements of him as having qualified for his office only by surviving childbirth with a pretty face and a famous name, politics is a very challenging occupation, and serving nearly 10 years as prime minister of Canada would be a remarkable achievement, especially for someone who lost the popular vote in his last two elections.

The advantage of this arrangement for the Liberals is that it makes Trudeau practically immune from a no-confidence vote. The NDP gains the ability to take joint credit for the dreary menu of socialistic measures agreed to by the two parties. Though all of them would have passed without this agreement, the effect of it is to ensure that the two parties monopolize power unvexed by any possibility of blundering into an election prematurely – the other three parties are sandbagged for the balance of a full parliamentary term. Most of our political media have adhered to their usual standard of insipidity – almost no presentation of this as the cynical clinging to the furniture of government that it is and a good deal of pseudo-political scientific bunk about the virtues of multi-party government.

The menu of tired socialist pieties whose adoption has been agreed is: dental care starting with children up to 12 in families with incomes of under \$90,000, a start on pharmacare with a determination of "essential medicines," "additional ongoing investments" in provincial health-care plans, more affordable housing, an end to federal funding for the fossil fuel industry, redoubling efforts for a net-zero carbon emissions economy by 2050, a clean jobs training centre, 10 days paid sick leave for federally regulated workers, rendering it illegal to call in replacement workers in lockouts in federally regulated unionized businesses, continued funding of searches for Indigenous graves, more funding for First Nations housing, the advancement of policies relating to missing and murdered Indigenous women, changes to taxes on financial institutions that "have made strong profits

during the pandemic,” a publicly accessible beneficial ownership registry and assurance that Quebec’s representation in the House of Commons will remain constant. Almost all of this is redundant and much of it is undesirable.

This platitudinous catalogue has elicited the customary hallelujah chorus of the somnambulant Canadian left, including almost all the media, but the government can’t determine essential medicines and reducing the role of the private sector in Canadian health care will just aggravate the rationing of health care and the encouragement of medically assisted suicide. We should accept more private involvement in health care, in order to focus state benefits on the disadvantaged and incentivize the accreditation of more doctors. We should not use climate change as an excuse to strangle our greatest industry. The world, including eastern Canada, needs our oil and natural gas. The search for graves at residential schools should aim to confirm any missing persons, and not just fan fantastic blood libels on Canadians as genocidists. The best road to reconciliation with the Indigenous is to tear up the existing statutes, ignore most of the royal commissions and work out with the most plausible and reputable First Nations leaders a generous and practical new policy. The current regime has just mired us in exaggerated self-reproach. The implication that there’s anything wrong with “robust profits” in a financial institution during a pandemic is just more socialist nonsense. So is truckling to labour unions (and in this case, the federal government will be the chief victim). If the beneficial ownership registry is an assault upon private companies, it will just drive capital out of the country in greater velocity and quantities than is already occurring. Quebec’s elected parliamentary representation can remain where it is as long as it does not restrain the other provinces, which are enjoying greater natural population growth.

Almost all of these goals reinforce the slow growth, reduced

investment, sluggish public-sector economy that Canada has pursued under this government: take the money from those who have earned it, give it to those who have not in exchange for their votes, and call it “social justice.” Almost everybody agrees with a policy of compassion toward the disadvantaged, but the decline in Canada’s per capita income shows us where these policies are leading.

These shallow obsessions with climate change and the preoccupation with Canada’s mistreatment of its Indigenous peoples, like the absurd fixation on gender issues, are the hallmarks of this government’s mistaken ambitions. This anti-parliamentary Liberal-NDP arrangement should achieve Trudeau’s tactical goal of diminishing the vote of the NDP. If the Conservatives elect another leader indistinguishable from the Liberals and afraid or incapable of enunciating a moderate conservative program out of fear of the customary quadrennial Liberal smear of harsh inhumanity, extremism and a sell-out to the avarice of capitalism, we will revert to the 1½ party system that enabled the liberals to rule for 52 of the 63 years between Robert Borden and Brian Mulroney (1921-1984). If the Conservatives cannot choose a leader who will stake out a socially just, high economic growth program and defend it against the entrenched bias of those in the media hurling the mud-balls and brickbats the Liberals produce for them, and don’t bring Maxime Bernier and his People’s party back into the fold, then we will continue on our present conveyor-belt to socialist oblivion. The world notices our decline; our weight in the Ukrainian crisis is zero. Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly’s claim that we have convening power is absurd. We are off the world’s beaten track and are talking to ourselves in a socialist fantasyland. Our present is less distinguished than our past and every day we are squandering, or at best deferring, the future.

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