

No Couillard Marois transition meeting yet

By Martin Ouellet
The Canadian Press

Quebec premier-designate Philippe Couillard will have to wait at least a few more days before discussing the transition of power with his predecessor, Pauline Marois.

The symbolic but important post-election meeting signifying the change typically takes place a few days after a provincial election.

Interim Parti Quebecois Leader Stephane Bedard said Friday a face-to-face encounter

should occur sometime early this week but he did not specify the day.

It isn't expected before Tuesday.

In the meantime, members of the Liberal transition team have been meeting behind the scenes with their PQ counterparts.

In September 2012, outgoing Liberal premier Jean Charest met with Marois just 48 hours after his party's election loss.

There was still no official word from Marois's camp on Friday, four days after last Monday's general election which saw the Liberals snag 70 of the 125 seats in the legislature to form a majority government.

The PQ was left with 30 seats following the stunning defeat and Marois lost her own riding of Charlevoix-Cote-de-Beaupre.

The outgoing premier has been careful to avoid reporters since announcing on election night she was stepping down.

According to Charles Robert, an associate of Couillard, the radio silence from Marois's

inner circle is, at the very least, "surprising."

The Liberals had hoped for a meeting within two or three days of the election but were rebuffed, Robert said.

The final PQ caucus meeting should be held next week while the incoming premier intends to form his own cabinet the following week, after Easter.

Bedard, who was named interim leader Thursday, told a news conference the transition process is well under way and has been harmonious. There is

a spirit of co-operation with the Liberals, and government departments have opened their doors, he said.

In Bedard's opinion, the date of a Couillard-Marois meeting is not as pressing as it's made out to be.

"In the first two days or in the first seven, it doesn't matter, the transition has already started," Bedard said. "The people are meeting also, there aren't any problems. I think trying to make a story out of this is missing the point."

Former finance minister Jim Flaherty to get state funeral this week

By Bruce Cheadle
The Canadian Press
OTTAWA

Jim Flaherty, eulogized as an Irish lion after his sudden and unexpected death last week, is going the way of Thomas D'Arcy McGee.

A state funeral will be held for Flaherty this Wednesday in Toronto, the Prime Minister's Office announced Friday, a formal government send-off for the man who shepherded

Canada's finances for the past eight years.

Flaherty, who died at age 64 Thursday of a reported heart attack, revelled in his Irish ancestry and was known for his ever-present green neck ties.

He'll become the latest in a tradition of Canadian state funerals that began in 1868 with McGee, an Ireland-born nationalist who became a member of Parliament and was assassinated on the streets of Ottawa after a late night of debate in

the Commons.

Flaherty was only a month removed from stepping down as finance minister, a portfolio he had held since the Conservatives came to power in early 2006.

A book of condolences has been made available Friday to the public in the Hall of Honour on Parliament Hill, and will be open to public expressions of remembrance until late today.

In Toronto, the CN Tower is to be lit up in green Wednesday,

the day of Flaherty's state funeral in Toronto, a humourously fitting tribute to a man who began most public speeches with a self-deprecating joke about his five-foot-three height.

Flaherty raised a family in and represented the city of Whitby, Ont., just 50 kilometres east of Toronto. His wife Christine Elliott, is a member of the provincial legislature at Queen's Park.

The last federal politician to

receive a state funeral was former NDP leader Jack Layton, who died of cancer in August 2011. His funeral, too, was held in Toronto.

It is an honour normally reserved for current and former governors general, prime ministers and sitting members of cabinet — although a state funeral may be offered to any eminent Canadian at the discretion of the prime minister.

Potton salutes its volunteers

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PHOTOS BY MABLE HASTINGS

A group photo of volunteers representing some 40 organizations in Potton who were recognized by the Municipality of Potton and the Volunteer Centre (CAB) on Saturday as part of Volunteer Week.

someone. Just like Alice, you made this world more beautiful for all of us. Today we would like to thank you for that."

The event on Saturday was a collaborative effort organized by Potton Community Animator, Trish Wood and CAB Executive Director Alison Hannan as well as Kim Nichols, Assistant to the Executive Director. The itinerary included a powerpoint presentation of photos on volunteering in the community as well as the presentation of certificates and

the drawing of a beautiful plant as a door prize which was won by June Peacock.

As Potton's volunteers posed for photos, shared in conversation and exchanged ideas, it was rapidly clear that volunteering is alive and well in this very active community; one could not help but feel the sense of pride in the room.

For more information about becoming a volunteer, visit Potton's website at www.potton.ca or the Volunteer Centre's website at: www.cabmn.org



Potton Mayor, Louis Veillon posed with Eastern Star member Mary Bailey.

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