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‘Read All About It’: Big book sale in Potton

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LAWL, QUE.

One day after Stephen Harper crashed a Liberal stronghold in Montreal, Justin Trudeau returned the favour Monday, rallying supporters in the heart of Conservative country and taking aim at the government’s economic record.

Harper’s first promise of the 2015 campaign, a $60-million incentive for businesses willing to develop skilled apprentices, stayed true to his lower-taxes, more-jobs mantra – as well as his stay-the-course message.

“Analysts are predicting good growth for this economy into the future, as long as we stay on track,” Harper said during the day’s first campaign stop at a factory in Laval, Que.

“It is a time to stick to our plan, make wise investments, control our spending, lower taxes and make sure our fiscal situation is balanced and strong.”

Trudeau begged to differ.

Harper has presided over eight successive federal deficits and has not made good on his economic commitments, the Liberal leader told an enthusiastic Calgary crowd.

“He has failed to live up to his promise to grow the economy, because he insists on giving opportunities and tax breaks to the wealthiest Canadians,” Trudeau said.

“This means there will be no exception.

There were many bargains to be had at last year’s book sale in Potton. This year promises to be no exception.

The joy of reading and the benefits to the human spirit derived from a good book are abundant! You are invited to “read all about it,” on Saturday in Potton.

The stop in Laval was Harper’s second in Quebec since the campaign began, following his kick-off rally Sunday in Montreal.

On Monday, he once again urged Quebeckers to support the Tories as a way to ensure they would have influence in Ottawa.

Harper warned against the risk of electing another batch of opposition MPs – and took particular aim at Thomas Mulcair’s NDP, which holds more than 50 seats in the province.

“This group of NDP MPs, through the last four years, are the most ineffective group of any group of MPs in history,” said Harper.

For us Conservatives, Quebec nationalism – nationalism that does not lead to the impasse of separation – is not a threat,” Harper told the Montreal rally.

It is the expression of a deep pride in our past and a solid trust in our future. And I ask you that in the next election to put this nationalism, this solidarity, at the service of a stronger Quebec at the heart of a government that’s solid, stable, national, majority and Conservative.

Harper also said Monday that the election campaign would not cost Canada a seat at the talks seeking to establish a massive international partnership billed as the backbone of future global trade in the Pacific Rim.

Canada will continue to negotiate a deal as part of the long-promised 12-country Trans-Pacific Partnership, Harper promised, a response to international reports Monday suggesting the talks would not wait for the campaign to end.

The partnership, “should it be concluded, will in our view form the fundamental trading network of the entire Asia-Pacific region,” Harper said.

“It is important that Canada remain at the table; we will remain at the table during this election campaign… and we will make sure that should there be a deal, we will get the best possible deal for this country.”

Harper said negotiators would continue to defend Canadian interests, notably the country’s supply management system, which protects dairy producers.

Harper also stopped in at a rally in Kingston, Ont., on Monday before steering towards the Toronto area for an evening rally at a golf course in Ajax, east of the city.

But things didn’t go smoothly. Mechanical problems with one of the Conservative campaign buses forced party staffers and journalists to switch vehicles in Laval before resuming the trip to Kingston.

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