

# THE HKLB NEW DEMOCRAT

## Federal NDP brass decide to opt for an extended leadership race



*Pictured above - Interim NDP leader Tom Mulcair during Question Period in the House of Commons*

The federal NDP has opted for an extended leadership race to replace Tom Mulcair, as it seeks a new leader between September and October of 2017.

The decision came after approximately 100 New Democrats from across Canada gathered in Ottawa to carve out the terms for the race.

The NDP's national director, Karl Belanger, said members of the party's governing body agreed that more time is needed to assess where the party is at and to allow for potential candidates to organize and set up campaigns.

In order to run, hopefuls will be required to provide a registration fee of \$30,000 while the spending cap has been set at \$1.5 million.

The party brass did not set a precise

date for a leadership vote within the fall 2017 time frame.

Some New Democrats who have opened the door to a possible leadership bid include B.C. MP Nathan Cullen, Manitoba MP Niki Ashton and Quebec MPs Ruth Ellen Brosseau and Alexandre Boulerice.

Cullen and Ashton both ran in the 2012 race that resulted in Mulcair's victory.

There will be many challenges for the NDP as it looks to replace Mulcair, including the current debt load of around \$5 million.

Mulcair has said it is unlikely he will run in the 2019 federal election. He has yet to weigh in on the timeline announced by the federal council.

As the NDP eyes its future and a lengthy leadership race, fundraising

is sure to be a concern.

A letter from the party's president, vice-presidents and treasurer noted council should consider the financial impact of the race and its effect on national and provincial fundraising efforts.

Consequently, these concerns were, in part, addressed by council, by increasing administrative fees from 15% to 25% meaning 25 cents will go to the party for every dollar a campaign pulls in.

Recent figures released by Elections Canada showed the party struggled in its first quarter and only collected \$1.3 million.

In addition to weakened fundraising efforts following October's disappointing election result, the NDP is also using resources to foot a legal bill over its satellite office debacle now playing out in Federal Court.

The party launched this fight after the Commons board of internal economy ordered 68 NDP MPs — many of whom went down to defeat last October — to repay \$2.7 million in parliamentary funds that went towards office operations in Montreal, Toronto and Quebec City.

The NDP has long denied that it used parliamentary funds for non-parliamentary purposes.

Thomas Mulcair remains personally on the hook for a bill of more than \$400,000.

It is almost inevitable that the party will still be paying off their debts by the time a new leader is chosen, making it difficult for them to be in a competitive position going into the next federal election.

## PM gives himself a false majority on the committee tasked with recommending how to end false majorities



Kelly Carmichael, Executive Director of Fair Vote Canada, wanted a non-partisan tribunal or citizens' assembly to recommend changes to our electoral system.

So did NDP Democratic Reform critic Nathan Cullen. Then, when the government nixed those ideas, Cullen suggested an electoral reform committee based on the principle of vote equality – a committee representing Canadians in proportion to how they voted last fall. However, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau – in response to the illegitimacy of false majority governments, and who last election, earned support from only 39% of

Canadians – gave his MPs 60% of the committee spots that will recommend how our next vote will be conducted. How ironic. Trudeau gives himself a false majority on the committee tasked with recommending how to end false majorities.

He gave six seats to the Liberals, three to the Conservatives and one to the NDP. He also gave one seat to each of the PQs and Greens but without vote. One can be sure that the six Liberals on this committee will be doing exactly what Trudeau tells them to do. Trudeau's been quite clear in the past – government MPs vote for closure and time allocation when he tells them. They ex-

clude every independent MP from Commons committees because he tells them. Government MPs work for him.

Trudeau is seizing the Commons' power and putting it in his own hands – just as the Prime Minister before him did. And the PM before that.

Last election Trudeau promised he'd get rid of the existing electoral system – but avoided naming a replacement.

Canadian's vote must be represented equally.

There have been over ten commissions and studies done that have all returned a recommendation for proportional representation, but Trudeau has expressed his support for an alternative-vote-counting model. But it's a system that's used almost nowhere. And for a reason – it gives false super-majorities.

Under Trudeau's preferred system, his Liberals would have taken about 50 more seats with 39% support. If adopted, future PMs could hold majority power with as little as 35% support.

And now, by extending his false majority to the electoral reform committee, Trudeau may be working toward that goal.

By Trudeau's own admission the status quo has no legitimacy. Alternatively, a system that increases false majorities has less.

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# The controversial “Leap Manifesto” isn’t actually new, radical or even left-wing



*Authors of the Leap Manifesto first presented their document to the Canadian public in September 2015 and is now being discussed and debated in all of the country’s provinces and territories.*

It would appear that the Leap Manifesto is still a topic of interest.

The short document, available online, has aroused passionate discussion.

Alberta NDP Premier Rachel Notley has called its centrepiece recommendations naive and ill-informed.

Former NDP Director Robin Sears has dismissed it as the product of “loony leapers.”

The media usually describe it as radical. When delegates at the NDP’s Edmonton convention voted to debate the manifesto at the riding level, some feared that the party was about to ride off into the sunset.

In fact, the Leap Manifesto, which first surfaced last fall during the federal election, is neither radical nor uniquely left-wing.

Its authors, including filmmaker Avi Lewis and writer Naomi Klein, present it as a non-partisan document that aims to influence all Canadian political parties.

While Lewis and Klein both have close links to the New Democrats (Avi’s father is former Ontario NDP leader Stephen Lewis), neither has been active in the party.

In fact, Avi Lewis didn’t join the NDP

until he decided to go to Edmonton to try and sell his manifesto.

The document presents the assumption that climate change poses a serious threat to the future of the world.

This might have been a radical position in the past, but it’s not now.

Last December, the world’s governments declared in Paris that unless fossil fuel emissions are reduced to zero by the latter half of this century, climate change will result in catastrophic damage — including flooding, famine and massive population displacement.

The authors of the Leap Manifesto agree. They argue that Canada’s carbon emissions can be reduced to zero by 2050.

The manifesto’s authors have taken the position that if Canada is to do its bit, the country must stop spending billions on infrastructure designed to accommodate fossil fuel production.

In practical terms, that means no more oil and gas pipelines.

That certainly seems like a radical idea in Alberta, but other parts of the country are more flexible to anti-pipeline arguments.

Both the federal Liberal government and the federal NDP have been wishy-washy on whether they support an east-west oil pipeline — largely because such projects are unpopular in Ontario and Quebec.

Like Ottawa and virtually every provincial government, the manifesto calls for investment in clean energy projects. As Ontario has found with its windmill policy, this can be a politically painful process.

But except for the manifesto’s suggestion that, as in Germany and Denmark, such projects be community-controlled, it is hardly novel.

In fact, the Trudeau Liberals have already promised to undertake many of the manifesto’s recommendations. They have said they will implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; they have pledged to invest in public transit and green infrastructure.

Like the federal NDP, the manifesto calls for a national child-care program. Like the federal NDP (sometimes) and both U.S. Democratic presidential candidates, the manifesto opposes trade deals that limit government’s ability to regulate in the public interest.

Like former Liberal prime minister Paul Martin, the authors favour imposing a financial transaction tax to help pay for all of this.

They also call for a carbon tax like that levied by British Columbia’s right-of-centre government, higher taxes on the wealthy like those imposed by the Trudeau Liberals and higher corporate taxes as suggested by the federal NDP. Workers displaced by the move away from the carbon economy would be retrained.

In short, much of the Leap manifesto is not particularly new. What the authors have done is stitch together, largely from current practice, a sketchy but relatively coherent plan for immediate action against climate change.

If the NDP chooses not to embrace some form of this plan, the Trudeau Liberals probably will.



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# Leamington tomatoes - a story of the benefits of unfree trade

Many grocery chain stores are now stocking French's ketchup — a condiment that, while produced in Ohio for sale in retail stores, is made from tomatoes grown near Leamington Ontario.

French's operates two separate ketchup runs in its Ohio plant, one for sale in the U.S. that uses American tomatoes and one for sale in Canada that uses Canadian tomatoes.

On both sides of the border, it seems, nationalist food demands are having a noticeable effect.

This doesn't always happen. Food processing plants and the farmers that rely on them are being wiped out with great regularity in southern Ontario, as multi-nationals use free-trade pacts to rationalize production.

The tomato controversy first made headlines when Heinz closed its Leamington processing plant in 2014, putting 750 people out of work.

Threats of boycotting Loblaw through social media is part of the explanation, but more important was the fact that tomatoes have not yet been affected by free trade.

Had Canada's food regulations been fully harmonized with those of the U.S., Leamington would have been finished. Heinz could have easily serviced the small Canadian market with tomato products processed elsewhere.

But the harmonizers have yet to get around to amending Canada's Agricultural Products Act, which requires all tomato juice sold in this country to be extracted from "sound, whole, ripe" tomatoes. (In the U.S., juice is made from tomato paste.)

If Heinz wanted to continue selling tomato juice in Canada, it needed the services of a plant that would process juice from whole tomatoes.

The answer was to sell its Leamington plant to a new company, Highbury Canco. Highbury would produce Canada compliant tomato juice for Heinz as well as tomato products for other food companies.

French's was one of those other companies. Last year, it quietly started buying Highbury's tomato paste.

At one level, this is a tale of corporate warfare. French's, a long-time mustard maker owned by the British conglomerate Reckitt Benckiser, is taking on Heinz in the ketchup business.

Heinz, which is owned by Brazilian and U.S. interests, has responded by branching out into mustard.

As the giants clash overhead, Leamington's tomato farmers are able to reap rewards.

But at another level, this is a story of the benefits of unfree trade. Thanks to arcane regulations that interfere with free trade, Highbury — unlike many other Canadian food processors — is able to thrive.

When French's decided to market its new line of ketchup in Canada as Canadian, it could rely on an existing Ontario food-processing company that used only Ontario tomatoes.

That's the good news: There are still a few areas of the economy not subject to the relentless discipline of free trade.

The bad news is that Justin Trudeau's Liberals, like the Conservatives before them, are fully committed to harmonizing rules and regulations with the U.S., a move that promises to wipe out these few remaining exceptions.

When the Agricultural Products Act is finally brought into line with U.S. legislation, the only force supporting Canadian ketchup will be the fickle food nationalism of consumers.

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