



Mississauga - Federal Constituency

Abbott is named to cabinet after two-year stint as MP

Sept. 22 - 76 NT

LPC

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Mississauga's federal Member of Parliament, Tony Abbott, has been launched into the political limelight after just two years in office with his appointment last week as minister of consumer and corporate affairs.

Prior to the Sept. 14 cabinet shake-up, Abbott admitted that he had heard through the "grapevine" that he might be in line for a lower-level cabinet appointment.

Abbott told The Times that he met Prime Minister Trudeau that morning and was told he would be placed in charge of small business development and be directly responsible to the minister of consumer and corporate affairs.

But later that afternoon the now famous battle of wills between Bryce Mackasey and

Trudeau left the consumer and corporate post open as Mackasey decided to resign from the cabinet.

The prime minister was scheduled to meet the press shortly after Mackasey's sudden departure, and Trudeau was forced to make some fast shuffles to fill the gap. Abbott found out about his quick promotion just before the announcement of it was made.

"I was really thrilled about this portfolio," Abbott said. He felt the ministry would play a major part in the fall session of Parliament as much of its proposed legislation "is brought to the front burner."

Abbott was first elected as the Liberal MP for Mississauga in 1974. He was and still is a resident of Oakville, but said that his

plans call for his wife and himself to move into an apartment in Mississauga some time this year.

Before his election he was the lawyer for the Retail Council of Canada, a lobbying of large and medium-sized retailers. Before that he was the corporate lawyer for Brascan, an international firm involved in mining.

When asked if his own background was suited for his posting as the representative of the nation's consumers, Abbott replied that "my background gives me an advantage in allowing me to see the other side."

"I don't have any prejudicial attitude in liking big business and disliking the consumer," he said.

For the last week Abbott has been undergoing briefings by ministry officials. "I've

certainly got my work cut out for me. There are a lot of things in the hopper for this fall and it's going to be a heavy job."

Legislation planned by the ministry includes the competition bill, the Lenders and Depositors Act, amendments to the Bankruptcy Act and changes in the Trademark and Patent Act.

As a result of his increased responsibilities Abbott admits that he will not be able to spend much time in the riding but explained that he planned to hire an assistant to help handle his local affairs.

Although he may have less time to spend on Mississauga affairs, Abbott insisted that his new cabinet post would put him in a position to be more effective.