

Grills, Lee

Belleville - Beiq



Lenny Williamson

Lee Grills

Grills Won't Run

By Lenny Williamson

Staff Reporter *Sep*

Belleville's "Friendly Milkman" has retired from political life.

Lee Grills announced this morning that he will not be in the running for the Conservatives in the Oct. 30 federal election.

In an emotion-filled statement to the press, the 68-year-old Belleville politician who represented Hastings in parliament for 13 years, said he had decided to step down from active political life "while the riding is in a strong position.

"This has been a very difficult decision — otherwise I wouldn't have left it so long," said Mr. Grills. "I have had hundreds of calls of support for my running again. I trust I have made a worthwhile contribution to my riding and to Canada."

No other field of endeavor has offered him "more challenges and rewards than my experience in the Canadian parliament" he added.

Mr. Grills first entered public life in 1946 as a councillor in the township of Sidney. He served as deputy-reeve, reeve and warden of Hastings county before running in his first federal election in 1953. Mr. Grills was defeated by Frank Follwell but returned to take the riding in 1957. He has represented Hastings ever since, except for the two years between 1963 and 1965 when the seat was held by Robert Temple.

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During his parliamentary career, Mr. Grills became known across Canada as Belleville's Friendly Milkman. The nickname came from the slogan of Lee Grills Dairy, the firm he operated for 23 years as Your Friendly Milkman.

"I am quite concerned about some of the legislation and the downward trend in the dignity of the House of Commons and in our parliamentary system over the last four years," said Mr. Grills today.

Of his own personal political philosophy, Mr. Grills said, "I've always thought that after election day is over we should raise our thoughts above party politics and serve all the people in the riding."

"I have never asked anyone how he voted—I tried to serve all my constituents equally. I get an average of 500 telephone calls a month and it certainly adds to a wonderful public relationship.

As he stepped down from active political life Mr. Grills paid tribute to his wife, now in the intensive care unit at Belleville General Hospital with a heart condition.

"She has been my running mate," he said. "She ran the riding for me and campaigned for me every day. A deep concern for her health has influenced my decision."

But Mr. Grills will not give up politics entirely. He will be in there after the Conservative nomination meeting, working for the election of the PC candidate.

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