

Martha's Monthly
December 2006
Will Honest Ed keep his promises?



When Martha visited Toronto a few years ago she found out about Honest Ed's [discount shop](#) on the corner of Bloor and Bathurst. The exterior was so intriguing with its hand-painted signs and funny slogans that Martha and the family were swept up in the fun and entered the landmark shop with great anticipation. Inside they found nothing more than you'd find in any old Kresge's shop on the corner of a main street in 1970s Alberta. Its not that Honest Ed wasn't honest, he just had more sizzle than steak.

Today, in Alberta, we have our own Honest Ed – the man who will be sworn in as Premier on December 14th on the steps of the Legislature. Our Honest Ed, Ed Stelmach, is also known as Steady Eddie for his unflappability. (Martha figures it will feel like a climate change from the impulsive, volatile, and edgy Ralph Klein) And his sizzle started right about the moment he was elected Leader of the Progressive Conservatives after trailing both Jim Dinning and Ted Morton. Because, there is nothing an Albertan loves more than to elect a guy with shit on his boots who looks like the guy who hangs out at the local Tim's or the Husky. And not only does Honest Ed not look like a politician he doesn't even sound like a grade 10 debater. Now that is a Premier. Martha has high hopes.

And the thing is Honest Ed has a plan. He admits it. He wants to make some changes – 42 changes in fact. And so far he has already announced two of those changes. But Martha is really waiting to hear about one she feels is the one to start with so that all the rest make sense. Honest Ed Stelmach promised to return some democracy to Alberta by reinstating all-party committees in the Legislature. (You may remember that Premier Klein removed these cumbersome reminders of democratic process early in his reign.)

All party committees exist everywhere that democracy exists because they recognize that all elected Members of the Legislative Assembly have the right to participate in policy discussion and debate. But for nearly a dozen years they have NOT existed in Alberta. Instead, policy has been discussed in one-party committees with no input from anyone that wasn't a member of Ralph's team. Honest Ed realized, rather lately it would seem, that all-party committees would be a welcome return to democratic process.

Now, as he becomes Premier, Martha calls on Stelmach to make his first move to be the reinstatement of all-party committees. And she will be watching. And so will a lot of other people because CBC has created a Promises Pending feature (see [Will Honest Ed keep his promises?](#)) to track Premier Stelmach's 42 promises. (Look under government to find the one he made about all-party committees.)

So join Martha in sending a letter of congratulations, warm welcome, and "we're watching" to Premier Stelmach. Let him know how many Marthas are depending on him to make good on his promises and be more than just sizzle! Send him the following letter and send this email on to as many people as you can so that many more Albertans will send him a letter. Copy and paste the following (or your own letter) into a new email and send it to:

premier@gov.ab.ca, fortsaskatchewan.vegreville@assembly.ab.ca,
marthasmnthly@yahoo.ca, edmonton.riverview@assembly.ab.ca,
cardston.taberwarner@assembly.ab.ca, edmonton.highlandsnorwood@assembly.ab.ca

December 14, 2006

Dear Premier Stelmach:

Welcome to your new position as 13th Premier of Alberta. The province has some high expectations of you and so do I. I am a member of Martha's Monthly (www.marthasmnthly.ca), a group of women and men who have been writing Premier Klein every month since June 2004. I write about issues that affect Marthas and Henrys, like school fees, recycling, and democracy.

I was very excited to hear that you are concerned about democratic renewal for the province and promised to reinstate all-party committees. I believe this is a critical first step in your platform to renew Alberta. I hope that you will make this a priority as I know a vigorous and vital legislature will lead to a vigorous and vital civil society.

I will be carefully watching your first months in office as I would like to see that you are a man who keeps his promises. I have heard that you are. I hope I heard right.

Sincerely,

Your name and address.