



Canada's Ignatieff Says Liberal Party Will Reignite Economy

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By Greg Quinn

May 2 (Bloomberg) -- Canada's main opposition leader said he will push for spending on education, research and jobless benefits to pull the country out a recession, areas where he said Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** has failed to act.

"Economic recovery cannot be purchased at the price of leaving anyone out in the cold," **Michael Ignatieff** of the **Liberals** said in a speech in Vancouver today. Ignatieff, 61, was named party leader at a convention today, after serving on an interim basis since Dec. 10.

"We are living this with you, in opposition we are fighting to protect you, and in government we will lead you back to prosperity," Ignatieff said.

Canada's economy entered a recession last year, the first since 1992, and the country's central bank said that first quarter output shrank by a record 7.3 percent. Opposition parties have pressed Harper's Conservative Party to give more people access to jobless benefits as weak U.S. demand shuts auto plants and lumber mills.

The Liberals are trying to rebuild their popularity after **Stephane Dion** led the party to their worst-ever showing in last October's election. Ignatieff has said he wants to focus on districts outside the country's biggest cities and in western Canada, areas dominated by Harper's Conservatives.

Harper, 50, won **last year's election** with 38 percent of the vote, compared with 26 percent for the Liberals. Because the Conservatives got less than a majority of seats, opposition parties can combine their votes in Parliament to topple the government on matters of confidence, such as the budget.

A **Nanos Research** poll of 1,001 Canadians by telephone from April 25 to April 30 gave Ignatieff's Liberals 36 percent support, compared with 33 percent for the Conservatives. Those asked also said Harper would make a better prime minister than Ignatieff, by a margin of 32 percent to 27 percent. The poll's margin of error was 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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