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"Where have you gone Joe Dimaggio, err, Jim Dinning."

If you live in Calgary and are at all active in any community, chances are a number of your friends and acquaintances have historically been provincial Tories. I too will admit to that. I like most of them. Often we even agree on matters political.

During the current campaign, the extent of our agreement is quite surprising. One area of consensus is that Alberta needs a change. A second area of consensus is that the Tory leader has proven to be in over his head and is not the guy for the job.

The focus on change is quite simply performance based.

Now, through the leadership race at the end of 2006, this city was largely Jim Dinning's territory. It might still be. The focus on change is not a matter of sour grapes. It probably extends well outside Calgary. It's quite simply a matter of observation of what has occurred over the immediate period of Stelmach's Premiership and the longer term of 37 years of Tory governance.

And is our man Taft up for the job? He certainly is. The question is how much more can Stelmach and his Tories do to continue to open up opportunities to assist Taft. They've done quite well through the first part of the campaign, and Taft has also done well capitalizing on a strong performance.

I have not since the dieing days of Don Getty's rule, heard so many committed Tories rail, absolutely rail, against their party's leadership.

In fact, I can't recall one Tory with whom I've chatted about politics that has been at all supportive. The most neutral among them simply shrug their shoulders (as they know that if they don't drop a number of seats, Stelmach stays). Well, you disenchanting Tories, things are as bad as they seem. You and the rest of the unaligned (the Liberals have no reason but to stick and push for change) should see this as an opportunity.

So with bombs (I mean scuds) dropping all around from his star candidate in Calgary Curry, his battle scars still open wounds from his clash with the Calgary Montrose Riding Association and the extra action he has triggered against himself with the ouster of ouster of their initial Calgary Egmont candidate he allowed to run entirely through a riding association election process, it seems he's has a few internal management issues, and that's where many of the current battle lines have been drawn ... and who knows what other chicanery has gone on behind the scenes that hasn't come to the public eye. There's always lots of that.

Premier Stelmach and his party have been around for far too long to be running under a banner of "change".

"Change that works for Albertans" should simply be converted to the last part of the Liberal's "it's time" campaign slogan.

Simply put, "it's time for change that works for Albertans".

When I challenge my Tory friends to cast their vote for KT, it seems most would rather just stay home than change their old ways. That's a poor choice. Taft provides a solid alternative.

If you disenchanted Tories would just take a few minutes you might see the light of day and do something responsible to make this Province a better place. Your biggest risk might have a silver lining; a Liberal minority and your hero Jim Dinning back on the scene. You'd at least be a little bit happy.

As a campaign wears on (and I hate to steal again an Obama line, but it's easy to do), we need "change we can believe in " and if you continue to pay attention to Taft's campaign, if he keeps it on track as he has, your eureka moment will arrive by March 3.

Daryl Fridhandler, Grit Insider. Tuesday, Feb. 12

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