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The Empire Club Presents

When the Worst of Times Become the Best of Times: Building a Future for Liberalism in Canada

Chairman: Tim Reid, President, The Empire Club of Canada

Head Table Guests

Verity Craig, Managing Director, CV Management, and Director and Upcoming President, The Empire Club of Canada

Brian Topp, Executive Director, ACTRA Toronto, and Senior NDP Strategist

Pradeep Sood, Founder, XactScribe Inc., Past Chair, Ontario Chamber of Commerce, and Director, The Empire Club of Canada

Robert Hyde, SVP Strategy and Finance Group Inc.

Cam di Prata, EVP and Head of Corporate and Investment Banking, National Bank Financial, and Director, The Empire Club of Canada

Max Naylor, Student, Northern Collegiate, and Prime Minister, Youth Parliament

Rev. Chris Miller, Minister, Oriole-York Mills United Church

John Koopman, Partner, Spencer Stuart, and Past President, The Empire Club of Canada

Deborah Gillis, Senior Vice-President, Membership and Global Operations, Catalyst; and

Alex Haditagli, Founder and CEO, Group Inc.

Introduction by Robin Sears

It's my great honor and privilege now to introduce our keynote speaker. As you probably guessed by now, Alf and I come from very different political stripes. Despite what my partners think I am a Tory and not a Liberal. As a Tory, I have a fantastic opportunity here today to put my friends through the wringer considering what happened on May the 2nd. But after careful thought and observing what his own party has done to him, I will go easy on him.

Alfred Apps is many things: a father of five beautiful daughters, the very fortunate partner of Kathy Elder, who does join us today, a respected and successful corporate lawyer, an active and committed Anglican.

But he's also a leader, a student leader who was elected President of the Student Council at his high school in Woodstock, his college at Huron and his University in London. A company leader who has successfully served as CEO of two large corporations. A community leader who has devoted much of his spare time to charities in healthcare and the arts. Former chair of the foundation board for the Center for Addiction and Mental Health, and of course, the past president of the Empire club of Canada.

A business leader who this month is taking over as chair of the board of two exciting Canadian corporations: Pacific mortgage, one of the leading independent financial services companies, recognized last week as Canada's second fastest growing company, and Biron Capital Markets, an emerging Canadian institutional investment bank.

But his passion for four decades has been politics, especially Liberal politics, and always as a volunteer. Today, he addresses us as president of the Liberal Party of Canada at a critical moment in history.

I just want to take you very quickly through one personal note. He is very dedicated Liberal. He's also a very dedicated Canadian, and I had an experience with Alf last year when the coalition thing was going on. I won't go into the details, but he along with a partner of his in the party after I approached them saying that the Liberal Party is an important institution in this country, and we don't want to see the country ripped apart by a bunch of opportunists, and they took a lot of work and heat and within their organization to take care of the coalition. And to me, that shows Alf it's a great Canadian.

Please welcome my friend and yours Alfred Apps.

Alfred Apps

Thank you, all so many friends, for being here today. And a special thank you to my friend Ryan Top, who is here today, and I'll try to make it as civil for you as you've always made it for me.

William Butler Yeats:

“Turning and turning in the widening gyre, the Falcon cannot hear the Falconer. Things fall apart. The center cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. The blood dim tide is loosed and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned. The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity. Surely some revelation is at hand.”

Ladies and gentlemen, on May 2, the Liberal Party of Canada suffered the most devastating election defeat of its long and storied history. There can be no doubt about that. In terms of elected members and voters supports we swapped places with the NDP. And it all seemed to happen seem to happen in one fell swoop over the last half of a very short campaign.

But no sooner had the voters pronounced their judgment than the pundits were pontificating, defeat was inevitable. It was a long time coming. Liberals have ignored their grassroots for too long-lost touch with their base. The party hijacked by an aging establishment elite, middle aged white guys clinging to power and brought down by their own hubris. An out-of-date structure, badly in need of modernizing. A party completely out of sync with the Facebook generation, crippled by an approach to campaigning from a bygone era and poisoned by old leadership squabbles that had sapped internal trust and eroded public confidence over years.

In short and with all the benefits of 2020 hindsight, an entirely predictable Liberal apocalypse. That at least is the current media narrative; the Liberal Party as broken institution, a party in a state of crisis. In fact, all of these armchair observations probably contain an element of truth, including I concede, some of the nastier barbs directed at yours truly.

In the coming weeks and months, Liberals will almost certainly consider each and every one of these diagnoses of the disaster because the most of them point to a fixable problem. And fixing the problems is now the first priority of most Liberals. Still, whatever and whoever is ultimately found to be responsible for our route at the polls.

It was President Kennedy who said, “Victory has 1000 parents and defeat is an orphan,” and since it happened on my watch, I accept my share of the blame.

But I'm not here today to conduct a postmortem, nor am I into self-flagellation. I am here to address a larger issue; something I'm going to call the threshold question, because the broken party theory of Liberal defeat is not the only one out there. Some have described our predicament much more dramatically, predicting the permanent demise of the party.

Their theory is not just about a broken party. It's about a paradigm shift. They see a world of no oxygen for Canadian Liberals, centrist parties are being squeezed the world over, what makes Canada different. What relevance to Liberal values have to the 21st century? And what are the things has changed so profoundly? Well, they think the moderate Canadian political consensus is gone. Some think it's been

swamped by ideological extremism, and single-issue activism from both sides of the spectrum. For them, polarization is inevitable. The only hope for Liberals is to merge with the NDP unite the left to fighting united right.

Others believe the traditional Liberal middle ground has been completely co-opted, both left and right moving to the center all at once, so convergence is inevitable. If you're a Liberal in that world, you have no choice to migrate to the other major party whose extreme faction offends you least. Hold your nose and cover your eyes, if you must, but surrender to one or the other and do it quickly.

So this is the pivotal question: has the paradigm shifted? Do Liberal ideas remain relevant to Canada in the 21st century? Are there still Liberal ideas that can earn the confidence of Canadians and are worthy of the fight? If the answer to that question is no, then we need to pause and understand why. Because all of the postmortems won't matter, and all the well-intentioned reforming, rebuilding, reimagining renewing re re re re will be a pointless exercise doomed to failure.

But the answer to these questions can be yes. Then Liberals need to understand those answers to because the commitment, the energy the passion required to succeed in historic work Canadian Liberals are about to undertake for the third time in a half century, demands first and foremost a profound rediscovery of the relevance of our fundamental *raison d'être* today, and that's what I want to talk about.

Let me first qualify my perspective. I became a Liberal on election night 1972 when Pierre Elliot Trudeau came literally within a hair's breadth of losing his second election. Since then, I've worked in 11 provincial and 12 federal elections, a total of 22 campaigns, we've lost 12 and 110. And I've been here where we are today before. I ran twice myself for Parliament. 1984, age 27, sacrificial lamb, four time incumbent, 40 seats nationally is where we ended up and I got my clock cleaned losing by over 12,000 votes. Four years later, slightly more mature sacrificial lamb, we'd rebuilt locally, the Tories still won a majority, and I lost by 1000 votes, that was even more painful.

But my point is not the defeats. Because in the next three elections, with the incumbent retiring and the right being split, the Liberals went on to win the seat three times in a row. It was my high school principal who got it as part of the Chrétien majorities, so it's not all sham drudgery and broken dreams, as Trudeau would have said; there have been victories as stunning as our losses along the way. Like 1993, when our Tory friends were reduced to two and we swept this province, in every riding except for one, or 85, people forget 1985, when the Ontario Liberal Party moved from third position in the Ontario legislature in 75, to government we're behind the NDP, to government, after 42 years in the wilderness, and in circumstances where at the time and we tend to forget this, there wasn't a single Liberal government in Canada.

Liberals who think things are tough today should think about that not so distant history, because we have found ourselves in places worse than nowhere before. Places where you have to ask yourself why you're a Liberal. And just as importantly, does it matter that you are. Once again, we're an existential crisis.

It was President Kennedy who observed that the Chinese used to brushstrokes to write the word crisis: one brushstroke for danger, and the other for opportunity, danger and opportunity. That is why the worst of times, can become the best of times. Make no mistake, there is very real danger for Liberals in asking the threshold question. Because we have to look hard in the mirror.

What if the only reason for our party's existence really wasn't always an only ever has been to win and hold power? What if we were never really a party of the people? What if we've always been less a political movement than a cult of leadership, the party that found the right leader for the Zeitgeist or the big issue of the day? What if we discover that in fact, the Liberal Party has always been a rather closed and hierarchical institution, a club for Canada's elites, a brokerage party that pays lip service to grassroots democracy, but in truth, functions like a presumptive palace from which the good and the great and Canadian business, law, academia and public service gain to govern the ordinary people?

Well, if that is the sum total what it means to be a Liberal then we are all in serious trouble as Liberals. Because we now live in an era of dime a dozen celebrity when elites have lost all their luster, where digital democratization has bestowed the power of information everywhere on everyone. Insiders beware. Most of the traditional barriers to success have come crashing down, giving way to a rampant albeit rambunctious meritocracy, where the ease of public expression, and the possibilities for influencing people and ideas and events, has given everyone the right and many the motivation to play on their own terms and on their own rules.

The new politics is based on a revolutionary concept of human connectedness and political community, a world of friends in the hundreds of thousands and from anywhere. Where associations can be formed virtually, and almost instantly around any topic or cause, and where thoughtful analysis and dialogue can occur in real time or be completely supplanted not just by the 30-second clip, but by the instant blog and the nanosecond tweet.

It is now the early spring of unprecedented human individuation. A time of creative chaos. Intellectual mayhem. A new and very still very rough and freewheeling frontier for self-expression and self-actualization where no single big idea dominates the public agenda. No challenge drives the public conscience, no one big challenge, and at least not for long. Some wonder whether the new world order has been universally afflicted by attention deficit disorder; others see that Canadians of this generation are yearning for a more radical democracy, one that can embrace the increasingly varied aspirations of a relentlessly and enthusiastically more diverse society.

And more and more tomorrow's voters see traditional processes for effecting change, especially political parties, as irrelevant to their goals. What good can come from institutions seen as fossilized arbiters of elite opinion, run largely by out of touch middle aged white guys whose interest is to preserve and serve the status quo. That's not cool. In a culture of individuation, and self-actualization militating, for change in just about everything.

The middle-aged white guys are just a proxy for political parties that are seen as out of touch, that have failed to engage the next generation of progressive Canadians on their issues; the environment and climate change, urban poverty and homelessness, the continuing neglect and abuse of our Aboriginal population, international human rights issues just to name a few.

And Canadians of today's generation are cynical, suspicious, that old line politicians and political parties are not listening because they are in the pockets of the vested interests who care nothing about those issues. Bluntly, we live in a culture that no longer wants to defer to the authority of political

establishment, and the Liberal Party has to wake up and see that popular consensus has become elusive because most of the old ways of shaping it are gone.

So what should we do? Back to basics: how do Liberal ideas fit into the new paradigm? Left bleeding on the side of the road after May 2, how do we respond to this new paradigm? Well, it's not enough to copy the competition. We have to leapfrog the competition, or as Wayne Gretzky would put it, Liberals have to skate to where the puck is going to be, rather than where it was. The reimagining of Canadian Liberalism has got to start from first principles.

So strip it down, what do we stand for? And I say Canadian Liberal because the word Liberal is now attached to political parties, the world over of widely varying orientations. And Canadians have built their own special kind of Liberalism in the context of a unique political experiment that is Canada.

We can trace it back to a long line of English political philosophers, ideas that came out of the French Revolution, a few of the ideas that came from the Americans, and even some of our own political philosophers. You name it, it should be no surprise that we are a hybrid party, given the nature of who this country is from the perspective of our intellectual heritage. But Canadian Liberalism reflects a lot more than the glib and easy phrases we've adopted of late like that fiscally responsible, socially compassionate formulation, or the progressive centrist label. Nor is it enough to say that we are not an ideological party of the left or the right, but a pragmatic party, the middle. That may all be true, but in fact, Canadian Liberalism is built on clear ideas.

First, we believe not only in the dignity and worth of the individual, but in the absolute primacy and autonomy of individuals. We are not a party of the entitled classes. nor are we a party of class entitlement. In an age of unprecedented and assertive individualism, that makes us relevant. We stand first and foremost for freedom. We believe that wealth is created, and social progress is achieved when we unleash the full capacity of individuals to think and act. We see the protection and extension of freedom for individuals as the key to personal happiness, the chief responsibility of the state and the paramount purpose of statecraft. At a point of unprecedented human creativity, driving us to new levels of intellectual and technological advancement, that love of freedom makes us relevant.

We believe in the human spirit and its unlimited potential; that every single citizen is entitled to live in conditions of personal security and opportunity to optimize his or her potential regardless of age, sex, race, creed, whatever without prejudice or discrimination, without or any other accident or incident of birth, culture, or country of origin. At a time of unprecedented human aspiration, self-actualization and choice, our philosophy is relevant. We believe that diversity is a strength, that immigration should be open, that social and cultural differences should be embraced, and that tolerance and accommodation are the essential virtues of Liberal society.

During a period when Canadian multiculturalism has blossomed into full flower, but accommodation of minority cultures has opponents. the generosity of our worldview makes us relevant. We endorse pluralism and secularism, because we believe both in freedom of religion and freedom from religion, that church should be separate from state. The public square must be open to Canadians of every faith background, including those of no faith at all. The time when some seek to inject matters of faith right into the heart of the legislative process, and others seek to shut them out, that respect for the overlap between spiritual and temporal makes us relevant.

We are capitalists, not socialists. We believe in the profit motive. For Liberals profit is not a dirty word. We're ready to fight for workers' rights, but we are ready with the right of individuals to accumulate and profit from their own capital, including especially their intellectual capital, whose development and commercialization of late has become so democratized, more democratized than it's ever been. In the knowledge economy of today, that approach makes us relevant.

We believe in equality, equality before the law, and equality of opportunity. Beyond property, civil and legal rights, we believe in economic, social, and cultural rights. In a society where basic fairness has become the measure of freedom, that makes us relevant.

And we believe in democracy. We think citizens have a responsibility to participate in their governments to pay their taxes to respect the rule of law, to fill out their census forms, to vote, most importantly, to vote. At a point in history, where technology has finally made our more radical democracy possible, our posture towards broadening democratic participation makes us relevant.

We believe in the servant state, not the nanny state of the left, or the watchman state of the right. We believe that the sovereignty of the state and its permissible scope of action is dependent entirely upon the will of the people and circumscribed always by the rights of individuals; that while the state is precluded from interfering with the basic freedoms of its citizens without their consent, its proper role extends well beyond protecting its people from internal and external threats.

In modern circumstances, where the genuine will of the people is more continuously and profoundly ascertainable than it has been in history, that makes us relevant. And the Liberal way is the balanced middle road. We believe in the power of government to do good, but that citizens must be vigilant. To constrain and define the power of government by expanding the rights of individuals and promoting the strength of markets.

We believe that those who think government is bad generally deliver bad government, while those who think that government is the solution for all problems invariably governed away, that creates even worse problems. But we are the party of nation builders, the party of a strong national government, the Party of Canada, of the Canada Pension Plan, of Medicare, of bilingualism, of multiculturalism, of the flag, of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, just to name a few.

Today, we are the only party in the House of Commons today that is not either pandering to the provinces or abandoning the field of national government. The only party that believes we need a strong and active national government to build a stronger and more united Canada in an ever more complex and shrinking world. That makes us relevant.

And we believe in free and fair markets. In fact, I will say boldly, the Liberal Party is the only Canadian political party whose core philosophy is genuinely pro-market. We believe that free and fair markets open competition are the biggest drivers of innovation and creativity, the engine of economic growth, the creator of wealth and jobs. Those on the left sometimes have trouble understanding that unless there is a possibility of profit, there can be no market. To move forward, you not only have to put the horse before the cart, you also have to feed the horse.

On the other hand, those on the right seem to have trouble understanding that free markets only remain free and fair in the face of their natural tendency to monopoly if they are regulated appropriately. That regulation, in fact, is a market friendly thing. That properly regulated markets are stronger markets.

Unlike socialists, conservatives know that you have to put the horse before the cart, and you have to feed it. What they don't seem to appreciate is that the beast has to be reined in if you want to prevent it from bolting and avoid driving into the ditch.

As Liberals we know the market sometimes fails to deliver the goods in the ways we need to ensure that the market itself is firing off on all cylinders and as productively as possible. So, we support public works like transportation, and energy and public or publicly funded services like healthcare and education, because that's what makes the market work better; and that's what a mixed economy is all about.

In a world where connectivity has created entirely new markets for goods and services, a thousand Adam Smith-types virtual shopkeepers; where progress in transportation, and communication technology have vastly also expanded global markets. The Liberal balanced pro market approach makes us relevant.

But at the core of everything. Liberals are children of the enlightenment. We believe in the power of reason. We value education and learning. We see intellectual curiosity and skepticism as good things. We are open minded and pragmatic reformers who think that public policy should be based on evidence and logic about what really works, rather than something that's merely sellable, because it resonates in the gut. Because Liberals know that knowledge is constantly advancing, and that the logic of scientific discovery sometimes does involve shifting paradigms, the replacement of old assumptions with new ones. We've learned over centuries that conventional wisdom is often out of date or just plain wrong, and that the so-called Common-Sense Revolution often has little to do with good sense.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Liberals believe that intergenerational stewardship matters. As a fundamental question of public morality, we must do whatever we can to ensure our aging and infirm are cared for. We should not mortgage our children's future by burdening them with an unfair inheritance of debt. We must do better in trying to leave our environment better than we found it.

I want to leave you with two ideas that I think are very Liberal ideas. The first idea requires us to look forward a year or two, the second could and should become the cause of Liberals for a generation; a beacon. The first is something I hope to put in motion as President before I retire in January, I repeat, retire in January. The second has been the dream of my life, and will be the cause of my life as an ordinary Liberal once I leave office.

I believe that is a party we should come at whenever and when we form government next, and God knows when it will be, that we want to introduce the concept of a registered voters list in Canada, where people register on their party label or as an independent, or as exempt from conscience or health. Second, that we commit to allowing online voting. People pay their taxes online, for goodness sakes, why can't they vote online? That we introduce like they have in Australia, I'm talking about voter augmentation strategies rather than voter suppression strategies, which some of our opponents like to

pursue. Not just that, but mandatory voting like they have in Australia, where there's a fine if you don't vote, 96% of the population votes.

And finally, the right if you're an expatriate, who's been ordinarily resident Canada within last 10 years, to be able to vote in a federal or by general by election.

Now, that's just the policy that we'd like to do when we're in government. We have to behave now, as a party, like that's the policy we want to live with. We actually have to do what the Tories did in relation to election finance reform, before election finance reform was a lie if we're going to leapfrog. So what we need to do is to have a voter registration drive across Canada starting next January, where Liberals go out door to door, through the social media, by the telephone, to every household in Canada, to sign up people who are going to be registered voters at no charge, registered Liberal voters.

And then what we've got to do is extend universal suffrage in the party, not just one member, one vote, but one Liberal one vote. And then 12 months from now, when we're having our leadership convention, our leadership process, what we need to do after 100,000, Liberals have visited 150 homes each over a two each over a 12-month period is to have a leadership process, where every registered Liberal voter on our list gets to vote. And we do it in a primary style. So that for the last two months, we spread it out; one weekend, New Brunswick, and British Columbia after two weeks of campaigning in those regions, then two weekends later, Saskatchewan and Alberta and the Northwest Territories, and so on and so on. We spread it out. We force the race into the small towns and communities rather than forcing the delegates of old to come to the big cities. And we re engage with Canadians and build a party. And by asking the questions at the doorstep, when we're registering our voters do the best and most thorough post-election defeat post-mortem imaginable. Think of how that would transform the Liberal Party of Canada. That's a process idea about democracy that I think is a really Liberal idea.

The other idea and what I'm going to wrap up with, is we talked about Liberalism and individual rights, talked about our legacy. My own view is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is our greatest legacy.

Liberalism is always in danger of running out of gas, of becoming a victim of its own success. There's always got to be the new frontier of reform, and as I look around my Canada today, I feel badly about the failures of my generation in this party, I go back to the point when things changed in my mind in the US. 1944, it was April, FDR was giving the State of the Union address. He died a year later, so he didn't get to do any of this, but he talked about the need for a second bill of rights; living wage, the right to healthcare as a constitutional right, the right to education as a constitutional right, et cetera, et cetera, economic, social cultural rights.

Now, our Charter, already, from the perspective of constitutionally trumping individual sovereignty rights already goes farther than most in the world, because we've gone beyond civil political democratic rights to language rights and other things. But that Charter didn't happen overnight. It was Liberals thinking and dreaming. over decades. Even a few Tories like John Diefenbaker, who started with a Bill of Rights in 1960. But from the Bill of Rights in 1962, the Charter of Rights in 1982 was 22 years of Liberal aspiration.

Now, that's why I'm saying we have to as Liberals take the big gaze out. And we have to look around us today and say, if our job is a party is to take power from the powerful and turn it to the less powerful. If

our job is to bring marginalized to the center, if our job is to leave those two parties that live on a static left right axis, fighting each other over yesterday's center in Ottawa while we define a new center, it's about bringing the marginalized in Canada to the center.

So what I'd like this party to do, is to set a beacon. And people say it's crazy, "You can't entrench economic rights in a market party." We sure as hell can. We entrenched legal and political rights that people said we couldn't entrench 50 years ago, and we made them subject to the reasonable limits of a free and democratic society. And we can make the right to clean water, the right to decent education -- think of our Aboriginals--the right to quality healthcare, all the rights that some Canadians do not have.

Charter trumps not because it's going to change anything overnight, but because it's gonna set a standard around which legislatures and everybody else will move forward. And you know, it won't be the first time because the only other quasi-constitutional Charter that has economic rights is the Charter in Québec, that was brought in by a Liberal premier Robert Bourassa in 1975. And I'm sure that an amendment to our constitution that moves us to economic cultural, social rights is something that's going to resonate massively in Québec, rather than fights over who's got which province and which government has jurisdiction over what.

So what are the reasonable limits on economic and social rights that we're going to fight for for the next 20 years, to become, again, the party of the people, the party of the people who are shut out. While the reasonable limits are the reasonable limits of fiscal prudence in a mixed market economy in a global marketplace. Those are the limits. We do the best we can and create beacons to get there that inform our entire value system and our entire culture.

I'll tell you that's the kind of new frontier. We've signed these conventions in the UN, which are great debating points on exactly the same stuff, but they're not worth much more than the paper they're written on. In Canada, we can be the first in the world, the first in the world, to do what has been the inexorable course of history for Liberal democratic thought, which is the sovereignty of one God devolved to the sovereignty of the King devolved to the sovereignty of the King in the entitled class, devolved to the sovereignty of the King in Parliament, right? And then the King in Parliament, when it was just men who own property, and then the King in Parliament when it was universal franchise, and then people under bills of rights, constitutional trumps. Sovereignty that went from God to the children of God.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me leave you with one short thought. This has been, this country, an extraordinary Liberal democratic experiment. Canada, as a consequence, has become a great country. But it is not just a country. It is an idea. It is an evolving idea. It is a Liberal idea. It is an idea about Liberal democracy that takes people from being subjects to citizens. It is an idea worth fighting for. Let's keep this party alive for our children and for tomorrow. Thank you.

Robin Sears

Alfred has agreed to take take some questions. We don't have time for a lot. But we'll get as many in as we can.

Questions & Answers

Q. You said you weren't going to do a postmortem. So what happened?

AA: Well, let me give you two thoughts on that. There was an air war and a ground war, and we lost them both badly. The air war we lost, because there was an emotional pre framing that occurred over many, many months when we thought 85% of Canadians were paying no attention. They actually were getting a very low-level impression of our leader, where his strengths, intellectual world perspective, compassionate, smart, all those things were turned into weaknesses, and Mr. Harper's weaknesses. were turned into strengths; his weaknesses being perceived to be not very good on the international stage, not very informed, not very compassionate, not very focused on little guy.

And the way they did that was they made everybody believe that Mr. Ignatieff was not a Canadian, and that he was a total opportunist, because he was in it for himself. And they made everyone believe, y the way, those things every time people saw him, it gave them anger that he wasn't even a Canadian, actually an American they thought, and disgust were the emotions he generated as a consequence of the psychological preset. Ads that were repeated over and over again and actually got tougher and tougher, if they'd been played in their final form at the beginning, Canadians would have been repulsed, but they became insulated and inoculated. And Mr. Harper was a leader who his international problems and weaknesses, were okay because he was here for Canada. And he may not have been the guy you wanted to have a beer with. He may not have been the guy that you wanted to get all fuzzy up to his blue sweater with, but he was a steady hand on the tiller in tough times.

So we got the air war, it was over before it started. In the ground war, I'm not going to go into the details here, but from an apparatus perspective, it was a peashooter against a bazooka. We went into the thing with 20 million data elements about Canadians and our systems; they went in with over 300 million data elements about Canadians. They leapfrogged us while we were in power on everything from fundraising to issue driven voter -they were actually able to do not just voter identification, not just voter activation, but voter suppression of their opponents.

So we lost the air war, we lost the ground war, and we had a very bad moment in the debate. Thank you. And that's politics.

Robin Sears

That's gonna have to be our last question. Okay, we run out of time. Cam di Prata will thank our speaker.

Note of Appreciation by Cam di Prata, EVP and Head of Corporate and Investment Banking, National Bank Financial, and Director, The Empire Club of Canada

On behalf of the Empire club, and everyone present here this afternoon, I'd like to thank Alfred for his insightful and thought-provoking speech and securing us completely in the Liberalism aspect.

Alfred's enthusiasm and inspiration will certainly propel the Liberal Party of Canada forward in a process of redefinition, full of opportunity and passionate belief in strong and lasting Canadian values. Your leadership and zeal will drive meaningful change at a time when, as you rightly said, the worst times can become the best of times. Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts with us today.

Concluding Remarks by Robin Sears

Thanks Cam. Alfred, as a token of our appreciation, you know this process, a book called *Who Said That?* memorable notes, quotes and anecdotes selected from the Empire club of Canada speeches 1903 to 2003.

Upcoming events, we have one more for sure. We're trying to do two more Wednesday, June 29, which is our Canada Day lunch, Lieutenant General Walter Semaniw, commander of Canada Command, the Canadian Forces organization; that will be in this room, obviously in the Royal York.

I would like to thank Pacific mortgage for sponsoring today's events. Thank you goes to Orange Console Net Computing, Richard Adar and Morrison Park advisors for sponsoring our student tables today. I would like to thank the *National Post* as our print sponsor. This meeting is being broadcast live on Rogers TV and will be replayed on Rogers TV and on CPAC over the next few weeks. You will also be able to view it on our website within a couple of days.

Thank you all very much for coming. I hope you enjoyed it and we'd love to see you again soon. This meeting is adjourned. Have a good afternoon.