

Trudeau lays groundwork for deficit in Newmarket-Aurora stop



By Brock Weir

Awaiting Tuesday's announcement of a technical recession, Liberal leader Justin Trudeau questioned, on a campaign stop in Newmarket-Aurora last week, how his NDP counterpart would be able to deliver on his promise of a balanced budget in the next year.

"Mr. Mulcair has now committed to balancing the budget next year even though we are right now in deficit," said Mr. Trudeau. "My question for him is which programs is he going to cut? He needs to come clean on what's off the table. I have said very clearly that we're committed to investing in Canadians, investing in growth, investing in infrastructure" and I will have a lot more to say about that in the coming days."

That was a commitment that was certainly kept as little more than 24 hours later, Mr. Trudeau announced his party was proposing three years of deficits in order to get, in their view, the economy on track. And, indeed, he did have much more to say about that in the coming days, but the whistle-stop in Aurora's northern riding lay the groundwork for the announcement ahead.

"Mr. Harper and Mr. Mulcair seem to think everything is just fine with the Canadian economy," said Mr. Trudeau. "I don't. I think the Canadian economy needs investment: investment in the middle class, investment in infrastructure, investment that is going to lead to growth and opportunity. One of the reasons Canadians are cynical about politics and politicians is regularly certain politicians will say things they know simply are not true.

"Mr. Harper did that in the 2008 election when he promised not to go into deficit. He has done that many, many times and Mr. Mulcair, he has done that in his entire career as a politician. I won't do that. I am going to tell Canadians the truth. We need investment and growth and that is what we're focused on. We're not going to make political promises about balancing the budgets when we know right now we are in deficit and we are going to need to grow our way out of it."

Mr. Trudeau's stop in Newmarket-Aurora was not to talk about budgets, but to visit Newmarket's Spectrum Educational Supplies, where he announced a new tax benefit for teachers and early childhood educators.

A Liberal government, he said, would introduce a Teacher and Early Childhood Educator School Supply Tax Benefit, which would be available regardless of income level and provide a cash benefit of up to \$150 per year on up to \$1,000-worth of school supplies and educational materials.

Joined at the announcement by Newmarket-Aurora Liberal candidate Kyle Peterson, Mr. Trudeau highlighted his previous career as a teacher.

?As I often told my students, a problem may seem insurmountable, but it can be solved if we work together to understand it clearly, articulate it openly, and tackle it differently,? he said. ?That is why our plan to grow the middle class is about investing in people. I know very well as a teacher that sometimes you have out of pocket expenses to help enhance the activities in your classroom; everything from gold star stickers to times table posters. Unfortunately, those expenses are not recognized by our Federal tax system.?

Added Mr. Peterson: ?Both of my parents were teachers and I understand the commitment teachers have to education in general and to their students in particular. All of the teachers assembled today should be applauded, especially as we get ready to get back to the school year.?