

# Justin Trudeau is the worst Liberal leader in history

By Conrad Black

Justin Trudeau is only the second elected prime minister in Canadian history after Jean Chrétien, to be ignominiously pushed out as prime minister by his own party, and this departure is more embarrassing because it follows a bungled attempt to lay all the responsibility for a failed economic policy on Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland, turf her out and replace her with a complete new comer to elective office. Chrétien was never taken overly seriously by the Canadian



In this 2010 photo, Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff laughs as former PM Jean Chretien gives Liberal MP Justin Trudeau a "Shawinigan handshake" Thursday in Shawinigan, Que. PHOTO BY ANNIE T. ROUSSEL/QMI AGENCY

public but was a reasonably competent prime minister with a defensible record. Because the (then) Progressive Conservative Party had been fragmented by the defection

of the Bloc Québécois and the Reform party, Chrétien routinely held elections prematurely, since he was sure to win them, as a substitute for doing the necessary to raise his standing in the country and in his party. The fragmentation of the

opposition made it effectively a one-party state and the grandees of the Liberal party tired of it and gave Chrétien the order of the boot. Finance Minister Paul Martin had an excellent record and took office with dignity in a spirit of confidence. What we have witnessed in the last few weeks has been an amateurish fiasco.

Freeland deserves credit for not accommodating Justin's preposterous charade of shuffling her out of finance wearing the dunce cap for the country's dismal economic performance while ushering in the deus ex machina of Mark Carney to lead us to the coruscation of this regime's psychosis about climate change. The Liberal party of Canada long had a talent rivalled only by the Holy See for introducing novel successors to successful incumbent leaders. It was a bold move for Edward Blake to promote as his successor, the French-Canadian Wilfrid Laurier in 1887. When Laurier died after 32 brilliant years as party leader, Mackenzie King had not been in Parliament for eight years and was an American resident working for the Rockefellers and the Carnegies. He would serve 29 years as Liberal leader, an astonishing 22 years as prime minister. He was an ungalvanizing obscurantist but was extremely successful. Louis S. St. Laurent was observing his 60th birthday, never having once seriously considered entering public life, when King asked him to replace the dying Ernest Lapointe as, effectively, the co-prime minister for Quebec. He did so out of war-time duty and succeeded King and was another outstanding prime minister. King and St. Laurent together recruited Lester Pearson, a career foreign service official, to enter Parliament and take over the External Affairs Department, and the likely succession to St. Laurent, though he had never evinced the slightest interest in elective office. And Pearson recruited Pierre Elliott Trudeau when he was 46 and had also never considered elective office, to run for Parliament. He served a year as parliamentary assistant to Pearson, 18 months as justice minister, and then 16 years as Liberal leader, all but a few months of them as prime

minister. Trudeau's only interest in entering public life was to defeat the separatists in Quebec, and whatever else may be said of him, he did that. The five men just named were responsible for the fact that for 66 of the 88 years from the first election of Laurier in 1896 to the retirement of the elder Trudeau in 1984, the Liberals (those five men), governed Canada. Theirs was the most successful political party in the democratic world.

Thereafter, the federal Liberal succession process became more conventional and less successful. John Turner had been the closest surviving rival to Pierre Trudeau in 1968. He succeeded Trudeau, defeating Jean Chrétien, who followed Turner after defeating Paul Martin, who eventually evicted Chrétien. The only electoral success these men had was due to the temporary fragmentation of the Conservatives. Martin was followed by Stéphane Dion who launched the paroxysmal Liberal preoccupation with climatological flimflam and was pushed out after consorting with the separatist Bloc Québécois, in favour of the new parachutée, Michael Ignatieff, a long time British and American resident who led the party to catastrophe. Justin Trudeau has been something of a Phoenix in reviving Liberal fortunes, but his administration has been so profoundly unsuccessful that he is completing the cycle of the phoenix and ashes are returning to ashes.

Except for Alexander Mackenzie (prime minister 1873-1878), every federal Liberal prime minister has now been mentioned in this column, and Justin Trudeau has been the least successful of all of them (including Mackenzie). By the principal yardstick of performance: comparative per capita income, Canada has tumbled from approximately 85 per cent of the standard of living of the United States, the most prosperous of the large national economies, to about 60 per cent. Canada has suffered severe net outflows of capital throughout the Trudeau years, dangerous accretions in the federal deficit, and an unsustainable increase in the number of public sector

employees to more than ten percent of the entire population. It is good that the Canadian population has now passed 40 million, but this has not been accompanied by an adequately increased provision of housing and Canadians of modest incomes have suffered severe increases in the cost of shelter and other necessities and their rightful protestations have too often been falsely dismissed as racially based.

Almost the entire Trudeau policy focus has been in three areas. There has been an insane exaggeration of what is actually known about climate change, leading to a self-destructive war on the oil and gas industries, and needless increases in the cost of living in pursuit of a will o' the wisp of fossil fuel use. The government's ambition for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is commendable but the \$5.7 billion that has been pledged to reparations is excessive and much of it has been unwise, as well as unjustified. There is still no comprehensive policy to improve the lives of Indigenous people, but in its self-flagellating effusion, the regime accepted that Canada is a genocidal country alongside Nazi Germany, the Turks in Armenia, Pol Pot's Kampuchea, and Rwanda. This is a blood libel on all English and French Canadians. And there has been a nonsensical obsession with matters of gender which has made us an international laughing stock and driven our most distinguished citizen, Jordan Peterson, out of the country. Everything is slathered in nauseating wokeism and the federal government has done absolutely nothing to protect the suppressed rights of English-speaking people in Quebec. Our Confederation is a shambles.

The Liberals are right to change leaders and I will assess their candidates when they have been identified. But what we should all aim at now is that as soon as this dubious prorogation of Parliament to late March to accommodate the convenience of the Liberal party ends, we should have the federal election. In these circumstances, waiting until

October will be an unearned punishment of all Canadians. We have suffered enough.

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