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LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

Liberals should invite NDP to cooperate to win, says Liberal

All praise to two Western Canadian opposition MPs—Liberal MP Joyce Murray and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May—for voicing what legions of Canadians are wondering: how and when, if ever, will the political preferences of the majority of citizens be expressed through the Parliament of Canada under the current electoral system?

Particular thanks to Ms. Murray, a Liberal with a plan to attain democratic majority government despite the current rules. She, alone among nine candidates for Liberal leadership, is honestly facing the obvious political conundrum: a struggling third-place Liberal Party, no matter what it does between now and 2015, may not win the 2015 general election and leaving the Harper Conservative minority in continued command of the federal government to 2019, or even beyond, would guarantee irreversible damage to our vision for society.

Liberal MP Justin Trudeau, while resisting Ms. Murray's call for cross-party electoral cooperation in 2015, was quoted on CBC national radio news on Jan. 21: "What values will we be required to jettison?" he asked his fellow Liberals, all declared and potential Liberal supporters, and all Canadians.

Mr. Trudeau, here's the very short list: unwarranted partisan arrogance and unprincipled advocacy of undemocratic electoral systems.

With those two retrograde LPC values abandoned, effective cooperation among the opposition parties to win in 2015 would become a serious possibility.

As a liberal Liberal, I would welcome our party's transformation on those two points, as would many other Canadians. The rewards, if the opposition parties succeeded in forming a coalition government in 2015, would be enormous.

All Canadian citizens would soon achieve, for the first time in the country's history, equal effective votes, proportional representation, democratic majority rule, and a flexible, accountable and effective Parliament.

The Liberal Party would become the institutionalized conscience and advocate of Canadian liberalism. It would acquire a permanent and secure position as the



Grit MP Joyce Murray and Green Party Leader Elizabeth May are talking openly about political cooperation in the next election. Letter-writer and Grit John Deverell says he thinks it's a good idea.

arbiter and regulator of Parliament and a near-permanent presence in government, usually by shaping the terms on which social democrats or conservatives would be allowed to govern the country.

It remains true, as The Hill Times reported last week, "Mulcair takes charge of any talks on electoral cooperation, orders NDP MPs not to respond to Green Leader May's letter," (Jan. 17) that the commitment of NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair to the quick implementation of democratic electoral reform is, to be polite, questionable.

Even so, the Liberal Party should position itself, well prior to 2015, as the unequivocal champion of democratic voting and representative democracy. We could then, as Ms. Murray advocates, publicly invite the Mulcair New Democrats to cooperate with the Liberal Party of Canada to win the next election—or reveal themselves to all Canadians as counterfeit democrats.

John Deverell
Pickering, Ont.

(The author is an executive member of the Pickering Scarborough East Federal Liberal Association and the founding treasurer, Fair Vote Canada.)

We need a national strategy on \$100,000-million sole-sourcing

Motivated by the KPMG F-35 report and recent events in Quebec and Ontario, we have decided to request a change in laws that guide sole sourcing of non-defence contracts more than \$100-million. While a perfect tendering process is unlikely, the billions of dollars are involved, a national strategy is needed to reduce opportunities for systemic corruption.

The tendering process for the federal ship-building contract should be a model for all high-value procurement at all levels of government. Use of the Federal Gas Tax requires that the procurement process be competitive, transparent, and provide value for money; these requirements should be the standard for all high-value contracts.

The AIT (Agreement on Internal Trade) between the federal, provincial, and municipal government procurement for goods

or services that cost more than \$100,000 should be changed to include the following prerequisites for high value sole sourcing/contract cancellations: an auditor general report to Parliament, or a House Public Accounts Committee report, or a city council report; and a recorded vote to approve a high-value sole source contract cancellation.

Finally, the federal director of public prosecutions' mandate should include the AIT Agreement and therefore all three levels of government, looking at sole sourcing at all levels of government, authority to conduct civil and criminal prosecutions to recover taxpayer funds, and obtain injunctions to prevent execution of contracts and payments of money.

Ade Olumide
President
Municipal Taxpayer Advocacy Group
Ottawa, Ont.

Save House of Commons seats for second-place candidates, too

If the teams in the playoffs in the National Hockey League are not all first-place teams, could the House of Commons have, for example, five per

cent of the seats awarded to the best second-place candidates?

Marc Williams
Montreal, Que.

EDITORIAL

CLIMATE CHANGE & LEADERSHIP

Obama says fighting climate change a top priority, now it's Harper's turn

U.S. President Barack Obama made fighting climate change a top public policy priority after he was sworn for his second term last Monday morning on the front steps of Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

"We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that the failure to do so would betray our children and future generations," Mr. Obama declared. "Some may still deny the overwhelming judgment of science, but none can avoid the devastating impact of raging fires, and crippling drought, and more powerful storms. The path towards sustainable energy sources will long and sometimes difficult. But Americans cannot resist this transition—we must lead it. We cannot cede to other nations the technology that will power new jobs and new industries—we must claim its promise. That's how we will maintain our economic vitality and our national treasures—our forests and waterways, our crop lands and snow-capped peaks. That is how we will preserve our planet, committed to our care by God."

Mr. Obama is supposed to outline more details during the State of the Union Address on Feb. 12, but he didn't mention coal, oil, and gas in his speech or the Keystone XL pipeline. According to the National Geographic magazine, the U.S. Natural Resources Defense Council has a detailed plan to cut GHGs from power plants more than 20 per cent from 2005 levels by 2020.

Here in Ottawa, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government has not made fighting climate change a top priority, although Mr.

Harper has said he would follow the U.S.

So far, Mr. Harper's federal government has brought in stronger vehicle efficiency standards and vows to bring in sector-by-sector GHG emission rules, but it still doesn't have a national clean energy plan, let alone a national energy strategy; it withdrew Canada from the Kyoto Protocol; its environmental commissioner just announced he's leaving two years early out of frustration; it cut the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy; its unprepared to respond adequately to oil spills in Canadian waters; it lacks the tools to limit GHG emissions and is inadequately managing the \$9-billion invested in climate mitigation and adaptation; and it's against introducing a carbon tax. At the same time, Mr. Harper is touting Canada as "an energy superpower."

The Environment Commissioner's Office says, despite the government commitment to cut GHG emissions by 17 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020, using a sector-by-sector regulatory approach, it's unlikely that Canada will meet its 2020 targets.

Meanwhile, the World Bank says the "world is barreling down a path to heat up by four degrees at the end of the century if the global community fails to act on climate change, triggering a cascade of cataclysmic changes that include extreme heat-waves, declining global food stocks and a sea-level rise affecting hundreds of millions of people."

Mr. Obama just put fighting climate change back onto the global stage. It's time for Prime Minister Stephen Harper to step up to the plate and lead on fighting climate change.

