

The Long-lived Libe



‘I PROPOSE THE ADOPTION of the rainbow as our emblem. By the endless variety of its tints the rainbow will give an excellent idea of the diversity of races, religions, sentiments and interests of the different parts of the Confederation.’ – Sir Henri-Gustave Joly de Lotbinière, in the debate in the Legislative Assembly of Canada on the proposed scheme of British North American Confederation, Quebec, 20 February 1865

Even as Canada was being born, diversity was recognised as a pre-eminent distinguishing characteristic. Joly de Lotbinière, a member of Parti Rouge, and subsequently the first Liberal to become premier of Quebec, recognised, too, in his celebrated metaphor that rainbows

were fragile – ‘an image without substance’ – and that confederation would be far from solid without constant attention to how our diverse varieties could congeal. Understanding this diversity, reflecting it, and working to help Canadians appreciate what they have in common rather than what divides them, has been both the vocation and the main achievement of the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) since its formation in 1867.

Diversity has taken many forms, but for party organisation it stems from the four British colonies that came together after the American Civil War to discuss and finally achieve a confederation of all the colonies and, eventually, the regions and territories of the country. The strong loyalties to

Justin Trudeau and his wife, Sophie Grégoire, as the Liberal Party wins the election on 19 October 2015

eral Party of Canada

the culture of those former colonies that became provinces and territories are still felt within the party organisation and the voting public. Parties named Liberal and electing legislators in the provinces and territories may hold quite different politics from the federal Liberals, reflecting their local conditions. So in this article 'Liberal Party' refers to the federal party in Canada.¹ Diversity also includes accommodating our enduring issues: two official languages, vast geography, six time zones, regional economic and cultural disparities and the influence of the powerful nation to our south.

The mathematical exactness of election results and the numerical expression of surveys give party politics a seeming concreteness that its actual practice belies. Party politics is all churn: new voters enter the electorate, issues emerge, opinions alter and societies change. Successful party management requires alertness to this vast kaleidoscope of change, a willingness to innovate to meet new demands or conditions, and creativity to achieve compromise, or at least acceptance, among the thousands of active supporters and the millions of potential party voters. Party politics is a constant juggling of a great many balls to keep as many as possible in the air. And no party has been as good a juggler for as long a time as the Liberal Party of Canada.

There are many elements to that juggling, including respecting provincial and territorial rights and governments, but also identifying national concerns felt across the country; ensuring linguistic rights for the French and English while including new voters from every possible immigrant and linguistic community; and building and rebuilding the party organisation, sometimes toward, and sometimes away from centralisation. Add to that the tensions between the elected caucus and the cabinet, the national, provincial and local party executives, and from time to time rivalries between candidates and the constituency or party leaders, and differences over policy positions and one is amazed at how long there has been a single federal Liberal

Party in or out of government. The other founding political grouping, the conservatives, has split into factions, coalitions, and ideologies and engaged in civil war against their leaders so that the current Conservative Party was founded only in 2003.² The LPC has managed far more subtle moves, leaving the party intact. The subtle changes are tracked inside the Liberal Party itself through changes in organisation, leadership, and policies but without formal coalitions even in the wartime governments. Individual Liberals participated in such governments but not the party as such. In addition, the LPC has policy conferences, the outcomes of which are considered by the parliamentary leadership, but does not have party manifestoes the way British and European parties do. One attempt to have such a document in the 1980s was soundly rejected at a party conference. This lack of published policy positions provides considerable flexibility to the parliamentary leadership.

In the 152 years since confederation, the Liberal Party has been in office for 91. In twenty-five of the forty-two general elections since 1867, the Liberal Party has captured more votes than any other. In all those years no other party has formed a government in Canada more often. In the nineteenth century, the Conservatives, led by the vision and wizardry of Sir John A. Macdonald, were the dominant party. In the twenty-first century, the Conservatives and Liberals have been essentially even: holding office the same amount of time, with the Liberals averaging only 32 per cent of the popular vote in the past decade and a half. In between, however, in the twentieth century, the Liberals were so successful that they became known as 'the natural governing party'. As the late political scientist Steven Clarkson quipped, 'If the last century did not belong to Canada, Canada turns out to have belonged to the Liberal Party.'³

After the First World War and the extension of the vote to women, Liberal governments were in office three-quarters of the time. Other parties, like Japan's Liberal Democrats or Sweden's Social

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Democrats, have had streaks of similar accomplishment, but none have come close to doing this decade after decade for over a hundred years. R. Kenneth Carty in his excellent study, *Big Tent Politics: The Liberal Party's Long Mastery of Canada's Public Life* concludes 'the Canadian Liberal party's particular claim to fame lies in its extraordinary longevity.'³

How have they done it?

John Meisel, the dean of Canadian political scientists, uses a compelling nautical analogy to explain elections. 'The courses of electoral outcomes', he writes, 'can be likened to forces affecting the surfaces of oceans.' Fluctuations in sea levels are determined in the long term by the shrinking of glaciers, in the medium term by the force of the tides, and in the short term by waves. Elections are similarly influenced: long-term historical and societal conditions set the context; leaders respond to and shape these basic conditions to influence the tides of public opinion; and skillful party managers and active volunteer organisations ride the waves of the tidal swell.

English political ideas came to Canada with settlement but rather quickly adapted to the realities of the new world. The Conservatives maintained closer links with the UK Conservatives and for longer than the Liberals maintained close ties with their UK counterpart.⁵ So while the British government controlled Canadian defence and foreign policy until the Statute of Westminster of 1931 and while there was extensive visiting and consultation, it was Canadian politicians themselves who created the content of the original British North America Act that passed the parliament in Westminster in March, 1867.⁶ The governors general appointed from the UK were generally sensitive to Canadian concerns and, since 1952, all governors general have been Canadian men and women. Except in matters of tariffs, foreign affairs and defense, Britain seldom showed much interest in Canada, always keeping a fonder eye on the lost colonies of the USA. However, they did retain the power to amend the BNA Act (our constitution) until it was patriated by Prime Minister Trudeau's government in 1982 at which point it incorporated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Canada in 1867 had a population of 3.4 million, 5 million in 1900, and just over 37 million today. In 1867, 268,217 men of property voted; in 1900, a million men, about a quarter of the population, were entitled to vote; in 2015, 26.4 million Canadians were eligible to cast ballots.

Only British citizens and only men voted in 1867. In some of the colonies women had the vote but lost this right before confederation. In 1916 the Liberal government in Manitoba granted women the vote and a year later the government of Canada granted suffrage to women whose close male relatives were fighting overseas. In 1920 women also gained the right to hold federal public

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office and in the years since minorities and indigenous men and women have gained the franchise and slowly gained traction in parliament.⁷

In recent times, fuelled by immigration, the electorate grows by an average of three quarters of a million votes from election to election. Not only does size increase but the distribution changes: Quebec, the bedrock of Liberal support, has seen its proportion of Canada's population fall from 30 per cent to 24 per cent, while the west, where Liberal support is weakest, has grown so that now one in three Canadians live in western Canada, the highest share ever recorded. If current Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spends a lot of time in British Columbia and the cities of the Prairies, he does so with good reason.

In 1867, Canada was an overwhelmingly rural, church-going society: today, Canada has become a secular urban nation with the most multicultural cities on earth.⁸ The dimensions, characteristics and turbulence of our electoral sea have been continually changing and thus, every generation or so, the Liberal Party has had to reinvent itself to continue to be relevant to the society of its time. But in those reinventions, the party has always applied the same formula: stick to the centre and invite all to join.

And although much has changed since confederation, one constant has remained: the first-past-the-post electoral system. In multi-party elections, a centre party like the Liberals often wins the majority of seats with only 40 per cent of the vote. The Big Tent rests on a sturdy first-past-the-post pillar. Needless to say, the parties who consistently win few seats advocate proportional representation, but that idea has lost in two provincial referenda and was recently abandoned by the government of Justin Trudeau.⁹

LPC: the origins

The pedigree of the Liberal Party dates back to the early nineteenth century, when reformers like Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine fought for responsible government against the Tory-led Family Compact and Château Clique. But once responsible government was achieved in 1848, and with Baldwin and LaFontaine retiring in 1851, Canadian politics had to be recast. The man with the most skilled hands at the forge was John A. Macdonald and he fashioned a Conservative Party coalition that dominated Canada for the next forty years. Macdonald brought together the old Tories (his faction), the Bleus of Quebec led by Sir George-Étienne Cartier, who was close to the Church, some moderate followers of Baldwin, and Montreal business interests centred around the Grand Trunk railway.

This did not leave much else, but what there was came together eventually to create the Liberal Party. The 'Clear Grit' farmers of Canada West (modern day Ontario) demanded electoral reform; economy in government, meaning fewer

subsidies for the Grand Trunk; and reciprocity or free trade with the United States. The post-Baldwin Canada West Reformers or Grits were led by George Brown, editor of the *Globe*, then the newspaper of western alienation and now the *Globe and Mail* of the centre-right.¹⁰

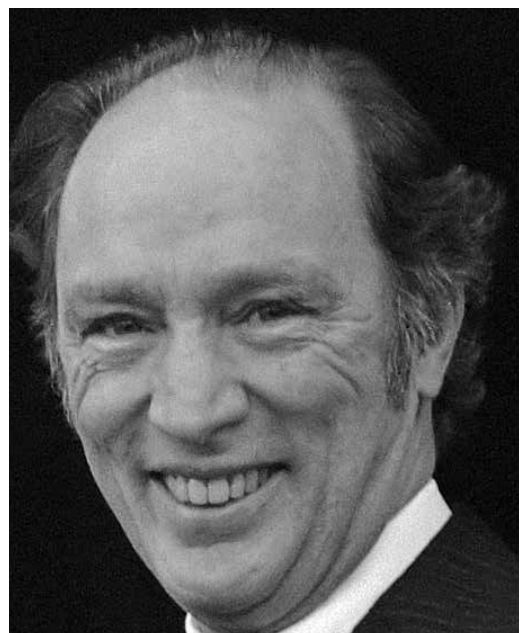
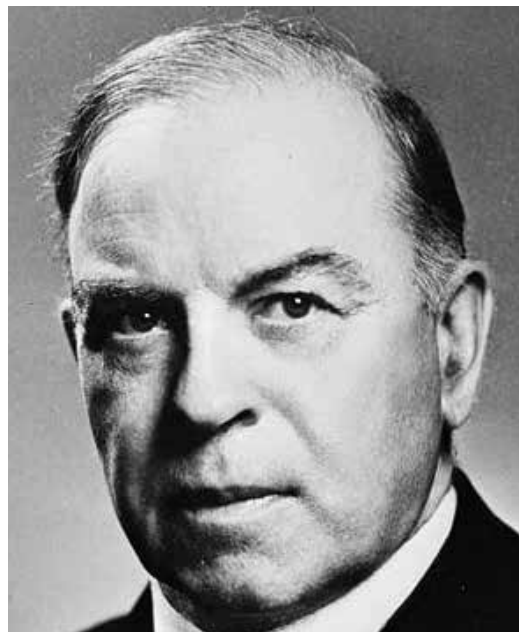
The other remnant of pre-confederation politics immune to Macdonald's wiles was the Parti Rouge led by Sir Antoine-Aimé Dorion. Les Rouges were heirs of the 1848 European revolution and were opposed to excessive clerical influence in politics. Initially, there was little in common between the Grits and Les Rouges, except their opposition to Macdonald. However, in 1856, Dorion began to advocate federalism as a solution to the issue of preserving French Canada's distinctiveness within a wider union while allowing representation by population, the main Grit demand. Brown gradually warmed to the idea and in 1858, the two parties joined forces to defeat Macdonald in the pre-confederation legislature and formed a short-lived administration which promised a constitution 'coming directly from the people, or by a Canadian Bill of Rights guaranteed by Imperial statute or by the adoption of a federal union with provincial rights guaranteed.'¹¹

That promise is the genesis of the Liberal Party. Against the bitter background of sectarian conflict, the differing interests of Catholic and Protestant, and the regions of Canada East and West, Brown and Dorion fashioned a compromise that allowed them to form a ministry. Conciliation and compromise, especially to protect minority distinctiveness within a system of majority rule, is a template that Liberals have used ever since.¹²

Frustrating failure – and then success

However successful Brown and Dorion were in creating a compromise within the reform movement, they could not match the superior political skills of Macdonald. In 1867, with confederation achieved, Brown wrote to Dorion and reform allies in the Maritimes about joining forces to oppose Macdonald in the Dominion's first election. In June 1867, a convention of Ontario Reformers supported Brown rather than continue in the 'Great Coalition' that had created the new country. The Liberal Party formally begins at that moment. But the 1867 election confirmed Macdonald's mastery. Macdonald won a clear majority of Ontario's eighty-two seats, Brown was personally defeated, and Cartier swept Quebec. There was now a Liberal Party but it was in tatters. When the federal parliament met in November 1867, the Liberal opposition consisted of only thirty-six Ontario Grits and twenty Rouges and Maritime members who had opposed confederation itself. It is good for Liberal hubris to recall that the party began in defeat.

The Liberal breakthrough did not occur until 1887, when Wilfrid Laurier became leader.



Liberal Prime Ministers:

Wilfrid Laurier (1841–1919), leader of the Liberal Party 1887–1919, Prime Minister 1896–1911

William Lyon Mackenzie King (1874–1950), leader of the Liberal Party 1919–48, Prime Minister 1921–26, 1926–30, 1935–48

Pierre Trudeau (1919–2000), leader of the Liberal Party 1968–84, Prime Minister 1968–79, 1980–84

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Brown and Dorion had negotiated an agreement that sought to guarantee Canada's diversity: Laurier embodied it. With one inspired leadership choice, the Liberal Party transformed its fortunes. In 1891, Laurier lost to Macdonald but increased Liberal seats in Quebec from twelve to thirty-seven. In 1896, Laurier swept Quebec with 53 per cent of the vote and forty-nine seats. From Laurier onwards, Quebec has been the anvil of Liberal success. Laurier inherited the Grit–Rouge alliance but he added to it key parts of the Macdonald coalition: he promoted railways and the opening of the West thereby bringing business support. The 'Laurier boom' rested on huge increases in immigration to open the west and immigrants in each successive generation have continued to vote heavily for the Liberal Party. Laurier also became as skilled at using patronage as the old Master himself. MacDonald had invented the Canadian recipe for electoral success – a French/English partnership to use government to drive development – but Laurier appropriated the recipe and added a few ingredients of his own.

With the most balanced parliamentary caucus in Liberal history with all regions represented by strong ministers, by his eloquent defence of tolerance in a sectarian age, and with political skills second to none, Laurier created the Big Tent that has sheltered Liberals from his day to ours. For these reasons, in Canada he is the greatest Liberal of them all.

After Laurier

Laurier excelled at the formula of finding common ground and his successors have followed in his footsteps. Since 1867, with the exception of unity governments during the two world wars, Liberals have formed twenty-five governments and Conservatives eighteen (under different names). Until 1993, when the Bloc – a Quebec separatist party, formed the opposition (1993–97), the opposition had always been the reciprocal of either the Liberals or Conservatives.

As Canada became an urban nation, Liberal Party leaders modified the founding policies. Mackenzie King (PM 1921–30; 1935–48) moved cautiously to promote social policy and Keynesian economics. Louis St. Laurent (PM 1948–57) promoted a dynamic foreign and defence policy and, despite the legacy of the conscription debate, carried public opinion in every part of the country. Lester B. Pearson (1963–68) – urged on by advisors like Walter Gordon, Allan MacEachen, and Tom Kent¹³ – moved much more boldly than King to introduce Medicare and the Canada Pension Plan. Monique Bégin,¹⁴ as minister of health (1977–79; 1980–84), continued the social policy thrust in the 1970s and 80s. Jean Chrétien (PM 1993–2003), with the help of Finance Minister Paul Martin, balanced the budget at a time when there were fears that debt was out of control, kept

Canada out of the Iraq war, and brought in the Clarity Act to dampen separatist enthusiasm for never-ending referendums. Chrétien gave a classic example of the Liberal formula of common ground when he said in distributing any budget surplus that one-third would go to reducing taxes, one-third to retire debt, and one-third for social spending.

Pierre Trudeau¹⁵ venerated Laurier and kept a bust of him in his parliamentary office. Just as pre-occupied with national unity as his great predecessor, Trudeau changed the unity dialogue from a debate about the division of powers between the federal and provincial jurisdictions to one about values and individual rights. By highlighting in the Charter the values of liberty, equal treatment, and multiculturalism, Trudeau made the Charter into the Ark of the Covenant of modern liberalism. Through the Charter, Trudeau enshrined in the constitution Laurier's formula of unity through diversity.

Party organisation and loyalty is the key

On a miserable winter day in 1980, with snow falling and the wind biting, the Liberal campaign rolled into the old Grit bastion of the Bruce Peninsula in Ontario. As they had for over 150 years, an enthusiastic crowd of 200 Grit partisans had turned out to welcome the Liberal leader and cheer up the campaign team. Later, adopting his best philosopher king mode as he and Tom Axworthy worked on the next speech, Trudeau asked, 'Why do they come?' Trudeau was not a party man. Unlike Jean Chrétien, he had not joined at an early age or worked his way up the party ladder. At that moment at least, he was genuinely puzzled about what it was that attracted volunteers to spend their time working so hard to elect the party of their choice.

It is a crucial question. Without an organisation to attract candidates, raise money and promote public education, even the best strategy will fail. Riding the waves is as important as mastering the electoral tides. The Liberal and Conservative parties, both vestiges of pre-confederation politics, are two of Canada's longest established volunteer organisations. Belonging to a party once meant jobs for your family but those days are long gone. The patronage system of Macdonald and Laurier is now a thing of the past. Parties must now attract volunteers by giving them a role in the process such as choosing candidates, electing leaders (since 1919) and influencing policies. The Liberal Party has been blessed with skilled managers and professionals who adroitly avoided official splits in the party, but these managers knew that it is the grassroots volunteer activists who bring vitality and credibility to the process. A big tent requires a large crew to raise it, repair it and keep it sturdy against the wind. It is the organisers and strategists who have kept the LPC in power so long.

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Liberal Party convention, April 2018

Looking ahead

After the 150th anniversary of Confederation, the Liberal Party faces challenges on all three of the metaphorical electoral dimensions of stormy seas, tides and waves. On voter volatility, the twenty-first century has been the most competitive for the Liberals since the days of Macdonald. In 2011, the party lost 850,000 votes from its previous total, falling to third place for the first time in its history, with only 20 per cent of Canadians identifying with the party – and many turning to the New Democratic party of the left instead.¹⁶ The turnaround achieved by Justin Trudeau and his team in 2015 was remarkable: from third to first with 39 per cent of the vote and with a majority government. The Liberal Party won 6.9 million votes in 2015 compared to 2.7 million votes in the election before. But the 2011 collapse shows what can happen to a centrist party when it is squeezed from both the right and the left. Trudeau started well with the most gender balanced and diverse cabinet in Canadian history. His government added to its political capital by maintaining more support in the polls than any other party until 2019. But this was achieved with the Conservatives and the NDP in leadership campaigns. Since the Conservatives elected their new leader in May 2017 and the NDP elected theirs in the fall of the year, the game has changed. Justin Trudeau has continued to draw strong support although the next federal election will be fought after powerful international pressures from the USA on trade and the rise of populism in western democracies.

Justin Trudeau has been practising the tried and true Liberal formula of seeking common ground. He has partnered with the current government of Alberta to fight climate change but also promoted pipelines to move Alberta's oil, though only with the strictest environmental safeguards. But in the twenty-first century, the success of a Big Tent strategy is not a given. The Harper Conservatives showed that it was possible

to win narrow-band campaigns appealing only to the base identified by deep data techniques. The Trudeau team will be especially challenged by the need to achieve reconciliation with Canada's indigenous peoples on resource development and much else – the Big Tent must be widened to allow indigenous people lots of standing room demonstrating inclusiveness once again. This will only happen if they are given real power and influence in the LPC.¹⁷ In general the focus on human rights issues in Canada and abroad was central to the Liberal focus.¹⁸ The election of Donald Trump in the USA and the need to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement knocked Liberal government's strategy off course from their declared priorities and the rise of right wing populism and Conservative provincial governments represent a significant challenge in the upcoming federal election in 2019.

In the meantime, the standing of Liberal parties in the provincial governments has a spillover effect on the federal Liberal Party's fortunes. Liberal parties have weakened, losing power in BC, Ontario and Quebec.¹⁹ Communicating this issue of separate parties under the same name is complicated. While the parties are separate and have their own policy positions, the electorate is less clear about which issues are legislated at each level – federal, provincial and municipal.²⁰ Party communications are vital to informing the electors and advancing the party positions. Social media are both helpful in reaching across the vast geography and time zones in both languages but also sometimes highly distorting, while newspapers with their opinion writers and editorials are struggling to maintain their subscribers and advertisers against the technological tide.

Maintaining a dynamic volunteer base and fund raising under tight new rules is another imperative, yet harder in our age of social media.²¹ Every organisation, from Canada's mainline churches to the Boy Scouts, is grappling with

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this problem. But for the Liberal Party's continued success this, too, must be addressed. At some time in the future, another beleaguered Liberal leader will be visiting the Bruce Peninsula and he or she, too, will need to be comforted and energised by volunteers who have been cheering the Grits on since 1867.

This article has been adapted for a non-Canadian readership from 'The Liberal Party at 150: the Centre Still Holds', *Policy*, Canada 150 edition, July–August 2017, www.policymagazine.ca.

Thomas S. Axworthy is Chair of Public Policy at Massey College at the University of Toronto and was principal secretary to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau from 1981 to 1984; thomasaxworthy@gmail.com. Lorna R. Marsden is president emerita of York University, an LPC executive member, 1975–83, and senator from 1984 to 1992, and remains active in LPC elections; lmarsden@yorku.ca.

- 1 For a convenient list of which parties formed governments at the federal level since 1867 consult Wikipedia, List of Canadian federal general elections.
- 2 The conservatives gained power as the Liberal-Conservative Party led by John A Macdonald in 1867; became Conservative Party; from 1943–2003 after incorporating much of the Progressive Party became Progressive Conservatives. In 1993 they went from government with 169 seats to two seats followed by the rise of the Reform Party and the Canadian Alliance on the right of the spectrum. Stephen Harper, leader of the Alliance merges with the Progressive Conservatives and Reform to become the new Conservative Party in 2003.
- 3 Stephen Clarkson has written extensively about Canadian party politics. See, for example, *The Big Red Machine: How the Liberal Party Dominates Canadian Politics*, Vancouver, UBC Press, 2005.
- 4 R. Kenneth Carty, *Big Tent Politics: The Liberal Party's Long Mastery of Canada's Public Life*, Vancouver, UBC Press, 2015
- 5 At present there are few Canadian Liberals who could even name the Liberal – or Liberal Democrat – leadership in the UK and apart from a mutual commitment to human rights and liberal democratic ideas there is little in common between the parties. That mutual indifference has only increased since 1867 and as the influx of British citizens to Canada has decreased.
- 6 Two major conferences in 1864 in, first, Charlottetown and later in Quebec City led to 72 resolutions on confederation of the existing colonies. These were debated in the colonial

- legislatures and through both compromise and deliberate ambiguity on some matters formed the basis of the British North America Act passed by the British parliament in March 1867. In effect, since the British parliament was distracted by more pressing issues, the Fathers of Confederation as we call them in Canada got the legislation they wanted.
- 7 See, for example, Lorna R. Marsden, *Canadian Women and the Struggle for Equality*, Toronto (Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 66–72.
 - 8 Statistics Canada reported from the 2016 census in *The Daily* of Wednesday 25 October 2017 that new immigrants overwhelmingly live in the large cities. Immigrants form nearly half of the population in Toronto, for example, over 40 per cent of the Vancouver population and nearly a quarter of the population of Montreal. Even the smaller Prairie cities have a significant immigrant population, far more than those cities have of the population of Canada.
 - 9 The proposal put forward by the LPC in the 2015 election was to review the electoral system. When the parliamentary committee would consider only proportional representation the idea of legislation was abandoned although new electoral reform proposals are again on the order paper as of May 2018.
 - 10 The *Globe* was distributed throughout central and western Canada very early on and merged in 1936 with the Conservative newspaper founded by Sir John A. Macdonald in 1892. Their editorial policy follows both Conservative and Liberal views depending upon current events. Like all Canadian newspapers it is struggling with the rise of digital media.
 - 11 Quote from *Le Pays*, 14 August 1858, cited by Jean-Claude Souldard, 'Dorion, Sir Antoine-Aimé', in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003), accessed May 15, 2018, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dorion_Antoine_Aime_12E.html. There is also a discussion in J. M. S. Careless, *Brown of the Globe*, vol. 1 (Macmillan of Canada, 1959), p. 206, which makes the same points.
 - 12 The protection of minority interests includes minority parties in parliament as well as minorities (religious, cultural and ethnic) in the population as a whole. See Janet Ajzenstat, *The Once and Future Canadian Democracy* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).
 - 13 Gordon, MacEachen and Kent were all highly influential progressive policy leaders. Walter Gordon (1906–1987) was chair of the Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects (created under Prime Minister St Laurent 1956–57), Liberal minister under Prime Minister Lester Pearson and honorary chair of the Committee for an Independent Canada. This committee was concerned with the high level of US investment and control in Canadian

- industry. Allen MacEachen (1921–2017) was an economist (doctoral studies at MIT), and Liberal minister under prime ministers Pearson, Trudeau and Turner where he successfully supported many progressive initiatives in health care, income support and labour reform. He was then leader of the Liberals in the Senate. Tom Kent (1922–2013) was an English-born economist (Oxford) and journalist (the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Economist*) who moved to Canada as editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press* (1954–59). He became principal policy advisor to Prime Minister Lester Pearson, then a deputy minister and finally professor, always maintaining a leading role in Liberal Party policy development. All three men dominated social and economic policy thinking among Liberals in Canada for many years.
- 14 Monique Bégin is a sociologist (Ph.D. Sorbonne), and began her political career as executive secretary to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1967–70. She was elected to the House of Commons from Quebec in 1972 and served until 1984 in various portfolios but her most famous contribution was as minister of health when in 1984 she brought in the Canada Health Act insuring that the provinces would provide universal health care access in order to receive federal transfer payments. She began an academic career after leaving politics and continues to lecture at the University of Ottawa.
 - 15 Pierre Trudeau, lawyer, became an MP from Quebec in 1965 and then rose to prominence as minister of justice in the Pearson government bringing in significant progressive reforms to the Criminal Code. He was elected leader of the LPC in 1968 and swept into power on a tide of popularity – Trudeau-mania – serving as leader and prime minister until 1984, except for a brief period between 1979 and 1980, when the Joe Clark Conservatives formed government. His contributions were many (official bilingualism, many reforms in social policy, defiance of terrorism in the radical separatist movement in Quebec among them); but his greatest triumph was patriation of the constitution from Westminster and the addition of the Canadian Charters of Rights and Freedoms.
 - 16 This shift led to the third-place showing of the Liberals although 80 per cent of those identifying as Liberals remained party voters. It illustrates the dangers of relatively small shifts to the survival of the party.
 - 17 For many years, the LPC has had 'commissions' for women, seniors and youth. Indigenous Liberals have caucused in the party parliamentary wing and the LPC has an Indigenous Peoples' Commission.
 - 18 Most recently the criticism by the Canadian foreign minister of the Saudi imprisonment of

women critics led to an extraordinary reaction by the Saudis in the summer of 2018 and, despite the Canadian isolation on this issue, the government has stuck to its guns; cf. 'A Canadian tweet in a Saudi king's court crosses a red line', *Reuters World News*, 10 August 2018.

19 Ontario held an election on 7 June 2018 in which they lost power to the rise of a populist Conservative Party in the province, coming third after the NDP and retaining only seven seats. The same fate befell the Liberal

government in Quebec and in New Brunswick although both continue as the official opposition party in their provinces. Since the Canadian media are seriously influenced by events in the USA, concerns with climate policies and refugee issues are rising in significance much as they are in the rest of the Western world.

20 Municipal elections are not party-based in the same way that provincial and federal elections are but there are some municipal parties in cities such as Vancouver and Montreal.

Nonetheless, candidates for municipal elections are often identified by their affiliations at the federal and provincial levels.

21 The base of the Liberal vote varies from province to province, although a concern with social justice and human rights balanced with economic balance is central. Those ideas are understood differently in various provincial and territorial contexts depending upon the economic base, the mix of cultural and immigrant groups and the history of the area.

Research in Progress

If you can help any of the researchers listed below with sources, contacts, or any other information, please pass on details to them. Details of other research projects in progress should be sent to the Editor (see page 3) for inclusion here.

Letters of Richard Cobden (1804–65)

Knowledge of the whereabouts of any letters written by Cobden in private hands, autograph collections, and obscure locations in the UK and abroad for a complete digital edition of his letters. (For further details of the Cobden Letters Project, please see www.uea.ac.uk/his/research/cobdenproject). *Dr Anthony Howe School of History, University of East Anglia, Norwich NR4 7TJ; a.c.howe@uea.ac.uk.*

Dadabhai Naoroji

Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917) was an Indian nationalist and Liberal member for Central Finsbury, 1892–95 – the first Asian to be elected to the House of Commons. This research for a PhD at Harvard aims to produce both a biography of Naoroji and a volume of his selected correspondence, to be published by OUP India in 2013. The current phase concentrates on Naoroji's links with a range of British progressive organisations and individuals, particularly in his later career. Suggestions for archival sources very welcome. *Dinyar Patel; dinyar.patel@gmail.com or 07775 753 724.*

The political career of Edward Strutt, 1st Baron Belper

Strutt was Whig/Liberal MP for Derby (1830–49), later Arundel and Nottingham; in 1856 he was created Lord Belper and built Kingston Hall (1842–46) in the village of Kingston-on-Soar, Notts. He was a friend of Jeremy Bentham and a supporter of free trade and reform, and held government office as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Commissioner of Railways. Any information, location of papers or references welcome. *Brian Smith; brian63@inbox.com.*

Emlyn Hooson and the Welsh Liberal Party, 1962–79

The thesis will assess Hooson's influence on the Welsh Liberal Party during this period by paying particular attention to the organisation, policy process and electoral record under his leadership. PhD research at Cardiff University. *Nick Alderton; aldertonnk@cardiff.ac.uk.*

The emergence of the 'public service ethos'

Aims to analyse how self-interest and patronage was challenged by the advent of impartial inspectorates, public servants and local authorities in provincial Britain in the mid 19th century. Much work has been done on the emergence of a 'liberal culture' in the central civil service in Whitehall, but much work needs to be done on the motives, behaviour and mentalities of the newly reformed

guardians of the poor, sanitary inspectors, factory and mines inspectors, education authorities, prison warders and the police. *Ian Cawood, Newman University College, Birmingham; i.cawood@newman.ac.uk.*

The life of Professor Reginald W. Revans, 1907–2003

Any information anyone has on Revans' Liberal Party involvement would be most welcome. We are particularly keen to know when he joined the party and any involvement he may have had in campaigning issues. We know he was very interested in pacifism. Any information, oral history submissions, location of papers or references most welcome. *Dr Yury Boshyk, yury@gel-net.com; or Dr Cheryl Brook, cheryl.brook@port.ac.uk.*

Russell Johnston, 1932–2008

Scottish Liberal politics was dominated for over thirty years (1965–95 and beyond) by two figures: David Steel and Russell Johnston. Of the former, much has been written; of the latter, surprisingly little. I am therefore researching with a view to writing a biography of Russell. If any readers can help – with records, other written material or reminiscences – please let me know, either by email or post. *Sir Graham Watson, sirgrahamwatson@gmail.com; 9/3 Merchiston Park, Edinburgh EH10 4PW.*

Liberal song and the Glee Club

Aiming to set out the history of Liberal song from its origins to the days of the Liberal Revue and Liberator Songbook. Looking to complete a song archive, the history of the early, informal conference Glee Clubs in the 1960s and 1970s, and all things related. *Gareth Epps; garethepps@gmail.com.*

Policy position and leadership strategy within the Lib Dems

This thesis will be a study of the political positioning and leadership strategy of the Liberal Democrats. Consideration of the role of equidistance; development of policy from the point of merger; the influence and leadership strategies of each leader from Ashdown to Clegg; and electoral strategy from 1988 to 2015 will form the basis of the work. Any material relating to leadership election campaigns, election campaigns, internal party groups (for example the Social Liberal Forum) or policy documents from 1987 and merger talks onwards would be greatly welcomed. Personal insights and recollections also sought. *Samuel Barratt; pt10seb@leeds.ac.uk.*