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MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

I welcome you to the First Session of the Thirty-Sixth General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Exactly seven weeks ago, the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly opened with a lengthy and comprehensive programme for provincial, social and economic development.

Events subsequent to the Opening of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly, how­ever, necessitated the seeking of a clearer mandate from the people of Newfound­land and Labrador and this has been accomplished.

My Government today is still totally dedicated to fulfilling the commitments and to carrying out the development programmes proposed during the Opening of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly. In the intervening weeks, my Government has considered these important matters and has already made substantial progress in activating many programmes of vital importance to the planned growth and develop­ment of the Province.

My Government is keenly aware of the enormous responsibility that has been placed upon it and it has been honoured with the confidence and trust of the elector­ate of the Province to initiate the type of immediate and long-term planning that is so desperately needed for the effective management of our Province's affairs.

The orderly development of Newfoundland and Labrador can only be achieved by our people under the leadership of progressive government. Development pro­grammes are carried out in social and economic conditions and settings which are peculiar to this Province, and upon which their success or failure largely depends. It is my Government's responsibility to ensure that our social and economic setting is, indeed, the proper environment within which well planned development pro­grammes can launch our Province into unprecedented prosperity for our people.

As development takes place, our lives will be affected by change; change that is inevitable. It is up to all of us to determine whether or not this change occurs through capitalizing on our assets and moving ahead or through apathy and indiffer­ence and falling further behind. The challenge before us is to seize the opportunity for a change that, by design and through effective planning, is constructive to the growth and prosperity of this province and its people.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government desires change that will improve our quality of life in general while at the same time protecting our environment from deterioration. My Govern­ment is convinced that industrial development can take place without polluting our existing environment of clean air, water and landscape.

My Government firmly believes that the people of this Province are eager to accept the challenge of change but will, with equal vigour, defend our life style as a treasured heritage unique within the family of Provinces that make up our great nation.

The policies and programmes outlined in the Speech from the Throne at the Opening of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly will be followed through with the vigour and determination that our people expect from my Government. Empha­sis will continue to be placed on a progressive yet realistic policy of job-creating through natural resource development.

My Government will, through sound incentive and educational programmes, en­courage all our people to develop their full capabilities in preparation for the social and economic development programmes which are required by this Province. My Government will create a favourable working and leisure time atmosphere for the anticipated expansion in Province-wide social and economic opportunities for all our people. Our natural resource development policies will encourage the effective and profitable development of our vast natural resources while, at the same time, pro­tecting the Province's aesthetic natural values and unexcelled environmental qualities. My Government is determined that the timing and impact of our large and expanding public expenditures will be effectively planned and co-ordinated to fulfill, in an orderly way, the basic needs of our people.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government is determined that the private business life of our Province, both large and small, will be encouraged to expand and that the contribution made by private business to the Provincial economy will be continuously assessed in con­cert with appropriate Provincial policies and Government incentive programmes. My Government will also ensure that policies are formulated to encourage a rational expansion of the private sector into a wide range of profitable job-creating activities.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government is dedicated and committed to providing adequate health and dental services for all of our people. The views expressed on this important subject during the Opening of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly are still valid and need not be repeated at this time. To the best of my Government's ability, the most important matters affecting the mental, physical and dental health needs of our people will be attended to on a well planned basis.

My Government is also aware of the many problems which require attention in respect of our handicapped and otherwise less fortunate and institutionalized people. We are convinced that their real needs must be determined earlier and in more detail so that effective remedial action can be undertaken. We are very determined that our people must, on a realistic basis, be assured of adequate services for their peace of mind and their general health.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government is concerned about the serious problems existing in the educa­tional field. Our educational programmes must provide a sound basic education for our children, they must provide a well balanced programme of further training to prepare our youth for gainful employment, and, combined with adequate incentives and facilities, they must offer retraining opportunities for adults. My Government is dedicated to the concept of adequate educational and training opportunities through a full range of academic levels of achievement but designed to meet the needs for varied skills and the employment opportunities throughout the Province.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government is concerned about the provision of adequate housing for all citizens and accepts the need for housing as a legitimate demand upon Government resources in seeking satisfactory solutions. Within reasonable bounds, my Govern­ment considers adequate housing a right of every Newfoundlander; similar in many respects to the social demands made upon Government for other amenities of life associated with good health, transport and communication facilities. The challenge is accepted and my Government pledges itself to do all within reason and its capabil­ity to assist individuals and communities to realize their expectations with respect to housing.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government feels that, through well defined and realistic social and econom­ic goals and objectives, increased per capita productivity from our work force will follow. If our Province is to move ahead at the desired speed, it can be accomplished only by more work from all our people and at all levels of employment. Convinced that this challenge is already being accepted, my Government realizes that, combined with hard work from a dedicated work force, there is also a need for adequate leisure time opportunities for relaxation and play. Through our Province's parks and other recreational and cultural facilities we plan to provide for such opportunities.

Natural outdoor opportunities for recreation are unexcelled in this Province but an adequate Provincial Park system is also required.

The success of future park development programmes will be dependent upon sound planning. My Government will embark upon a master tourism and outdoor recreation plan for the Province. The first phase of this plan will determine detailed demand estimates to the year 1980 and will provide general forecasts to the end of the century. I n addition to this programme, my Government will be working with the Government of Canada and with other provinces in a National Outdoor Recrea­tion Demand Study which will be complementary to the Newfoundland study. These programmes will be the key to charting a course for future park development in this Province.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government has great expectations for future employment opportunities and revenue from the rational and well planned development of our vast natural resource wealth. Our natural resources are the basic building blocks of our Province's growth upon which we must rely for the social and economic benefits we have a right to expect.

Our forests, our lands, our waters, our fisheries and our minerals, including oil and gas, are ours - to be used wisely for the development of our Province. Together with our human resources, it is my Government's pledge to combine these elements and weld our human and natural resources into a strong cohesive developmental force never before attained in the long history of our great Province.

The main responsibility for assembling data regarding our natural resources rests, of course, primarily and principally upon Government but, in this task, advice will be sought and full advantage taken of appropriate knowledge and information available elsewhere. The process of resource development consists largely of organiz­ing the development and productive exploitation of natural resources in the interests of the whole community, both private and public.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government is greatly concerned about the need for determining our partic­ular development and social needs and for carrying out the necessary planning to assure long-lasting results. My Government feels that some apparently wasteful and misdirected programmes have been undertaken hitherto as cost-shared activities with the Government of Canada and that much of this problem has resulted from the failure to formulate programmes adequate to fulfill our particular needs. Such mis­directed programmes are inevitable if there is inadequate preparation before seeking federal financial assistance.

My Government will insist that, in the future, our priorities will be determined and adequate short and long term plans prepared so that cost-shared programmes, so important to us, are utilized for maximum long term benefits. Various cost­ sharing arrangements with the Government of Canada are now being studied and, in order to obtain the maximum possible benefit from these valuable programmes, my Government intends to introduce legislation to establish a Department of Inter­governmental Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

The Province's forest resources are not being effectively utilized. We have the potential, and policies must be devised to assure better utilization of our forested land. The creation of an environment which will facilitate the continuing develop­ment of our forest industry is of vital concern to my Government, and to all our people. Economic and forest development studies undertaken in the past will be carefully studied to assess their present application, and where essential information is not available, it will be obtained. The potential of our forest industry in relation to the Province's economy must be determined, as the employment derived from our forests is too low to satisfy my Government.

If our forest industry is to continue to share in the growing world-wide demand for wood in relationship to the available future supplies, a dynamic forest manage­ment programme must be developed.

The continued development of Labrador will be closely linked to a continued expansion of our forest products industry. This industry, along with mining and tourism, will provide the major opportunities for future development and employ­ment in the northern two-thirds of our Province.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government wishes to reiterate its position with regard to the statements made in the Speech from the Throne at the Opening of the Thirty-Fifth General As­sembly dealing with our valuable marine fishery resources. The importance placed in that Speech from the Throne on these resources is emphasized again and our fisher­men are assured of my Government's desire to establish, in full partnership with them, a progressive and meaningful marine fishery development policy and programme.

My Government is concerned about the lack of protection afforded to our fishermen who are endeavouring legitimately to obtain their rightful share of our off-shore fishery resource. My Government is also greatly concerned over the lack of a strong national policy with regard to the ownership of the fishery resources surrounding our Province. My Government upholds the conviction that, within certain traditional and treaty rights with a few nations, this is a resource available for development by Newfoundland and Canadian fishermen who will comply with rules of good management based on knowledge of the availability of the resource consistent with a sustained harvest. I t is the view of my Government that if Canadian ownership and control are not soon declared, the resource will be depleted beyond economic limits.

My Government views with alarm the lack of positive and realistic steps on the part of the Government of Canada with respect to preventing the possible over­exploitation of our salmon resource while they are far from our shores during a stage in their life cycle. There is, similarly, a serious situation with regard to the seal harvest policy and regulations proclaiming, without due consideration, that seals are a natural renewable resource that, under management, will provide a sustained harvestable surplus available to our people.

My Government notes with appreciation such groups as the “Save Our Fishery Association (SOFA)”*,* and various individuals who are also expressing their concern in these matters.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government has taken steps to ensure that we will derive maximum benefits from the anticipated discovery of oil and gas in our off-shore areas. Legitimate exploration companies will be encouraged to explore these resources and, in this connection, my Government is preparing regulations which will protect both the interests of our Province and those of industry. My Government will further ensure, to the greatest possible extent, that our environment will be protected from pollution as a result of these or any subsequent operations.

My Government has taken steps to assess new ways of encouraging and protect­ing legitimate exploration for minerals within our Province. I n this connection, a study is presently underway setting forth the various choices available to Govern­ment to assure that our people win derive maximum benefit from the mining develop­ment that is expected to result from an accelerated programme of exploration.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government is convinced that farming must be encouraged, and steps have been taken to ensure that, on the basis of a sound land use plan, agricultural land will be brought into production where there is a demonstrable need.

My Government is planning an expanded programme of service to our farmers, and, as an example, there will soon be established on the West Coast a Hog Breeding Station, a Veterinary Clinic, a Forage and Soil Testing Laboratory, a Demonstration Farm and increased staff services.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government feels that tourism, if properly planned, can bring much greater returns through employment opportunities and new income than are presently being realized. To this end, an investigation is being made of our tourist potential with particular emphasis on possible conflicts from the competing use of recreation facil­ities and wildlife resources between the tourist and the needs of our people.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

Many factors, other than our great wealth in natural resources, are also essential for sound economic development. They include the availability of capital, a skilled labour force, efficient management, incentives to business, advisory and management training services, realistic development planning, and well-conceived economic and social policies.

Weaknesses in any of these factors can impede overall development even if we possess great natural resource wealth.

In the Speech from the Throne at the Opening of the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly, my Government announced its deep interest in establishing the Newfound­land and Labrador Development Corporation. During the intervening weeks, my Ministers, as well as senior officials in various Departments of Government, have been giving this important subject very careful consideration. A draft agreement between the Government of Canada and my Government is now being carefully studied to determine it if meets our requirements. My Government is most anxious to assist small businesses throughout the Province to develop and expand, and we are therefore most anxious to have the Development Corporation established as quickly as possible. It is now expected that the Corporation's doors will be open for business by late Spring or early Summer in the present year.

It is anticipated that a revolving loan fund will be made available to the Corpor­ation for lending purposes by the Government of Canada. A revolving equity fund will be provided to the Corporation by my Government. All other operating expenses of the Corporation will be shared on an equal contributory basis by the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

My Government is also studying the need for an expanded incentives programme designed to close the gaps now existing under the grants programmes of the Depart­ment of Regional Economic Expansion of Canada. In this connection, my Govern­ment realizes that many small manufacturing businesses are not large enough to meet the minimum capital cost requirements of the federal grants programme, and as a result, my Government is seriously assessing the need for and the means of providing a Provincial Special Grants Programme for these small operations which are so im­portant to the overall development of our Province.

To round out the whole programme of capital required for development, my Government is also planning the incorporation of the existing small loan schemes into an expanded financial assistance programme for those people who are interested in or presently engaged in businesses using our natural resources. This plan will be designed to assist, for example, fishermen, saw-millers and farmers in establishing well-conceived programmes that will contribute to the development of our Province and generate employment opportunities.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

The development of our Province's natural and human resources must be sup­ported by an effective and efficient Government administrative structure. To achieve this objective, my Government has recently appointed a special committee known as "The Committee on Government Administration and Productivity".

This Committee has been instructed to enquire into all matters relating to the administration and management of the day-to-day functions of Government with a view to recommending such improvements as may appear necessary and advisable in the organizational structure of the existing public service in order to increase the standards of efficiency in Government administration. The enquiry will include such matters as the organization and responsibilities of Government departments, and the organization and responsibilities of Boards, Commissions and Corporations with re­spect to their role in relation to Government productivity. There will be an assessment of the organization and responsibilities of staff in the public service at the top management level and an investigation into the utilization of and the requirements for office space and other facilities. The committee is to make its recommendations known to my Government within a few months.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

It is the intention of my Government to establish an independent commission whose responsibility it will be to examine closely the present system of regional representation in the Honourable House. Population shifts, as well as improvements in transportation and communication facilities, may have resulted in certain in­equities in our present electoral boundaries. This permanent commission will report at regular intervals to Government and will make recommendations consistent with a just and equitable system of representation.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

For some time past, many serious minded people in our Province have expressed concern over the possibility that conflicts of interests involving Members of the Honourable House might be detrimental to the public interest. To eliminate any such possibility, my Government will introduce legislation to correct any possible incon­sistencies with regard to the proper conduct of the business of Government.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

In the Speech from the Throne delivered at the Thirty-Fifth General Assembly of this Honourable House, my Government declared its intention of establishing a series of Advisory Councils and Committees to assist and advise Government in its extensive plan for provincial development. These advisory groups will not only serve to involve more of our people in the decision making process but will also permit my Government to draw on a great, and never before utilized, source of expertise. I am pleased to report to this Honourable House that this important programme is already in progress and has resulted, so far, in the establishment of such committees as the committee on land tenure and forestry, the committee on off­shore mineral regulations, the committee reviewing the provincial mineral concession system and the committee to study the functions of Government as previously de­scribed by me. Other such groups are being established and a great supply of valuable information and recommendations will soon be available to my Government from these groups.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

My Government will request the setting up of various internal committees com­posed of Members on both sides of this Honourable House including a public accounts committee, a committee to reform the rules of this Honourable House, a committee to study the salary and pension system presently in effect, a committee to study the merit of establishing a group of standing committees as is the practice in many other Legislative Assemblies and other such committees as may be required for the efficient operation of this Honourable House.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

It is the intention of my Government to bring before this Honourable House the appropriate legislation to ratify an agreement between my Government and the principals of the Stephenville Linerboard Complex. My Government is concerned that there shall be no delay in bringing this project, and the employment opportuni­ties it will generate, into operation as soon as possible.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

With the challenge of change leading to greater prosperity, my Government invites our people to become involved in the building of this Province: My Govern­ment seeks your full and loyal co-operation, not through demanding the impossible, but by working together for what we can accomplish with what we have on which to build. All Newfoundlanders worthy of the name could not ask for a more sensible request or a more exciting challenge. With a clear understanding of our present position, and a dedication to the progress which we must make, we can look forward to the future with hope and confidence.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY:

You will be asked to grant Supply unto Her Majesty.

I invoke God's blessing upon your labours as you give careful consideration to the matters laid before you for the welfare of our beloved Province.