

Well, we gave the Tories another good scare in last Monday's Whitby-Oshawa by-election while improving our results in Yellowhead to a distant second. Very low voter turnouts make it difficult to guess what a general election would look like, but given the collapse of the NDP vote, particularly in Ontario, and the call for strategic voting by Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union, the energy is definitely building behind the Liberal brand.

This last week saw some particularly sharp criticism of the Conservatives' ad campaign promoting tax splitting and their new child care benefits, neither of which have yet to pass parliament. The legality of similar advertising for the 'Action Plan' employment program, which did not actually exist when the ads ran, led to a parliamentary order to pull the ads.

While the generally positive public and media reaction to PM Harper's foreign affairs initiatives (Iraq military action and the 'get out of the Ukraine' comment to Russia's president) has begun to subside, a somewhat quieter conversation on the inequality issue continues to gather momentum. Just today, two very different sources - the Broadbent Institute and the Toronto Dominion Bank - raised similar concerns. The TD's analysis essentially called for a return to a more progressive tax regime in the country, quite against the flow of the government's direction.

Our messages to the public:

Stephen Harper's Priorities Aren't Canadians' Priorities

Earlier this week, it was reported that Veterans Affairs has left unspent \$1.1 billion since Mr. Harper came to power - money that was supposed to fund services for our veterans and their families. But during this same period, the Conservatives have used \$743 million of taxpayers' money on advertising and self-promotion.

Rather than prioritizing infrastructure development, Conservatives have cut the Building Canada Fund by 90 percent. They've made huge cuts to the Department of National Defence and proven that they are incapable of procuring the equipment most needed by our men and women in uniform.

Justin Trudeau's priority is clear: we must bolster the strength and prosperity of middle class Canadians, who have not had a decent raise in 30 years. Canadian families deserve a real and fair chance to succeed.

The Party has prepared some good info-graphics on misplaced Conservative priorities that you can use online and in the community...available here: [Liberal Party sharable](#)

Items of interest from the news and the party:

-The Toronto Star's Chantal Hébert suggests that the Conservatives have (much against their will and intention) positioned Justin Trudeau as the source of power in the opposition

http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/11/21/conservatives_inadvertently_give_justin_trudeau_a_leg_up_hbert.html

-Ralph Goodale's comments on infrastructure investment found friendly ears at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the theme was picked up by the Globe & Mail

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/rob-insight/infrastructure-crisis-demands-ottawa-step-up-to-the-plate/article15424927/#dashboard/follows/>

-The Globe & Mail's main editorial on Tuesday was sharply critical of the government's advertising campaign:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/editorials/and-now-a-non-partisan-word-from-your-harper-government/article21643218/#dashboard/follows/>

-The Toronto Dominion Bank calls on Canada's policy makers to 'lean against' income inequality through the taxation system:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/canadas-tax-transfer-system-needs-rethink-amid-growing-inequality-study/article21720250/#dashboard/follows/>

-Ed Broadbent looks at inequality of opportunity in Canada:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/canada-has-failed-to-create-equality-of-opportunity/article21704778/#dashboard/follows/>

-Vote-rich Ontario may not look kindly on the treatment it's getting from the Prime Minister:

<http://www.windsorstar.com/news/Harper+skating+thin+snubbing+Wynne/10405508/story.html>

There are many more items, with new ones appearing throughout the day, on our Seniors Commission Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bclibs/>

Looking ahead:

With BC's municipal elections now completed, we may see more nomination meetings called across the province in the coming weeks.