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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Terre- Neuve et Labrador | 37e | 3e | Discours du Trône | 6 mars 1978 | Gordon Arnaud Winter | Lieutenant Gouverneur | PC |

I have the privilege and pleasure of welcoming you to the Third Session of the 37th General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland.

The year 1978 will be memorable for all residents of our beloved Province. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, together with His Royal Highness the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, will visit our Province in July. This will be Her Majesty's third official visit to our shores, having graced us with her presence in 1951 as Princess and in 1959 as our Queen. I am sure that it is most appropriate that this visit of Her Majesty and His Royal Highness to Canada should begin in Britain's Oldest Colony and Canada's Newest Province. The Queen and Prince Philip will receive the warmest and most respectful welcome of the Newfoundland people. We also wish Her Majesty well as she continues on to Alberta to officially open the Commonwealth Games.

During the past year this Province had the pleasure of hosting the Canada Summer Games. My Government applauds the organizers and the athletes who brought honour to their sports and to their Provinces and Territories. We are pleased that Their Excellencies the Governor General and Madame Leger as well as Prime Minister Trudeau were able to be with us on this occasion.

Also during 1977 the people of Newfoundland and Labrador were highly honoured by the visit of King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola of the Belgians.

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

My Government's progressive programs continue to improve the social and economic well being of the citizens of this Province. The results are gratifying. Naturally, there are certain problems that continue to challenge us. I refer specifically to the high unemployment rate, the heavy tax burden, and a growing labour force which makes it more difficult to lower the unemployment rate significantly.

My Government is very sensitive to these problems, and very active in trying to combat them. The fact that they are problems which are troubling all nations does not lessen the suffering of those out of work. My opportunities available to them, and there will be many more as the economy expands. Unemployment will not always plague us, and the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are the greatest resource we have in our battle to overcome the problem.

The austerity measures of My Government in the past two years have demonstrated its determination to maintain a responsible financial position for this Province. Unless there is a major recovery in the Canadian economy, however, My Government will be maintaining this restraint in the forthcoming budget. A more detailed report on the economy and on new measures to stimulate economic growth will be presented at that time. The final answer to present financial difficulties will be found in new and revitalized economic growth.

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

My Government will be intensifying its efforts in 1978 to resolve several basic economic problems. The most outstanding of these is the Churchill Falls Power contract which now gives virtually all the benefits of this great hydro development to the Province of Quebec. This House is assured that adjustments will be vigorously pursued. The existing arrangements are manifestly unjust and inequitable to this Province.

My Government will continue its efforts in 1978 to find a new buyer for the Labrador Linerboard Mill at Stephenville. My Government is optimistic that a firm arrangement can be made in 1978, and present information suggests that the mill can be modified to produce bleached kraft pulp or newsprint. A thorough analysis of wood transportation systems and costs will be commissioned. I am optimistic about the prospects which currently exist.

My Government will be cooperating with private enterprise to establish a fish plant and attendant fish catching systems in St. Lawrence to alleviate the effects of the closure of the mine.

My Government is gratified that the Government of Canada desires to assist the Province in energy development. At the Conference of First Ministers, agreement in principle was announced on the establishment of a Lower Churchill Development Corporation. The Corporation will have ...

My Government is confident that the tremendous energy resources of Labrador will be developed. Canada cannot afford to allow the energy equivalent of 140,000 barrels of oil to flow to the sea each day unharnessed. I assure this House that My Government will press forward with imagination and discretion to develop these resources to the benefit of residents of Labrador and the Island as well as to the whole Canadian nation.

During 1977 Cabinet approved the Province's first oil and gas regulations. These regulations aim at controlling the rate of exploration and development, protecting the environment, and obtaining the maximum economic benefit for the people of this Province. Exploration under these regulations can be expected during the coming year.

My Government wishes to inform this Honourable House that hearings in the Supreme Court of Canada with respect to offshore jurisdiction should begin by early 1979. We are confident that these hearings will resolve in our favour, confirming our moral and legal right to manage the resources which we brought with us into this great Confederation.

You will be asked in 1978 to approve a Mineral Holdings Impost Bill. This legislation will encourage mineral exploration by taxation of unused holdings. Speculators will no longer be able to retain unhindered possession of mineral lands. They will either invest in exploration, pay a tax, or forfeit title.

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

This House is aware of the tremendous potential of our fishery resources. We have already seen benefits from the new management regime in the improved catches by our inshore fishermen in 1977. Insofar as this Honourable House has limited jurisdiction in fisheries matters, My Government will be bringing in measures in 1978 to further capitalize on the growth potential of this cornerstone of our economy. Steps will be taken to replace outdated offshore vessels and revitalize the inshore fleet. It is the intention of My Government to pursue short-term vessel chartering pending the planned replacement of the deep sea fleet. Studies are proceeding with respect to regional fisheries plans and centralized landing ports from which fish may be distributed to plants requiring additional supplies.

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

In my remarks last year, I reported the dire threat to the forests being posed by the spruce budworm. Nearly six million cords of timber are already dead or dying and future growth is being severely damaged. My Government reluctantly carried out an experimental spraying program in 1977 which proved that the insect can be controlled without serious environmental or health hazards. An independent committee confirmed these findings. My Government is committed, therefore, to a spraying program in 1978. There is no acceptable alternative. The incomes of a large segment of our population must be preserved. This spraying program will be augmented by other intensive forest management techniques.

The sawmill industry is facing problems of markets, log supplies, and outlets for pulpwood. My Government will be addressing these problems in 1978 and has recently approved a saw log inventory financing program.

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

My Government, in 1974, signed a ten year General Development Agreement with the Government of Canada. This Agreement outlines a joint strategy for social and economic development. I am pleased to inform this House, as the midpoint of this Agreement approaches, that 14 subsidiary agreements have been signed for a total spending of $310 million, of which the Federal Government will pay $265 million, or 86 per cent, through the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. About 70 per cent of this will have been spent by the end of the fiscal year 1977-78. These agreements have provided highways, marine service centres, fisheries facilities, forestry programs and access roads, water supplies, mineral exploration programs, and industrial parks. The Newfoundland Oceans Research and Development Corporation Limited was financed in this manner. The latest Agreement provides funding for tourist expansion programs over the next five years.

My Government emphasizes that spending under the General Development Agreement represents investment vital to the future of this Province. This is one manner in which My Government has been gradually strengthening the economic base of the Province which will eventually bring substantial improvement in employment, incomes, and the financial position proposed. In addition to changes mentioned earlier with respect to fisheries, My Government intends to provide fish handling facilities, storage facilities, and wharf and stage improvements. In forestry, development programs will include introduction of new harvesting and utilization technology, access roads, management programs, insect and disease protection, reforestation, and inventory assessment.

My Government has previously stated its desire to build a Polytechnical Institute to strengthen our secondary educational system. This Institute will house the existing College of Fisheries, Navigation, Marine Engineering and Electronics, and will also accommodate much of the activity of the College of Trades and Technology. It will permit the addition of more and better courses. My Government views this project as vital in support of expansion in resource industries. Our labour force must be trained. At the present time, however, this project is beyond the fiscal capacity of the Province alone. In May, 1977, My Government therefore requested the Government of Canada to share in the cost. A favourable decision is expected shortly so that construction may begin in 1978.

My Government has consistently promoted the development of the rural economy in Newfoundland. As an integral part of its program for the next five years, proposals have been put forward to enhance and build upon the network of regional development associations. Local entrepreneurship will be assisted to bring small industry to fruition.

My Government will be adopting a program in 1978 to promote local preference in government Purchasing.

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

My Government will be devoting major attention in 1978 to transportation. Transportation improvements will be interwoven with developmental plans for the next five years. Emphasis will be given to concluding an agreement to upgrade or replace major sections of the Trans Canada Highway. My Government hopes to undertake with the Government of Canada major road improvements in Labrador, including a start on the Trans-Labrador Highway between Goose Bay and Churchill Falls.

My Government has also decentralized its operations in various ways. Very significant was the placing of an Assistant Deputy Minister in Labrador, and the increasing of staff of several departments in that vast section of our Province. The Departments of Rural Development and Industrial Development have expanded their network of field offices, as has the Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation. My Government will continue such endeavours in 1978 to make government work better for our people.

My Government has embarked upon a program to combat the vicious campaign against our traditional seal fishery. Already, it is showing positive results. It is the intention of My Government to sustain this program in 1978 and for as long as it is necessary.

My Government is keenly aware of its responsibilities to assist disabled persons to integrate more fully into the mainstream of society and to lead normal lives. Legislation will be introduced with respect to rehabilitative services being provided to mentally and physically handicapped persons. In addition, My Government intends to develop legislation to ensure easier access to buildings by physically disabled persons.

Great progress has been made during recent years in the provision of institutional care for senior citizens. Future efforts will be directed towards developing alternative services which will permit more of our senior citizens to remain in their homes or other community settings.

My Government will be developing measures to control the costs of health care in 1978. Lower cost alternatives, such as home care, will be expanded. Greater emphasis will be given to programs to encourage our people to alter their life styles and habits. Prevention will be emphasized rather than cure.

My Government has become concerned with the manner in which employees performing essential public services can jeopardize the minimum acceptable standard of care provided by such institutions as hospitals and homes for special care. In 1977 we witnessed the eighteen week strike at the Waterford Hospital and the rotating strikes of nurses which spanned several weeks. My Government intends to reassess the effects of strikes in the public service and to introduce legislation into this Session to alleviate some of the include the successful achievement of the land banking and land assembly components, and the construction of an additional 1500 subsidized rental family housing units in the Province. The need to improve the quality of housing for our people is recognized by My Government, and this important matter will continue to receive attention in the coming year. The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation is currently undertaking a further multi-year review of housing needs in the Province.

During this Session you will be asked to approve the Northeast Avalon/Urban Region Bill which will provide for the incorporation of the region and the establishment of a Regional Council. You will be asked to consider a new Capital Values Bill which will make the basis for real property taxes in the City of St. John's the same as for all other municipalities in the Province.

Legislation will be presented in the area of Consumer Affairs and Environment. Changes will be proposed to the Mortgage Brokers Act. As a result of the rapid increase in the number of wells being drilled for water supplies, My Government will seek your approval for a Well Drilling Act. This Act will regulate companies providing this service and give a measure of protection to consumers.

Occupational health and safety remains a dominant concern of My Government and a consolidation of the existing Act will be presented.

My Government intends to replace the existing Judicature Act with several specific statutes, including a Supreme Court Act, an Arbitration Act, and a Jury Act. The Summary Jurisdiction Act is likewise being studied for replacement by two new statutes defining the jurisdiction of magistrates.

An amendment will be made to the Conveyancing Act to provide for the earlier release of mortgages.

The Public Accounts for the period ending March 31, 1977 and the estimates for the coming fiscal year will be placed before you, for your usual close scrutiny and serious consideration.

You will be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

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

I hold once more before the people of this Province the challenge to or ingenuity, or to quench the independent spirit that has marked Newfoundlanders for centuries.

My Government will continue to give strong leadership in economic development, and is confident that the private sector will also respond to the opportunities. We know our people have the will to build, and My Government will provide the necessary training and environment. We will be making maximum use of our abundant renewable resources in fisheries and hydro-electricity. We shall extract every possible job in fishing, fish processing, and associated activities. We shall seek the earliest possible construction of energy projects in Labrador. In the long term we can be optimistic about development of offshore oil and gas, but for the next five years we have planned a systematic attack on the evils of unemployment on the basis of our proven resources. My Government is confident that we shall succeed in our endeavours and that our people will respond to the challenge.

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

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you commence your labours in this Third Session of the Thirty-Seventh General Assembly. May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.