

The Empire Club Presents

NAHEED NENSHI MAYOR, CITY OF CALGARY:

THE TWO CALGARIES

October 22, 2014

HEAD TABLE:

Distinguished Guest Speaker:

Mr. Naheed Nenshi, Mayor, City of Calgary

Guests:

Ms. Jennifer Bell, Vice President, Communications & Content Management, TIFF

Canon Don Aitchison, Chaplain, Trinity College School

Ms. Malini Giridhar, Vice President, Gas Supply & Business Development, Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc

Ms. Mary Hofstetter, Former President, Banff Centre

Ms. Barbara Jesson, President and CEO, Jesson + Company Communications Inc.; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. Andrea Wood, Senior Vice President, Legal Services, TELUS; President, Empire Club of Canada

Welcome Address by Andrea Wood, President, Empire Club of Canada

It is now my honour to introduce our guest today, Mayor Naheed Nenshi. As you know, Mayor Nenshi is Calgary's 36th mayor. He is currently serving his second term in

office. When Mayor Nenshi was first elected, I will admit that some of us in Toronto were a bit surprised and envious that our brother in Calgary had made just a progressive choice. For starters, Mayor Nenshi is a distinguished academic and an author. Prior to becoming mayor, he was Canada's first tenured professor in the field of non-profit management at Mount Royal University's Bissett School of Business. He holds degrees from the University of Calgary and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and he was the lead author of a book, *Building Up, Making Canada's Cities Magnets for Talent and Engines of Development*.

In addition to being a leading urbanist and public intellectual, Mayor Nenshi has strong business experience having worked as a consultant at McKinsey and Company. As if that were not enough, Mayor Nenshi is so personable that he has been described by the *National Post* as "the cuddly creature in charge of Calgary." And, I think he is probably the only mayor in the world with a gourmet doughnut named after him—not just any doughnut but the hipsters' preferred choice, salted caramel.

Mayor Nenshi serves at a time when Calgary is facing significant challenges. We look forward to hearing about some of those challenges and Mayor Nenshi's plan to overcome them. Thank you for having taken the time to come speak to us today. Mayor Nenshi.

Naheed Nenshi

Thanks very much, Andrea. What a pleasure to spend some time with you. Before I begin, I think we have a short video presentation. I say stuff like that, and magic just happens on the tech side, so let us see if it works.

Calgary Economic Development Video presented

I do love that. I love it for many, many reasons because it gives you a sense of my place, of Canada, of what we are and who we are as a community. And also as you were watching very, very carefully you will see that it also shows you the truth about Calgary, which is that everyone in Calgary is extremely young, extremely beautiful and mostly white. So, I do tease my colleagues in Calgary Economic Development about that last bit on that video every now and then.

But it is a great pleasure for me to be here with you today, and a special thanks to a great Calgary company, Enbridge, for sponsoring today. Thank you through you to your colleagues. I was just saying to Melanie—she works at Enbridge in Toronto, so she does not really work at Enbridge—just two million customers here in Ontario, right?

So, today, I want to actually spend some time with you in the limited time we have got to talk about two Calgaries that you have heard of, two Calgaries that you have seen a lot of in the news. And my goal is to chat a little bit about that

and then have some opportunity to have some dialogue with you at the end. I should warn you that I have been mayor for exactly four years. Saturday was my fourth anniversary as mayor of Calgary, and in every one of the hundreds of public addresses I have done in that time, I have started every single one by saying, “We are going to have lots of time for dialogue at the end because I will just speak for a short period of time.”

I have yet to succeed in doing that, but maybe here at the Empire Club, there will be a first because there is a first for everything—and a special thanks to the Empire Club as well.

It is a great honour for me to be on this illustrious and historical podium—111 years of people thinking and speaking and engaging dialogue with the community, which is wonderful. I do think it is interesting because I saw the little brochure that you have at your table that says, “Conversations with Power,” and one of the things I may talk about is the lack of power that cities and mayors have. But, before I do that, I want to tell you a story, and I want to start out just by telling you a little bit of story. It is a story about a few days in my life, a story about a few days in the life of my city, a story about a few days in the life of this nation, and it is a story that tells us a lot about who we are as Canadians, who we are as Calgarians and what we do for one another to build our communities. It is about how everyday people doing everyday things with their everyday

hands can make enormous change in our community, and it is a story that, like all good stories, starts in Toronto.

June 2013. Wednesday night. I fly in from Ottawa to Toronto. I have just been speaking in Ottawa to a bunch of people, students and federal civil servants and politicians about the future of our nation. I am flying into Calgary—into Toronto, I should say, to continue my speeches. I am picked up at the Toronto airport by my friend, Alison. Her full name is Alison Loat. Alison has just written a brilliant book called *Tragedy in the Commons*. It is about the federal government. It is a horror story. You must read it. It is the best political book written in many, many, many years in Canada. But Alison is getting married on Saturday, and I am very proud of myself because I have managed to arrange my speaking tour in Toronto such that my last speech ends at 11:30 p.m. on Friday, and then I am going to rent a car and drive to St. Catharines, Ontario for Alison's wedding, and I am going to have a weekend off, and I am very excited about my weekend off—my first weekend off in months. It is probably going to be my last weekend off until Christmas. So I am thrilled. I am going for it.

She picks me up from the airport, and I say to her, "Alison, I am amazed that three days before your wedding, you are able to spend a little bit of time with me," and she said, "Naheed, I am amazed that with your schedule you're able to come to my wedding." And I look her in the eye, and I say, "Alison, nothing on earth could prevent me from

coming to your wedding." And at that exact moment, the rain begins to fall in a town called Canmore, upstream of Calgary. I missed the wedding. I have got to rush back home, and I get back home on Thursday night. I took this picture on Friday from a helicopter. I did not have time to think about, "Oh, I'm in a helicopter. That's cool." It was, in fact, the second or third helicopter I had been in that day. One of the helicopters I was in that day was with the prime minister and the premier.

If you look at the top of your screen, you will see that is the south bank of the Bow River. Calgary's founded at the confluence of two rivers, the Bow and the Elbow. Yes, I know that is funny, and in June, 2013, both of those rivers simultaneously experienced the worst flooding in our memory. The Bow River, which you are looking at right there, on a nice summer's day will typically run at about 300 cubic meters per second. What you are looking at is the Bow River running at close to 2,400 cubic meters per second.

The Elbow River is controlled by a dam which forms the Glenmore Reservoir, a great recreational facility we have in Calgary. So, the Elbow River is very, very, very placid. You will have seen in the video pictures of people rafting down the Bow, which is one of the great pleasures of Calgary in the summer. The Elbow is very placid, and people will float down it on air mattresses and wading pools in Canadian Tire \$10 rafts. It normally runs on a June day at about 30 cubic

meters per second. At the time that I took this photo, the Elbow River was running, not at 30 cubic meters per second, but 700.

So, at the top of your screen, the south bank of the Bow River and the community of Bowness, you see canals that used to be roads. You see patches of trees. Well, those are peoples' houses, and you see a lot of devastation.

The reason that I show you this particular photo, though, is not what is at the top of your screen, but what is at the bottom of your screen, and you will notice at the bottom of your screen the north bank of the Bow River, the community of Montgomery, and you will see that the streets are dry. The basements are clear. That is nature. No matter how sophisticated we think we are, no matter how urban or urbane or cosmopolitan we are, no matter how much we control the elements around us and control the world in which we live, that is nature. One bank of the river completely devastated; the other bank of the river completely dry.

We were lucky in one way, and we were lucky because we were able to see the water recede quite quickly. One of the interesting things about Calgary is if you are in Manitoba, let us say, in the springtime, you can see a flood coming. You have a warning before your rivers crest. In Calgary, we are very close to our headwaters. We are close to the mountains, so there is very little warning, but it also means that the water clears relatively quickly.

Early in the crisis, we made two important decisions. The

first important decision had to do with communications, and it was that anything that we knew, everybody would know. Unless there was a compelling public safety reason to hold information back, the public would learn everything we knew when we knew it, and we would use every possible medium in order to get that information out to them. If there was ever a reason to hold back information, then that decision had to involve me, personally, and we had to have a discussion about it, and we never did. We never actually held anything back.

The second decision that was very controversial in emergency management but I think critical came as the waters receded. And, as the waters receded, we realized that there was a very human need for people to see their homes, to see what damage there was, if any, to make plans for the upcoming weeks and months for themselves and for their families. The problem was that we really could not let people back in their homes until every home had been inspected. Keep in mind that this was a giant evacuation—probably, the largest peacetime evacuation in Canadian history, 35,000 homes, 100,000 people.

How are we going to do that? Well, what we did is we defaulted back to my core political philosophy: People always ask me if I am leftwing or rightwing, and I always say, "I don't know what those things mean," because I do not know what those things mean, but I do have a core political philosophy, and my core political philosophy is

just this: People are not stupid. Citizens are inherently smart. Citizens are inherently good. Citizens will do the right thing.

So we made a simple decision, and the simple decision was to let everyone go home. But in return for letting them go home, we had a little bit of a deal that we made with them, and the deal was that if you want to go home, the first thing you have to do is stop by your local community centre, pick up some basic supplies and a checklist of things to do. If you go to your house and there is water on the road on your street, do not go any further. If you make it up your walkway, and there is no water on the walkway, you can enter. If there is water on the main floor, do not go in. If there is water in the basement above the level of the lowest electrical outlet, leave immediately, and in one fell swoop we created 35,000 home inspectors and people were able to go home, figure out what the damage was and make the plans that they needed to plan—and there was a lot to plan. Images like this became extremely common throughout the city, and I want you to think about this image a little bit. What are you looking at here? You are looking at a house, a nice house with a giant pile of trash out front, but it is way, way, way more than that. That trash, well, that is your kids' report cards. It is the artwork that was on the fridge. It is the couch that you saw in a catalogue, and you scrimped and saved because you wanted that exact couch. It is your photo albums, teddy bears. That is your life. That is your

life piled up on your front lawn waiting for my colleagues who drive the garbage trucks to come and take it away.

And when we are in decision-making roles, when we are lucky enough to be able to hold the future of our community in our hands. These are the things that we have to remember, that these are peoples' lives, and, at this point, we were thinking, "Well, we're in a point where a lot of people in our community are going to feel like this is the worst point in their life, that this is a point where they've lost everything." But we learned two important things during the flood, two important lessons that I would like to share with you today: The first was that we are incredibly lucky in this country, in my province, in my city. We are incredibly, incredibly lucky to live in a place where government works, where dedicated public servants go to work every single day to keep us safe and to keep our communities running and to make it better. And even horrible politicians cannot screw it up. It is an important thing, and during the crisis, certainly, our federal government and, particularly, the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces—of whom we think today more than ever; our thoughts and prayers are with them—did an incredible job. The provincial government did everything they needed to do, but, if I may, you have an election coming up on Monday, so I hear and I want to tell you something. At the City of Calgary, I have 20,000 colleagues, 20,000 people who go to work every single day. They drive our buses. They keep our water safe. In keeping our water safe,

they gave us the privilege that a billion people in the world do not have and that is clean, fresh, safe water every minute of every day. By the way, during the flood, we never had a Boil Water Advisory. They fix our roads. They look after our parks and our recreation spaces. They are the first on site when there is an emergency. They keep us safe every day, and, if I may, God bless the garbage men driving those giant trucks up and down the flood-impacted streets for 17, 18, 19 hours a day just trying to bring a bit of normalcy and a bit of cleanliness back to the community. We are very, very lucky that we live in a place where public service is an honorable profession and people go to work in it every single day, and we should be grateful for that.

This picture that you are looking at now is our LRT system. Hey, did you know LRTs work? Anyway, you may have seen photos. The most successful LRT system in North America, by the way. You may have seen photos of this particular tunnel after the flood. It looked like a rollercoaster, and those dedicated public servants and their private contractor partners you see in the photo rebuilt the entire tunnel—one and a half kilometers of track, in under ten days to open it in time for the Calgary Stampede. They are standing in front of a road called Macleod Trail, one of the major arteries in Calgary. Macleod Trail was gone. It had disappeared into a sinkhole. They rebuilt Macleod Trail in one day. That may lead to an interesting question in many of your minds: If you can rebuild an entire road in one day...? That question

does not have a good answer, I am sorry to say. I keep asking it, and it does not have a good answer.

But I know that none of my colleagues in the public service would begrudge me if I said that our job as public servants is made so much better and so much easier by the quality of the public whom we serve.

When I arrived from Toronto on that Thursday night, I walked into the Emergency Operations Centre. Now I want you to imagine every movie you have ever seen about NASA and mission control. That is the Emergency Operations Centre: A giant video wall showing everything from live traffic cameras to helicopter pictures to graphs showing the water and where it is going and to-do lists and work plans for the people in the room and something called the “Common Operating Picture,” which is this amazing map that aggregates all the data from all the different systems of the city, so you can see which traffic lights are out, where the power is out, all in one place. It is pretty amazing, and in front of that video wall are about a hundred cubicles, and every one of those cubicles is labeled with an agency, like, “The Fire Department” or “The Police Service” or “Water” or “The Building Owner and Managers Association” or “Alberta Health Services” or “The Canadian Armed Forces.” They are all in the room together, and it is like a giant game of public servant whack-a-mole.

I am there in the middle of the night, and someone jumps up and says, “We need to evacuate a building in Chinatown,”

and the police jump up and say, “I can have people there in ten minutes,” and Calgary Transit jumps up and says, “It will take me fifteen minutes to get a bus there.” Emergency Social Services jumps up and says, “Mmm, it’s the middle of the night, it might take me a while to find a Chinese translator, but I can probably find one in half an hour,” and someone else jumps up and says, “Forget that, I speak Cantonese. I’m on my way.”

That is what was happening, and, in the middle of all of that, we started to get flooded, ha, ha, with offers of help from regular citizens. Remember that even at the height of the crisis, only 10%–12% of Calgary was under water, so, 85%–90% of the city was unaffected, and those people were saying, “What can we do? How can we help?” So, right away, in the middle of that chaos in the Emergency Operations Centre, I pulled aside a few people, and I said, “Listen, your job is to manage the volunteer response. Figure out what we are going to do with the volunteers when it is safe to deploy volunteers.” And, as much as I love public servants, sometimes they get, well, a little bit public servant-y, and they immediately set out to fighting with one another. My big mistake was inviting the lawyers to the conversation. Sorry, Andrea.

Municipal lawyers are a very special breed. Let us just put it that way, and they were filled with questions: What about liability? What if someone gets hurt? What if they do not know what they are doing? What if they cannot actually

help? How are we going to transport people to the evacuated areas? What are we going to do? And they continued to fight for the next 24 or 48 hours.

Come Sunday night, I finally decided I need to leave the Emergency Operation Centre for a little while and get some sleep, so in the wee hours of Monday morning and Sunday night, I went home to get some sleep. I woke up a few hours later, and I heard on the radio, “The City of Calgary would like to invite anyone who wants to volunteer to come meet at McMahon Stadium in two hours.” And I sit up in bed and go, “What? Where did that come from?” And I phone, and I said, “What is happening?” And, they said, “Well, after you left last night, we were still fighting, and we figured we better just get started. So we have invited people to come to McMann Stadium. We will deploy them from there.” And I said, “Okay, that’s all well and good, but were you planning on telling anybody because you’ve given people two hours’ notice on a Monday morning to show up? Nobody is going to come.” And they said, “Well, your worship, that’s kind of on purpose because we have no idea what we’re doing, and so if a couple hundred people show up this morning, we’ll process them. We’ll figure out what we’re doing. We’ll be ready for bigger onslaught tomorrow morning.” And I said, “Okay, except nobody’s going to come. You haven’t given them any notice. Thirty or forty people are going to show up. I suppose I had better go over there and actually say, ‘thank you’ to the thirty or forty people who show up.”

So that is what happened. When I got there, thousands and thousands of people—some in coveralls and work boots, some in tank tops and flip flops—showed up. There was no PA system, so I arrived, and one of my colleagues from Calgary Emergency Management was standing on a folding table attempting to yell at the crowd. And then and only then, I had an idea, and, for the first time, I actually added value, and the idea was that I had borrowed a vehicle from the fire chief the day before so that I could get into some of the evacuated areas. By the way, I still have it which tells you a lot about asset management in the fire department. Every time I make that joke, the fire chief jumps up and says, “Actually, it tells you way more about the fact that no one can say to the mayor, ‘Give me back my car.’” All right.

So the reason I borrowed the car, of course, is because it had sirens and lights, and then I realized, “Well, if it has sirens and lights, then it must have that thing you never want to hear when you’re driving down the street late at night, the voice of God: “Pull over now.” So I climb up on the table. I lean into the driver’s window. I pull out the radio. There is a horrible photo of me yelling into this thing, and I go to address the crowd. Meanwhile, Jason, my colleague who had been on the table before me, is now at the bottom yelling up at me and he says, “Send them home!” And I said, “What?” And he said, “We’ve run out of forms. You think I’m kidding? Look at the guy with the grey T-shirt

right in the front and centre of the screen. See, he’s got a form.” And so I take a deep breath, and I look out at the crowd. Visions of municipal lawyers dance in front of my eyes. I swallow hard, and I say, “All right, folks, we’ve run out of forms. There’s no more room on the buses, but you are all here for one reason alone, and you are all here because you want to help. So help. Just go. You know what neighborhoods have been badly impacted. Just go, and when you get there, it will be obvious what you can do. You may have to go door-to-door—I bet you will not. Just go.”

And what resulted from that was the most remarkable example of humanity, of resilience and of power of everyday people that I have ever been fortunate enough to see in my life. Volunteers all came together throughout the community doing hard, back-breaking work for strangers, for people they did not even know. This is my favourite shot of that. I love this shot for so many reasons. These young people have been working incredibly hard in the house of someone they have no idea whose house it is that they are working in. They are filthy, and, by the time the water got into that basement, it was not crystal clean, glacier water any more. They smelled bad. They are exhausted, but they are smiling. The reason I love this picture is because I love the fact that their hands are clean, and that they are eating hamburgers, and the hamburgers are the real reason that I love this picture so much because the hamburgers remind

me that every single person in the community figured out what they could do in order to help out. Some did back-breaking labour. Across the whole city, children set up lemonade stands to raise money for flood relief. Oh, my God, I drank a lot of lemonade. Lucky, I like lemonade. Or they would bring food to the volunteers.

This photo always reminds me of the story of a woman I call “Sam’s Mom.” She is more than Sam’s Mom. Her name is Laurie. She is a fully realized human being, but when I met her she thought of herself largely as “Sam’s Mom,” and, in their little house on Fourth Street, they had stripped it down to the studs, and she said to me, “You know, Mayor, I don’t have anything in my house. I don’t have a stove or a fridge or cabinets or plates. It’s all gone. I don’t have any way to prepare meals for my family. But, you know what, Mayor? Tonight, for dinner, we had hot shepherd’s pie. And I think a lot about that shepherd’s pie when I am having a rough day. I think about the hands that made it, that boiled the potatoes and peeled them and mashed them, that put the mixture into the casserole dish and covered it with tin foil and think just for a second, ‘I am never going to see my casserole dish again,’ but it doesn’t matter because somewhere out there there’s a family that hasn’t had a hot meal in days, and they need to get this shepherd’s pie while it’s still hot.” I think about that a lot, and I think about people who thought they were at the absolute bottom, people who felt that they had lost everything, and the shepherd’s pie

was not about shepherd’s pie. It was not about getting a hot meal for the first time in days. The shepherd’s pie was about remembering that we live in a community, that we live in a community where people look after one another, where we catch those who stumble, and we put them back on their feet and we help them live a better life. In a community where we understand that our neighbours’ pain is our pain as much as our neighbours’ success is our success, and that we can work together to do extraordinary things. Every day people using their everyday hands doing everyday things to make extraordinary change in our community.

About a week later, I found myself in the community of Bowness—the community you saw in the very first slide—and just up from the bridge on the street Bow Crescent that you saw incredibly flooded, in the fourth house up from the Hextall Bridge and the new park, I met a couple who were back in their house. They were super-happy to be back in their house, where they had had four feet of water on the main floor. Everything in the house was gone. I am sure they were sleeping in hammocks. They had found a piece of plywood in their basement, and, on that piece of plywood, they had scrawled a message, and they had stuck it to the tree out front. And if everything I saw during that flood of the devastation of the rivers running higher and faster and angrier than everything I have ever seen before, the people who had lost so much, the one thing I remember more than anything, the one thing I will never forget is that sign that

they nailed to that tree on that piece of plywood because that is who we are. That is who we are as Canadians. It is what we do, and that is, I think the thing that we must remember, and that is really the first part of the conversation that I want to have with you today about Calgary, about what we do for one another in times of crisis and the question that I ask myself that I hope all of you ask yourselves is this: That power, that resilience, that humanity that comes out during crisis, how do we take the power and resilience and humanity and apply it to poverty, to homelessness, to environmental justice, to economic prosperity? How do we take that power that we know exists and use it to make our communities better every single day?

What we know is that building strong communities builds a great nation and that building strong communities means that no matter what is thrown at you, you have resilience, and you are able to move on that resilience, and that is the second part of Calgary I want to talk to you about today, the second Calgary that you have seen in the news and that is the Calgary that is the economic engine and the driver of this country's economy. I do not want to go too much in on it. I will do a lot while I am here in Toronto, but not so much with you guys today. But I do want to tell you a little bit about where we are right now.

Right after the flood, we launched a campaign that you might have seen called "We're Open. YYC, Open for Business." There are some folks who think we are still underwater. We

are not still underwater. We are most back up again, but, even with that flood, even with that disaster, Calgary has had the strongest urban economy during the last decade. We are going to stay on top according to every forecast, at least until 2017. And, 2017, by the way, is when my second term as mayor ends, so after that, who knows? I may be back again.

Ten percent of all jobs in Canada last year were created in the Calgary region. Amazing for a place that has a population of 1.2 million people—less than 4% of our population. We do have a chronic labour shortage. That is one of the reasons I am in Ontario right now: We are expected to increase the demand for workers in Calgary by 200,000 by 2020, so I am here talking to a lot of young people, and I am trying to steal your children about considering great job opportunities in Calgary because I think that, we as Canadians, owe it to ourselves to ensure that Canadians have great jobs in Canada, that they have wonderful opportunities in this country. I am very pleased about the diversity of our economy.

One thing that always shocks people in Toronto is how Calgary has become increasingly a major global financial centre. Every investment bank in the world has offices in Canada. Two of the largest banks in the world have opened up branches in Calgary in the time since I have been mayor. Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the Bank of China. We are excited to have them there. I am waiting, and I see some bankers in the room today, and a couple

that I know pretty well. I keep saying that I am waiting to see which of the five Canadian banks will be the first to move their headquarters to Calgary. Three of them have the names of other cities in their name, but that is okay. We will take them, anyway. I was with one of them the other day, and I said, “ ‘Calgary Imperial Bank of Commerce’. Nice ring to it.” Anyway.

But that is very true. You will be interested to know this. Most people do not: Canada is a major energy player in the world but not really that big. Just 3%–4% of world energy production, oil and gas production, comes from Canada, but anywhere between 12%–20% of the M&A deals actually come through Canada. We punch way above our weight in the energy financial sector, and most of that work is in Calgary, and so this is actually a very interesting thing. When the Chinese National Overseas Oil Corporation, CNOOC, bought Nexen—you will remember that story—if you talk to the CNOOC executives and you say, “Why did you buy Nexen?” they will say, “Well, you know, we love the company. We love the people. We love the assets at Nexen. But, in reality, we needed to have a presence in Calgary. We need to be part of the deal flow that goes through that city every day because we needed to be part of understanding that into being a fully integrated global energy company.”

Another thing that will surprise you: Calgary has the largest number of tech start-ups per capita in Canada—not

Waterloo, not Toronto. There are 5,300 tech companies, and we are attracting people from around the world. Why does that work? And this is where I will finish. People in Toronto are always surprised, and I love to remind people in Toronto because it always surprises people that the Alberta oil sands are not actually located in Calgary. I will let you think about that for a minute. The Calgary Tower, not actually an oil derrick. In fact, the oil sands are pretty far away. For me to fly to the oil sands takes almost as much time as for me to fly to Toronto—except that it is straight north. So that should lead to an interesting question in your minds: If they are so far away, and you have got to fly there, then why are all those head office jobs in those glittering office towers in downtown Calgary? They could be here, but more likely they could be in New York or Houston or Shanghai or Dubai. Why are they in Calgary? Simple reason: People like to live there, and people like to work there, and people like to invest there because it is a terrific place to live and work and invest, and that means that the kind of investments that we make in the urban fabric, in things like art and culture and sport and recreation and a great public transit system—did I mention LRTs work?—and vibrant public spaces. All of those are not *soft* investments. Those are hard-edged, economic development investments in building a community that will attract that top graduating environmental engineer from Shanghai. When she is thinking about where she wants to live in the

world, to have Canadian cities on her agenda is something we must do as a nation, and that is why making investments in our urban fabric and in our cities is incredibly important. But there is more to it than that. It is not just the Rocky Mountains nearby which are awesome or the Alberta Ballet, which is amazing. It is in fact about a certain spirit and a certain understanding of who we are as a community, and sometimes I use the word “meritocracy” to describe that. Calgarians have never believed or cared about where you went to school or who your daddy is or what your last name is. What we care about is whether you are you smart. Are you willing to work hard? Do you bring the best of you to the table, and, if so, we as a community just like we have a responsibility to help people succeed at times of loss, have a responsibility to help you succeed in business. And that for me, is the most important thing we can do.

We are very lucky here in Canada. We are very, very, very, very lucky to live in the best place in the world, and the reason it is the best place in the world is because we have created a society, and you see it nowhere more than you do in Calgary. We have created a society where it does not matter what you look like, where you came from, however you worship, whomever you love. Every single person in every single corner of our community has the opportunity right here, right now to live a great Canadian life. That is a big deal. It is something that is not true in most places in the world. And, together—everyday people using our

everyday hands—together we have to fight for that promise in our community in Calgary and Alberta and throughout this great nation to fight for that promise that every single person will continue to have the ability to live right here, right now that great Canadian life. And I hope that all of you will continue to fight for that for everyone.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. I am abusing the generosity of my host who needs a few minutes at the end here to wrap up. We have time for a couple of quick questions. As you can tell, I am the master of the sound bite. I am very good at answering questions very fast. That is a lie, but we have time for a little bit of dialogue so questions, thoughts, comments. You can ask me anything except who to vote for on Monday, and there are mics in the audience.

Questions & Answers

Q: Thank you very much for that speech. It is the essence of the word community; it means C-o-m-m-o-n dash—

NN: Unity.

Q: —u-n-i-t-y. I have never heard of it so expressed.

NN: Thank you.

Q: My question to you is could you give an insight, or was there anything in your moral judgment about being a c-o-m-m-o-n hyphen w-e-a-l-t-h dash f-a-m-i-l-i-e-s of that greatest world institution, the British Empire.

NN: It is after all the Empire Club of Canada, but I am actually really glad you raised that. You know, my family came from Tanzania. I was just talking to my uncle about this this week. He is visiting me from Los Angeles for a family wedding, and he talked about his difficulty when he immigrated and had the exact same discussion with an immigration officer in the U.K., and he said, “I am from a Commonwealth country. Why are you treating me like this?” A lot of us have had similar situations like that, but I want to be a bit broader about it in that we are lucky that we were raised in this community or have come to this community where we share these common human values. But I will go even further than that, and I will say that, as I ended

my conversation with you today, with the power of our community is in the welcoming of people to share opportunity here regardless of what they look like or where they come from.

But you know what? We have got to fight for that every day. It is easy to lose it, and it is important for us to fight against the forces of racism and bigotry and small mindedness and intolerance wherever we find them. We have to say to politicians who would try to use wedge issues to divide us that that is not acceptable. I am very happy that the people of Québec punished the provincial government that attempted to do that in what I call the “Charter of Racism,” a Charter that in Canada in the 21st century said, “There are certain jobs you cannot do because of your faith.” But I am angry that others in our community did not speak out more loudly against that by saying that is social suicide for this nation, that we need to continue to fight those forces wherever we find them, and we need to continue to create opportunity wherever we find it. So now you have gotten me on my soapbox.

So I am going to say one other thing: There is a lot of business leaders in the room here today, and I am going to give you all a challenge: I want you to go back to work this afternoon, and I want you to call your HR departments, at Enbridge, at TELUS, at the big banks, and I want you to ask them a very simple question: “In

your criteria for screening people who come to work, do you use the words ‘Canadian experience’, and if they say, yes—and, by the way, they will say yes—tell them to remove it. Tell them to open their minds and make sure that your companies become the companies of choice to create opportunity and good jobs for new Canadians and for our First Nations brothers and sisters. And make sure you do it today because that is how we will continue to build that opportunity for everyone in this country, and that is how the guy who works as my security guard who has an MBA and served as the vice president of the bank in Dubai will be able to get a job as a teller in a bank. And I guarantee you that, once he gets the job as a teller, he is going to be managing that branch in a month. But we have got to give people that first opportunity. We have got to open the door, and it is the job of those of us who have the luxury to have lunch at the Empire Club to make sure that that door gets opened.

Q: Hi. Communication seems to be one of your very strong suits. I am one of your many Twitter followers. Can you talk about Twitter, and how you have used that to get your message out there in addition to the lost cats?

NN: Sure. I am very happy. A lot of lost pets! How do people lose their pets? I have never had a pet in my life, and I just do not understand how so many go

missing all the time. And if you do not follow me on Twitter, you will understand that 25% of my Twitter feed is lost cats, especially. Where did they go? They all have a party somewhere.

But, no, I ascribe to a very, very simple and very old political rule, and that rule is go to people where they live. Do not expect them to come to you, and so that means that I spend an incredible amount of my time out in the community talking to people, and I have tried to inculcate that throughout everything that we do as a city government. To give you a simple example, we had a major new transit strategy. You guys know about new transit strategies here in Toronto. You get a new one every week it looks like! So we crafted our 30-year transit strategy, but I really wanted to talk to the experts, people who really understand transit. Let me tell you, I am a public transit nut. I have taken the Pearson Rocket Express more times than I think of because I love to take transit to the airport and figure out how transit works in different cities and so on, and I have got lots of people who work with me who know a lot about transit. I have got network optimization engineers and fare strategy marketing people, and I know I have got people who know how to drive trains—did I mention LRT works?—and drive buses. But we are not the experts in public transit. The experts in public transit are, of course, the people who

take it every day. The person who takes the bus every day, well, she knows how it can be better and what is working and what is not working. I am getting to Twitter. I really am. One of the very simple things that we did for our transit strategy is we dolled up one bus in our fleet. We called it the “Engagement Bus.” We covered it in Post-it notes, with markers, and so on. If you were standing waiting for the bus in the morning and the Engagement Bus happened to pull up—it was just at random—then you got a free ride that day. But in return for your free ride, you had to talk to the Calgary Transit Managers we were on the bus about your experience with transit.

So it is all about getting to people where they live, and one of the things that we have learned is, increasingly, a lot of people live online, and Twitter are there not just for dirty pictures and following Justin Bieber. A lot of people really do engage with the community, in the future of the community, using that tool. One of the things I found, ironically, is that in 140 characters you can actually have really authentic dialogue. You can answer questions. You can push people, and if you follow me on Twitter, that is just me. I am the only one who has the password. It is only on my phone, and I do not spend that much time on it. You would think I did, but I do not because it is truly short. It is really easy to answer. I do not have time to spin or to

think about what I am going to say, and sometimes that gets me in trouble because I often get into fights with people if I think they are being dumb, particularly, if I think they are being intolerant or rude, and yet at the same time, it gives me an opportunity to reach directly to people.

Now, I am probably at the scale where if it was much bigger, it would be hard for me to do that on my own. I have got about almost 200,000 Twitter followers now, and none of them are shy about the question “Where’s my cat?” And I do not know if that can be scaled any further, but, for now, it works fine. I spend a half hour a day before I go to bed answering people’s questions, usually, late at night, and it is a way to really see what is going on.

The other thing I for which it is really useful and great is eavesdropping. So if you really want to know whether issues are resonating with people, what people are really talking about and thinking about, spend some time to see what they are talking and thinking about online. That said, I do not understand Snapchat. I just do not get it.

**Note of Appreciation by Barbara Jessen, President
and CEO, Jesson + Company Communications
Inc.; Director, Empire Club of Canada**

Thank you, your worship. I just want to say that as a new Director at the Empire Club, it is a very humbling experience to have my first remarks follow Mayor Nenshi. I do not think I am breaching any protocol in noting that there has, from time to time, been a degree of rivalry between eastern and western Canada with our two great titans of power, Calgary and Toronto, leading the charge. It has, occasionally, provoked some alarming, nation-trembling moments, and, no, I am not alluding to the now-famous battle cry suggesting that the east could face the impending winter storm without assessments from western Canada. I reference the event that occurred in this very place, the Royal York Hotel, when in 1948, the Calgary Stampeders won the Grey Cup and supporters rode their mighty steeds right into this bastion of eastern pride, and they had the temerity to repeat the performance in 2012 at the 100th anniversary.

The jostling for dominance by the forces of an industrial-based marketplace versus an oil-rich, natural resource economy has reached epic proportions on occasion, but, as Andrea alluded to, I do not think eastern envy has ever been more intense than in 2010 when Calgary elected you mayor. Four years later, Calgary has re-elected you, a man

who shared Young Leader Award from the World Economic Firm in 2011 for your innovative ideas on urban planning and who was ranked the second most important person in Canada, next to the prime minister, by *Maclean's* Fifty Top Canadians for 2013.

Mayor Nenshi, in 2008, just two years before you were elected, the United Nations declared that for the first time in the history of mankind we became primarily an urban species. Today, city states are perhaps the key political force driving economic growth and social policy. Strong leadership at the municipal level has never been more important. Thank you for addressing us today, but, thank you, more importantly, for being an inspiration and a role model for all Canadians. For your proud country, you have become an icon for how to do it right.

Concluding Remarks by Andrea Wood

I will close today by thanking our very generous sponsors. Thank you to Enbridge Gas Distribution Inc. and to Calgary Economic Development.

I would also like to thank the *National Post* as our print media sponsor.

Follow us on Twitter at @Empire_Club and visit us on line at www.empireclub.org.

Thank you all for coming. We hope to see you again soon at some of the exciting, upcoming events described in the brochures on your table. Thank you very much.