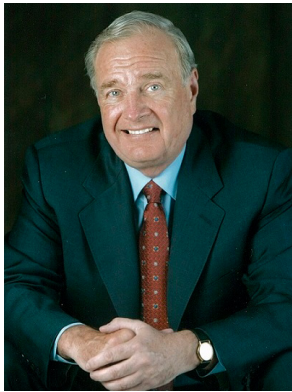


## The Empire Club Presents



**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
PAUL MARTIN,  
FORMER PRIME MINISTER  
OF CANADA**

### ***WITH: EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND YOUTH TO BUILD A STRONGER CANADA***

**Welcome Address, by Barbara Jesson President of Jesson +  
Company Communications Inc. and President of the Empire  
Club of Canada**

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December 6, 2017

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. From the One King West Hotel in downtown Toronto, welcome, to the Empire Club of Canada. For those of you just joining us through either our webcast or our podcast, welcome, to the meeting.

Before our distinguished speaker is introduced today, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our Head Table Guests. I would ask each Guest to rise for a brief moment and be seated as your name is called. I would ask the audience to refrain from applause until everyone has been introduced.

### **HEAD TABLE**

#### **Distinguished Guest Speaker:**

The Right Honourable Paul Martin, Former Prime Minister of Canada

#### **Guests:**

Mr. Michael Kobzar, Director, Sales Ontario, Siemens Canada Ltd.;

Third Vice President, Empire Club of Canada

Mr. Jeff Lyash, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Power Generation

Mr. Mike Martelli, President, Renewable Generation & Power Marketing, Ontario Power Generation

Dr. Gordon McIvor, Past President, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. MJ Perry, PhD Candidate, Theology (University of Toronto); Vice President and Owner, Mr. Discount Ltd.; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Mr. Christopher Wein, Chief Executive Officer, Great Gulf Real Estate

The Honourable David Zimmer, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

My name is Barbara Jesson. I am the President of Jesson + Company Communications and the President of the Empire Club of Canada. Ladies and gentlemen, your Head Table Guests.

We also have with us, today, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Honourable Kathryn McGarry. Minister, thank you so much for joining us today.

Great Gulf has also invited with them, today, some students from the Master's Program at the University of Toronto and York University. Now, I would like the students to rise and be recognized. Where are you, our student table? Welcome.

We are delighted you could be with us today.

I have been told that our acoustics are not the best in the room, today, so I am not going to be rude by not addressing the peripheral part of the audience, but I am told that if I speak

straight ahead, you are going to hear me. Mr. Martin has also asked me to make his apologies. Neither of us are trying to be rude, but we want you to hear.

Some speakers need no introduction. Certainly, the speaker that we have with us today is one of them. He has been with us before. In fact, his father also spoke at the Club many years ago. We are very delighted to have you back, sir.

The accomplishments of men like Mr. Martin and their contributions to this country run before them and say far more about their character than I can from this podium. Our distinguished guest today is perhaps our best example of this. All Canadians owe Paul Martin an enormous debt of gratitude.

Mr. Martin was likely Canada's most successful finance minister ever. I remember very clearly when he took office. The books had not been properly balanced in Canada for nearly 40 years, and we had the highest annual deficit of any country in the G7. It is hard to imagine, in these sunny days, how low our international reputation had sunk. The Canadian Pension Plan was on its way to insolvency. Our credit ratings had been downgraded, and I can still recall newscasters likening the Canadian dollar to the Mexican peso, on the nightly news.

Along came Mr. Martin, who told us that, come hell or high water, we were going to fix this. The path to get there would be arduous and take many painful years, but the country needed it. Few politicians would show the courage to take this long view to our finances, but Mr. Martin told us

that if we wanted Canada to be a successful and a competitive country, we needed a national reckoning. Whether we liked it or not, Mr. Martin was right. Reconciling years of poor policy was by no means easy, I think we can all agree that it was necessary. Canada's deficit was erased. I do not particularly recall that there was any hardship that we really experienced as we went through the process. The five years thereafter, we had a budget surplus and a declining national debt. In fact, I would argue that the economic prosperity that we enjoy today, can draw a straight line back to the tough decisions made by Mr. Martin.

Those in the room will likely know better than most that before heeding the call to public service, Mr. Martin enjoyed an enormous success in business. As the Chairman and CEO of the CSL Group, he headed the world's largest self-unloading shipping company. Not only that, but when he purchased the company in 1981, it was hailed as the most important leveraged buyout in Canada.

It was with great interest, then, that I watched this lawyer, former shipping magnate and, undoubtedly, one of the greatest economic minds of our time, take the reins as prime minister. He made one of his chief policy objectives bridging the gap between Canada's Indigenous peoples and the rest of the country. After generations of countless atrocities and broken promises, here was another courageous choice and then, one that was perhaps not the most obvious priority for a former finance minister. At the time, who could imagine that all the provinces, federal government, and the many Indige-

nous Nations of this country would come together to agree in a single sweeping accord? Yet, in 2005, the Kelowna Accord was announced. It took a man of great foresight to stake his political future on an issue few wanted to touch. It took a man of even greater conviction to actually broker an agreement. Once again, Mr. Martin stood on the side of the right instead of the easy. He told Canadians the hard truth, that not only was it a true moral imperative, but with all too familiar language, that it was an economic imperative as well.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Mr. Martin has unfinished business, that all Canadians have unfinished business. And though our former prime minister has been called to service again by the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, and the Global Ocean Commission, he clearly feels that his true vocation is right here at home.

Ladies and gentlemen, please, join me in welcoming the 21st Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Paul Martin.

## **The Right Honourable Paul Martin**

Thank you very much, Barbara, for that wonderful introduction. I have got a couple of speeches I have got to make next week. Would you like to come and introduce me? Also, thank you for telling people that I have got to speak straight ahead because I cannot look to the left, and I cannot look to the right. I do not want people to interpret that as a political move.

I am actually a little nervous. I went to the University of Toronto. When I came to the University of Toronto in my very first year, my father spoke at the Empire Club, and he asked me to come. It is a famous thing in our family that when my mother called to say, “How did your father do?” I said, “He spoke too long.” I am a little worried that he is up there looking down, and there is going to be a bolt of lightning that is going to come down if I go too far. I am asking you to forgive me.

We meet today—Barbara and I were talking on this—on the traditional territory of the Huron Wyandot, the Seneca, and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the New Credit. These are acknowledgments that gain, in purpose, when I had mentioned that I had been asked to speak to you, by the Empire Club, about the importance of Indigenous children and youth, and if you will allow me to, I will speak a little bit about MFI, which is my family’s foundation working in those issues.

Am I here to talk to you about a problem? No, I am not. I am here to talk to you about an opportunity, but it begins with

a problem, one going back to the European explorers who, after they figured out that this was not China or India, believed that they discovered a new continent, one where no one of any consequence lived, despite the fact that there had been vibrant societies living here, educating, sharing and trading since time immemorial.

What made the problem worse was that from the start, the Europeans' message to North America's First Peoples was the mantra used by colonial powers all over the world. We told them—and what was worse was that we told ourselves—that everything we believed was good, and everything they believed, their history, their traditions, their culture, was irrelevant. Over time, because we imported disease, and we had bigger guns, the ability of the First People to resist was weakened. However, they were stubborn, these Indigenous people. Because of their strength of will, our attempts to eradicate their culture failed, thank God. That being said, their resistance came at a great cost, which can be seen today in the lives of so many Indigenous children, 50% of whom live below the poverty line.

After these opening remarks, the question you are going to be asking yourself, I suspect, is Where is this opportunity you are talking about? The answer, I believe, is that it will come when we build the partnership that we should have built generations ago, a partnership that, as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission advocated, essentially gives Indigenous children a fair shake. The question really is How do we do that?

Let me tell you a story. Children who cannot read or write by the end of grade three will have to play catch-up, regardless of their school, throughout their school years. The odds are—if you look at the statistics—that they will never graduate from high school simply because, if you cannot read in grade three, you get passed on to grade four; you get passed on to grade five and you never learn how to do it.

Faced with that reality, a number of years ago, the Province of Ontario initiated a turnaround program designed to improve the literacy capacity of the hundred worst performing primary public schools here. It was a huge success. After learning about it, on behalf of MFI, I went to see the minister of education, now Kathleen Wynne. I can say this to you, Minister Zimmer, Minister McGarry, so you can say thank you when you get back home. I asked her if I could learn the details of the program and for the names of those who led its implementation, both of which she readily provided.

Not long thereafter, in order to see how it could be adapted, we introduced the program into two on-reserve schools in Southwestern Ontario. How did we do? The best way to put it to you is before the pilot program began, only 13% of the students at the two on-reserve schools that we went into could read and write by the end of grade three. This compared to 70% in Ontario's public schools who could read at the Ontario standard.

At the end of our project, five years later, 81% of the grade three students in those two on-reserve schools had attained the provincial standard. They could read and write, and they

read and wrote at a level that far surpassed the provincial average. These were spectacular outcomes. As a result, with the support of the federal government, we are now implementing the program in six schools, and we will be, by 2020, in 20 schools across the country. Hopefully, the program will continue.

Clearly, those numbers speak volumes, but what spoke even louder was what the Chief of Kettle & Stony Point, which is one of the reserves where one of the pilot schools were, and what he said when the results were announced. He defined, better than anybody I have ever heard since the demise of the Kelowna Accord, which Barbara referred to, what the potential is for the partnership required between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. What happened was this very large, big man stood up before everybody when the announcement was made, and the tears were rolling down his cheeks. He said to the assembled crowd, “You did not think they could do it, but look at what our kids can do when they are given the tools to do the job.” Ladies and gentlemen, that is what the partnership we need requires.

The First Nations, the Métis Nation and the Inuit will do what has to be done. Our responsibilities, as Canadians, is to ensure that they have the tools to do the job. Our role is to walk the path with Indigenous parents in their communities as they seek the best for their children.

Let me give you a couple of other examples of what I mean. Imagine yourselves as the principal in a northern reserve school. Imagine what it is like. You have no school

board to back you up. You have no ministry of education to back you up because Ottawa does not have a department of education. There is no other principal within 200 kilometres to talk to, and you may have received very little training for the job. It was to help to fill this gap that MFI created the principal’s course. We brought in 13 expert educators from across the country. We brought them to the University of Toronto’s Faculty of Education. For over a year and a half, working in partnership with OISE, they built the curriculum from the ground up. The program is now in its third year teaching Indigenous principals and those who want to be, online, across Canada. Those who have taken the course will tell you that the content is there. They will tell you that the standards are extremely high. Most importantly, they will tell you that it is a course that is not designed for big-city schools. They will tell you that it is a course designed for the reality that those principals face in these northern schools, confirming that education must be empowered from inside a school where it counts most.

Another example of providing the tools to Indigenous communities can be found in the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program. The President of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, JP Gladu was here. We are talking about the kinds of people that are part of his organization today, but we are talking about them when they were students. Through no fault of their own, many Indigenous communities have been shut out of active participation in the economy and the opportunity that that provides.

The collateral damage falling from this is a lack of work experience and skills development, and, among young people, it feeds upon itself inhibiting the resilience and their self-confidence. It comes down to self-confidence. Think about it. Think about it: When you are a 15-, a 16-year-old kid and you are asked the question all of us ask, the dumb question What do you want to be when you grow up? and you have never seen a business; you do not know anything about business. Why in God's name would you pick business?

Then we come along, and we say, "Why is there 85% unemployment in some of these communities?" It is because there has never been a business course taught in any Aboriginal high school. We have got one now, and it is working marvelously well. In fact, we created an accredited high school course with the goal of teaching Indigenous students the elements of business— everything from marketing to accounting, from how to raise money to how to close a sale. We started at a First Nations school in Northern Ontario serving small, fly-in communities of anywhere from 100 to 300 people down the shores of Hudson's Bay. We are now in some 42 schools across Canada. At their request, we are now expanding into adult education centres. That was at their request.

Why has the course succeeded? I will tell you the story, and I do not look very good in this. One reason is about two years after we got the course going—it has been going now for six or seven years—a young Oji-Cree student asked me why we did not have more Indigenous examples and role models in the program. In fact, what he said to me was, "Mr. Martin, you

know that this is a course for Indigenous students, and you know that most of us live in communities of anywhere from 300 to 1,000 people. How come every one of your examples is in Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver?" I looked at him, and I suddenly realized, "Boy, are you a dope." I said that first to myself.

As a result, working with Nelson Publishing, we produced the first set of high school business workbooks and textbooks ever written for Indigenous students by Indigenous teachers about Indigenous entrepreneurs in Indigenous communities, and it made all the difference. In fact, we are now sending these books to New Zealand, to Australia. It is a wonderful, wonderful success story. These kids are really doing well. In other words, give them a chance to learn. Give them a chance to learn within the context and the culture that they are familiar with. If you want them to build businesses in their communities, then teach them how when they are young and ready to take on the world.

In the same vein, we have established a relationship with the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada that led to the creation of a highly successful mentorship program, which they are running. We have reached out to the law firms. WeirFoulds is here. They have been with us from the very beginning. In fact, now we have also got a mentoring program with McCarthy Tétrault that we hope to see expanded in the profession, all of this building on our relationships. Why is this so important? It is because mentorship is partnership at its most personal.

So far, I have been talking to you about the tools required to play catch-up. We will continue to need these tools. The questions that Indigenous communities are now asking us is How will we stop having to play catch-up? And, to cite a prominent First Nations advocate, a woman by the name of Cindy Blackstock, of whom many of you have heard, “What if the next generation of Indigenous children was the generation that did not have to recover from their childhoods? What if they were able to break the cycle altogether? Is this possible?” Yes, it is, provided that we, as a society, are prepared to invest in families and their wellbeing, so that parents can build up the identity, the resiliency and the belonging that they seek for their children.

We know that the single most important factor in a child’s early development is a stable and committed relationship with a parent, a caregiver or another adult from birth. If this is absent, then the consequences will be felt throughout that child’s early life and far into adulthood. Some scientists, in fact all, confirm this today, but mothers have known it since the beginning of time: The nine months of pregnancy and the early years of a child’s life are the most critical period in shaping the fundamental structures, the functions of the brain. Getting things right for the first time is a lot better than trying to fix them in later life.

Why am I telling you all this? I am not telling you because you do not know. You all do. In fact, I can see the women are shaking their heads positively, and the men are probably questioning me. I am telling you this not because you do not

know it; I am telling you, really, because it provides the basis for a new program that we have been working on for a year and a half that I would like to talk to you about. It is a program that originally rose out of a conversation with an elder who raised the critical role that parents in communities play, when we were down there talking to him about our business course one day. We got into a discussion of what the scientists had said, what the mothers had said, and then the elder stopped all of us and just said, “Wait a minute. You think you are telling us. We knew this. We did this. We have this knowledge. Our traditional way is the family, and the community raises the child, but that was taken away from us by the residential schools.” That elder was confirming that the Indigenous communities know what is best for their children. They know what their children need. They know what is best for their children’s well-being. They also understand that they have to have the support that is required to re-establish those ways after all of those years of residential schools. That is what our new program is all about.

To develop it, we consulted with Indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast. We discussed it with Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts, health education, child welfare experts across the land. Together with them, we developed a five-year project, which focuses on fostering healthy development in the critical age of pregnancy to age five. The program trains home visitors from the community, only from the community, and then asks them to pair with all of the expecting mothers in the community who are living there,

beginning with their pregnancy and up to the age of two. Then, the mothers will also participate in weekly talking circles, providing peer support facilitated by the home visitors and various experts who will be invited to speak.

I am sure it is the same thing in your families, but what happens right now, is so many of these young mothers are just left alone, kept to their own. There is basically no interchange. I have got three daughters-in-law, two of them with a number of children. I asked them, “Do you see your college friends?” They say, “No, all of our friends are the mothers of our children. That is where we meet them all.” This is what happened. Why does it take a genius to understand that the same thing is going to happen within a community? So, we have set up these talking circles facilitated by the home visitors. They are bringing experts to speak to them. At the age of two, each child will then move to a play-based curriculum at a preschool-driven curriculum, and the home-visiting component will continue for another two years. They will be there right up until, essentially, when the child turns five.

By better resourcing new moms and dads and their families, clearly, we hope to see an improvement in child development, but we also hope to dramatically decrease the number of child welfare apprehensions, particularly, at birth.

Too often the current system that is set up, sets up Indigenous families for failure before their children are even born. The consequence of that is that almost 50% of the Canadian children who find themselves in foster homes today are In-

digenous. Remember, Indigenous Canadians are 4% of the population and they are furnishing in the system 50% of all the kids, and in some provinces, by the way, that number goes up to 60% and 70% and 80%. The reason for this could be as simple as unfair as a mother’s poverty. You think about it. A mother loses her child because she simply does not have the money to sustain that child. This goes against everything that we, as Canadians, say that we stand for. Because of this, home visitors will work with all families in the communities with new babies. In this way, the home visitors, hopefully, will be positioned to offer supports to parents that, hopefully, will prevent family dysfunction, helping them navigate their way through crises and, where necessary, advocating on their behalf.

The home visitor’s approach seeks to support new parents and children from every possible angle. Thus, what we hope is that the program will provide a platform on which communities can build other initiatives as well, all seeking to help a child fulfil his or her dreams, a platform that puts children at the centre, that gives community services the chance to work together, a platform that can be scaled up in Indigenous communities right across the land, meeting family needs wherever they are, because giving Indigenous children a good start in life should be a given in Canada.

So far, what I tried to do in these remarks was respond to the Empire Club’s request to tell you a bit of what we are doing. History has shown that the First Nations, the Métis Nation and the Inuit know better than anyone what their chil-



dren's needs are. As Canadians, our responsibility, as I mentioned, is essentially to ensure that they have the tools to do the job. This is what motivates MFI, and it motivates our allies. However, none of this will bear fruit unless the partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is alive and well. That is why I was so glad to accept your invitation to come here. The fact is that there are so many of you here on this issue. I am not sure that would have happened five years ago. I think it is wonderful that we are here and that you are being so patient in listening to me.

None of this is going to work a) unless the partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians is alive and well and b) unless governments at all levels play a strong and positive role. In that context, the one of governments, I would ask you to bear with me as I make a few final comments. Having been at government, this is where the two ministers are going to say, "Oh, my God, what is he going to say?" Let me just simply say I would like to touch on the decision by the federal government three months ago to divide the INAC (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada), or the Department of Indigenous Affairs, into two separate ministries which, in my opinion, makes enormous sense because, quite simply, although we have finally recognized the unfairness of our treatment of Indigenous peoples, we continue to expect them to overcome the issues they face without the necessary resources to succeed. What is now required is a new understanding in which Indigenous peoples regain control over their future and understanding based on cultural respect and proper fund-

ing. That is why the creation of the two new ministries is so important, and that is why at the helm of each is a very, very strong minister, Dr. Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Indigenous Relations, and Dr. Jane Philpott, who assumes the responsibility of Minister of Indigenous Services. I am sure you know both of them, being that they are both Toronto ministers.

As the elder in the story that I accounted to you earlier said, Indigenous communities do have the knowledge required to determine what the best thing is for their children, but that has to be issued in governance. It has to be reflected first of all, in the transition out of the Indian Act, which is probably the worst piece of legislation that was every written any time anywhere and that has lasted since 1876, my God. It also has to be a reflection, I say, in the transition out of the Indian Act into a relationship that fully incorporates the inherent right of self-government, of self-determination, one that will enable Indigenous communities and families to regain control over their children's future, and this is one of Minister Bennett's prime responsibilities.

In Minister Philpott's case, while the residential schools have been justifiably blamed for the terrible things they did, I will tell you, there is something else that all of us in this room should understand, and that is while the residential schools are taking all the blame, over the last 60 years, as we began to phase out the residential schools, the underfunding of on-reserve education, on-reserve healthcare, on-reserve child welfare, clean water and housing, has led to massive

damage in Indigenous communities across the country. Our generation cannot walk away from that. It is enough. You can blame the residential schools, but take a look at what we have not done and what we should have done. How in heaven's name do we justify that child A was going to get all that money and child B was not going to get anything? This is what we sought to address in the Kelowna Accord, and this is the greatest challenge Minister Philpott has inherited.

What staggers the mind is that there are still those who, today, would argue that we cannot afford to provide Indigenous children with the same health and education that other children have. That that is morally repugnant beyond belief goes without saying, but it is also economic nonsense. I speak this as somebody who has spent some time there. The fact is that the cost of teaching Indigenous children to read and write, to add and subtract, to speak their own languages, to learn their own culture, to grow up confident in their own identity is nothing compared to the social and economic cost of illiteracy, of pandemic suicide, of drug abuse and incarceration.

In a report commissioned by the Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation, the Conference Board of Canada recently estimated that every dollar spent on early learning pays for itself six times over. That number should not surprise you. As Barbara mentioned, I spent a bit of time in the Department of Finance, not exactly a locale of compassion and generosity, but the fact of the matter is there is not an official in the Department of Finance who would not essentially tell you that there are few returns on investment in government as

high as those which come from education. Clearly, there can be no better investment than in any child's education, health and well-being, whether they be Indigenous or not—except that when it comes to Indigenous children, the payback from eliminating the existing gaps becomes even greater.

For the first time in history, there are more people in our country over the age of 65 than there are under the age of 15. The fastest growing segment of that young population is Indigenous. In a recent report co-authored by Don Drummond—Don Drummond was an official, Terry, with you and I in the Department of Finance—and published by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards, it is predicted that Indigenous people who represent, as I said earlier, just 4% of our population, could contribute as much as 20% of the growth in Canada's workforce provided that the education gap, which currently exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is bridged. If that is not enough, just ask yourself what the consequences will be if our country, with an aging population of only 34 million people in a world of huge technological change, under-educates the fastest-growing segment of our population.

What all this means, in my opinion, is that Minister Philpott may be the minister responsible for social services, but she is also an economic minister of the highest order. It is her department that will provide this country with the highest payback of anything on which government can spend money.

In summary, if Canada is to be successful, then young Indigenous people must have the opportunity to take their right-

ful place in an economic life of a nation, a nation that should not only welcome their participation but, in fact, needs their contribution as tomorrow's workers, as tomorrow's scientists, teachers, academics, business leaders, entrepreneurs, and if you forgive me saying so, maybe even the odd politician. Equally important, Indigenous youth must see a picture, must see a future that is grounded in the rich traditions and the deeply held values of their people. Here, the work of Minister Philpott and Minister Bennett really complement each other.

As a country, we have a future to deliver, promises inscribed on the parchment of treaties and in the words of the Constitution, but also etched in the hearts of so many Indigenous youth who ask not only to succeed, but they ask to be understood. As we ask them to understand our culture, they ask us to understand theirs. When you begin to do it, you understand that it is an incredibly rich culture. There is an enormous amount to learn. We should do it.

Surely to God, we will not make the same mistake that the early settlers made, which was to dismiss Indigenous thought out of hand. For the fact is that if we understand and we respect the richness of the Indigenous world view, then we will provide one of the tools that is so crucial to young, Indigenous people if they are going to live in both cultures.

In short, ladies and gentlemen, the time has come for us, as Canadians, to start listening and working together. Thank you very much.

## Questions & Answers

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**Q: Mr. Martin, you mentioned business being an important part of this equation. What are your thoughts on Canadian business and their role in Indigenous education?**

PM: JP Gladu is the head of the Canadian Council for Native Business and has spent most of his life on this issue. An interesting thing for many of you who would have known Murray Koffler, who was the founder of Shopper's Drug Mart, is that he was really the founder of the Canadian Council. There is no doubt that Canadian business can play the key role in many ways: Obviously, in understanding Canadian business, which is in the extractive industries—understanding, in fact, what is going on there and making sure that the consultation is full.

There is an enormous amount more that is happening where I think that business has got to play a role. Simply, I will give you two. One of the ways that you are working on very much is the question of internships. I think that internships are absolutely crucial. We know it in the light of ordinary Canadians. We know the importance of internships. It seems to me that internships in the case of First Nations, Métis Nation and Inuit is all the more important.

The second thing that I would say to you is that more and more we are now seeing—and I think properly so—that business and the education community are begin-

ning to understand that they are going to start teaching coding in grade one, that we are going to start teaching STEM in primary school and that there is going to be, I think, a fundamental revolution in a great deal of what happens in terms of primary and secondary school education.

My biggest fear is that, in fact, that will take care in the public schools here, in Toronto, and it will not take care in the on-reserve schools up in Northern Ontario, as an example. I think that what business has got to say is to understand that, fundamentally, that goes back to the youngest and the fastest-growing segment of your population. If what you do is to simply say that STEM and higher math and all of these kinds of things that are going to be taught in these other areas are going to be important for my business, but I am going to draw from a smaller segment of the young population, it is not going to work.

I think it is in Canada's interest. I think it is in business interest, but I also think that it is the right thing to do.

**Q: Mr. Martin, I will probably be throwing the cat amongst the canaries, and I apologize in advance. As someone of settler heritage who is committed to reconciliation, in my small way, I was struck by two of your phrases. One was not to dismiss Indigenous thought, and the other was we need to give the tools. As we are getting into more 3P-types of things and we are needing to hear voices, I am thinking also of my generation as we help train children. My generation needs to**

**hear what is going on, and we need to know why and the history. Yet, the hardest place or events of any kind, be they award events, be they speeches, be they fundraisers, to find sponsorship is when it involves Indigenous people representing themselves and coming forward with ideas. I do it all the time. That is the one area where I have difficulty. What do we do to encourage the sponsorship of events in which Indigenous people can represent themselves?**

PM: Are you talking about sponsorship?

**Q: One was an award event, actually, two award events—one for Roberta Jamieson and Marie Wilson, and the other was for Stan McKay and Cindy Blackstock. They were speeches here, at the Empire Club, various events. It is finding sponsorship when Indigenous people represent themselves that I am always having difficulty with.**

PM: I understand what you are saying and the difficulty. Again, I do not want to keep referring to JP, but the fact of the matter is, the business community can be represented and is represented. There are a number of outstanding Indigenous business people in the country, Darcy Bear, Clarence Louie. I can give you the names. To be honest, it is not going to be easy for you to get them to come and speak. A lot of businessmen are hard to come and get to speak. I suspect that Gordon, you have had trouble, or Barbara, you have had trouble to get.

BJ: We waited a long time for you.

PM: There you go. It was because of my father. I will tell you something that is interesting. When we decided that we were going to do this most recent from the early childhood, there are, in the faculties of the higher education across the country in the public policy schools, you would be amazed at the number of Indigenous people who are there. In terms of education, in terms of healthcare, Michael Dan, who is here, could speak to this, because he is at the university. I think what you have just got to do is blackmail them. I am actually surprised that you have trouble getting the businesses. I think that a lot of us would be prepared to help you with that, because that just does not make any sense to me. If there is anybody who should be prepared to sponsor those kinds of events, it should be the business community. They are the ones that will gain from it. I think the fact that you raise that here, I think, will cause a lot of twinges.

**Q: Bonjour. [Remarks in Indigenous language.]**

**My name is Leslee White-Eye. I am the former Chief of Chippewas of the Thames First Nation and an educator by career. I appreciate the work you are doing, Mr. Martin. It is incredible in terms of your advocacy and your championing the work that has to be done in our communities. The challenge, I think, is where does the message start to change, and is it no longer the past in current terms of a settler approach that was racist? When do we call upon what is happening now? Is this ignorance? Is this complacency? This**

**is a question for the larger group here: What is it that is going to compel you to work and figure out the complex issues together? I certainly do not want to sit and listen over and over again about the ills of my community. If that is what compels you to move, I do not want to be a part of that. What is going to compel you to move?**

PM: I think your question is dead on, which is why I made the reference to Jane Philpott, not as a social affairs minister, but as an economic minister. The fact of the matter is, if we know what is good for us, we are going to invest in First Nations education. We know what is good for us. We are going to invest in First Nations communities because this is where the young people are going to come from. If we are going to succeed, we are going to make sure that those schools up in Northern Ontario are learning coding at the same time that they are learning coding in the schools down here.

I think the moral argument is overwhelming. And I believe—and I think everybody believes—for exactly the reason that you have given, that the argument has got to switch to the economic argument because that is the one that is impossible to ignore. It is impossible. That is what you are hearing in the odd place, when somebody comes along and sort of says we cannot afford it; it is too much money. But think about it: At the time that the public schools were created 100 years ago, what if somebody had come along and said we cannot afford to

educate all of these people, where the heck would our economy be today? That is the argument that has got to be made today.

**Q: That is the argument that is being made here? I hear it every time when we come to the table with government or private enterprise or social groups: “Well, that is the issue of the federal government,” or, “No, that is a provincial issue.” There is this long-standing narrative within Canada that has parked Indigenous issues outside of the Canadian household. That has got to stop. We can hear it, this whole jurisdiction thing. We end up at the Human Rights Tribunal.**

**We end up fighting the federal government, and everybody can look the other way, because, “Oh, good, somebody else is taking care of it.” Where does that argument start to change, and what is going to compel us to work together and tell a different message? I do not have an answer. I am trying desperately to figure out a way. I guess I am compelling whoever is here, present right now, that we do need to figure out a different narrative. It is not about who has got responsibility—“Oh, it is them,” and them trying to figure out if it is theirs or not. It is circular.**

PM: First of all, I do not think it is happenstance that you have got two provincial ministers here. They are both economic ministers. I think the argument, to be quite honest, has begun to shift. I think you are absolutely right.

At some point, we have got to stop looking at what

happened 50, 60 years ago or 150 years ago—except that I do believe that it is absolutely crucial that we get rid of the Indian Act and we have something to replace it. I think that is one area where we are going to have to look to history.

I think that you are right in terms of talking about the future of the nation. The other thing that I did not get into very much here but that I think we should be talking about is First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture. One of the things that scares me just a little bit is that what is going to happen is we are going to continue to ask the First Peoples to understand our culture, but their culture is ancient, and their culture is evolving, and their culture is very, very rich. I am a little worried if we do not understand that their culture is important. We have got to work together, and that has got to be understood.

We cannot ignore that culture because it is incredibly rich. I believe that you are right in terms of where you take it, but I also think the whole question of culture has got to play a role here.

#### **Note of Appreciation, by Jeff Lyash, President & Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Power Generation**

Prime Minister Martin, thank you for those compelling remarks. As I sat and listened, what stood out for me were really two words, and those words were ‘opportunity’ and ‘partnership’. On the first, I am reminded that Thomas Edison

said, “Opportunity is most often overlooked, because it comes dressed in overalls and looks like hard work.” On the second, ‘partnership’, it is clear that the channel to realize these opportunities is through partnership.

I would share with the assembled group that I, personally, and OPG, have experienced the benefit of those partnerships. We have had the good fortune on a string of generation development projects to partner with First Nations in whose traditional territories those facilities exist. It allowed us to place contracts with First Nations businesses and helped them grow. It provided job skills training, apprenticeships and internships to those community members, and, perhaps, most importantly, we have these First Nations as long-term equity partners in those facilities.

They are co-owners with us, and they benefit from a revenue stream that will go decades into the future. I share that because I think those were opportunities that took very hard work to realize, but we realized them through partnership, and they are benefitting those communities, the company, and all of you, Ontarians, as shareholders. Your remarks were inspirational, and they laid a challenge in front of us that I think is well worth taking up. For that, thank you, and a job well done.

### **Concluding Remarks, by Barbara Jesson**

A sincere thank you to our generous sponsors, Ontario Power Generation and Nova Chemicals, for making this event possible. As MJ alluded to so eloquently, sponsorship really is at the core of what we do here at the Empire Club. We think we bring important issues before Canadians, but we do need your support to do it. We are profoundly grateful. Thank you so much.

We would like to thank mediaevents.ca, Canada’s online event space for webcasting today’s event for thousands of viewers around the world.

We have tried to stay current at the Empire Club. Although we have been around since 1903, you can follow us on Twitter at @Empire\_Club and visit us online at [www.empireclub.org](http://www.empireclub.org). You can also follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Finally, please, join us at our next event on December 11th with Patrick Brown, the Leader of the Ontario PC Party at the Arcadian Court. Thank you so much for being with us today.

This meeting is now adjourned.