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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Terre- Neuve et Labrador | 38e | 1ère  | Discours du Trône | 12 juillet 1979 | Gordon Arnaud Winter | Lieutenant Gouverneur | PC |

I welcome you to this First Session of the 38th General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland.

Forty-five years ago, our people faced the greatest crisis in their history, the suspension of Dominion status, an economic and political crisis that cost them their hard-won democratic institutions and control over their social and economic destiny.

Since then we have gone through a period of social and economic reconstruction and development which has seen a Commission of Government for 15 years, our entrance into Confederation and a 30 year Post-Confederation development period. Throughout this whole period, the determination of the Newfoundland people to control their social and economic destiny has not wavered. The debate has only been about the appropriate means by which this great overriding objective is to be achieved. While it is clear that our entry into Confederation cannot be questioned, there is a growing realization that the present structure of Confederation does not allow this Province to realize the full economic benefits of its own resources onto adequately promote the enhancement of our unique cultural heritage.

My Government feels that we must go through a final, but necessary, stage of our process of reconstruction. Our people are, I am sure ready, yes, even anxious, to complete the task of securing to themselves the means by which they, as a people, can assure their future as a distinct society. This objective can only be achieved if we, once again, have adequate control over our marine resources--fisheries and offshore oil and gas.

If we are to move forward, there must be constitutional change and a new attitude in Ottawa towards the role that this Province.

The people of this Province will be invited to actively engage in this great constitutional debate. My Government will be developing firm proposals as to how Canada's constitution should be changed and will place these proposals before the other nine Provinces and the Government in Ottawa. My Government will be asking groups throughout the Province to comment on these proposals and to support the Government's position. All must understand the importance of these proposals to our future as a people.

My Government's basic position will be first, that the unity of the Nation must be preserved. Having said that, My Government will further take a position that we must have a Canada wherein each Province is given the means and powers to control, to an appropriate level, its social, economic and cultural destiny. Our new Canada, however, must continue to assist the growth of less developed Provinces, but in such a way that aid from the Federal Government clearly has the effect of lessening the need for such aid over time.

My Government believes that, engaged as we are in this historic debate, it is appropriate that we now take stock of our position within Confederation.

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

While there is much of which we can be proud as Canadians and while much has been done to bring economic and social justice to our people, we nevertheless have very serious economic problems. It is clear to My Government that the present self-defeating cycle of Federal make-work schemes and the current system of transfer payments by their very nature make our dependency on Ottawa a certainty. We must break this vicious cycle.

To help in that process we should understand clearly the nature and roots of our basic problems. Let us look back over the problems and defects of our society in 1934 which led to the loss of our political independence, for the basic problems which our forefathers faced at ... and the health of our economy. Moreover, we know from our own more recent experience that our existing political system is far from perfect. Thus it is vital that we always be ready and willing to reform our political system.

My Government believes that at present, political reform must have two features:

(1) A new Elections Act will be introduced so that the Members of this House will henceforth be chosen more freely by the provision of the partial public funding of election expenses and by requiring full disclosure of the amount and source of election contributions; and

(2) To allow this House to work more effectively, changes in the Rules of the House and the introduction of a Committee system will be proposed.

The second great problem facing our forefathers in 1934 was the lack of a sound economic base. The problems they faced at that time will sound familiar even to the young. Our economy was overly dependent upon one industry, the salt-fish industry; outside commercial interests dominated every new resource development; resource revenues contributed little to our national revenue; and, secondary manufacturing was virtually non-existent.

These defects still exist in spite of all our attempts to correct them and in spite of great natural resource developments. Indeed, in addition to the fatal flaws of 1934, we now also have far too great a dependence on transfer payments, direct and indirect, from the Federal Government.

My Government will seek to tackle the problem of building a sound economic base by reliance on seven basic strategies. All of these strategies will be aimed at the central objective of creating 40,000 new jobs over the next five years.

First, while private industry will be encouraged, particularly locally ...

Third, we will use our natural resources as levers to create other industrial benefits. Thus, for example, our hydro in Labrador, particularly on the Lower Churchill, will be used to create industry in this Province, not merely construction jobs with little long-term benefit such as happened at Churchill Falls. Similarly, strenuous efforts will be made to maximize the impact on the Province of the expenditures which the oil companies will make in the offshore oil and gas sector. In addition, the Province will, by force of its regulations, have first call for industrial purposes on all oil and gas produced. To accomplish this, our ownership of and control over our offshore oil and gas resources must be put beyond question.

In the area of fisheries development, My Government will, in the forthcoming constitutional review process, seek the right to use access to our fisheries resources by commercial entities (whether domestic or foreign) as a lever to maximize downstream benefits by way of further processing, and upstream benefits by way of the building and servicing of vessels and the manufacturing of fishing gear.

Fourth, My Government will pay special attention to the marine industries field with its mutually reinforcing fisheries, offshore oil and gas and shipbuilding. My Government will, in particular, build a strong marine research and development capability to ensure that marine resource developments have a better chance of creating related secondary manufacturing opportunities in the Province.

Fifth, the Province will enter into all new arrangements related to resource and commercial matters in a careful and businesslike manner. A prime example of this new approach is My Government's careful negotiating stance with regard to the reopening of the Come By Chance oil refinery.

Sixth, My Government will make strenuous efforts to renegotiate certain arrangements already in place, in particular the power contract at the Upper Churchill and the arrangements which presently exist at ...

My Government wishes to ensure that all financial assistance made available to us by the Government of Canada is used wisely and is not dissipated on costly short-term projects which make little or no contribution to the solution of the long-term economic problems which face this Province.

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

The Five-year Plan will seek Federal co-operation, for example, with regard to:

(1) Fisheries development including the Primary Landing and Distribution Centre at Harbour Grace;

(2) Labrador resource development including the Lower Churchill Power development;

(3) A new forestry development plan;

(4) A new and expanded marine research and development program; and

(5) An improved technical training program.

The first three elements of this Plan involve major projects which will significantly assist the long-term development of three of our major resource sectors.

The fourth element, the marine research and development program, reflects My Government's firm belief that we must have a strong, local marine technology capability if we are to broaden the economic impact in this Province of the development of our marine resources.

The fifth element, an improved technical training program, reflects My Government's determination that as many as possible of the new employment opportunities created by the development of our resources will go to existing residents of the Province.

Integral to the Five-year Plan are a number of key proposals relating to transportation within the Province, reflecting the fact that creation of a year-round port in Labrador, together with a highway into Western Labrador by way of Churchill Falls.

(2) The re-negotiation of present financial arrangements relating to the upgrading of the Trans-Canada Highway.

(3) The commitment by the Government of Canada to the continued operation of the railway and to its significant upgrading over time.

My Government's Five-year Plan will emphasize the development of small and medium-sized business and will present an active and aggressive program of rural development. Over the last several years we have witnessed a dramatic revitalization of the economy of rural parts of our Province and the next few years will see an enrichment and consolidation of the progress achieved so far. My Government will not overemphasize the big project in its philosophy of development nor will it offer financial support to large scale industrial enterprises which properly belong in the private, free market sector.

For instance, the development of the Lower Churchill will be pursued as an integral part of an overall Labrador Development Plan so as to allow proper development of complementary resource-based industries.

Similarly, the basic objective of the Primary Landing and Distribution Port is to provide stable year-round employment in small and medium-sized fish plants that are now operating on a seasonal basis. By providing a continuous supply of fish from offshore landings, particularly during the winter months, the Primary Port will contribute toward the revitalization of the Newfoundland fishery and the industrial base of rural Newfoundland. The establishment of a

marine industrial park in the Primary Port will not only foster the creation of a secondary processing capability to produce final consumer products but will encourage the growth of industries which are allied to the fishery.

In the interim, the Province's economy will be stimulated by a number of measures which will be detailed in the budget which My Government will present to the House at an early date. However, the main thrust of My Government's program will be the creation of a permanent base for our economy. This will not be easy.

Indeed, My Government will have to take decisions in relation to both its capital and current expenditure programs which will be far from popular. Given our fiscal situation and credit rating, unrestrained Government spending would be irresponsible. However, My Government is confident that the strategies and Five-year Plan to which I have just alluded will, within five years, secure this Province's economic foundations and provide both employment and the tax base upon which our public services, present and planned, can be supported.

The last basic problem faced by the Newfoundland people in 1934 was a grossly inadequate social welfare system. Historians will argue whether this was because our economy at that time was not sufficiently strong to support such a system, or whether the political will to put it in place was absent. Whatever the cause, all that has now changed. We have a relatively strong social welfare system. Yet much remains to be done. The economic program set out above will give us the means to make the necessary improvements; the House can be assured that My Government has the concern and the political will.

For instance in the area of special care, My Government will continue to provide those social programs which offer opportunities for both rehabilitation and gainful employment for those adults who are physically, mentally or socially disabled. In this time of inflation and rising energy costs many of our elderly must be assisted financially as well as through home support services and through the provision of appropriate health care facilities and programs. Efforts will be intensified to develop more services for the elderly at the community level as an alternative to institutional care employment for as many able-bodied family heads and single parents as possible.

There are whole new areas of social concern unforeseen or deemed irrelevant forty-five years ago, which our society today demands be addressed. My Government will be moving forward in the present Session in two such areas.

First, we must as a society and through this Honourable House recognize in a fundamental way the role of women in our society and the need to remove all discriminatory restrictions and attitudes which would detract from their proper and equal status.

The way in which we approach the question of women's rights will perhaps, more than anything else, indicate the degree to which we, as a people, are willing to recognize the changing nature of our society. Legislation respecting matrimonial property will be amongst the measures to be placed before you in this area.

The area of women's rights is one of the most important areas of law reform that will be undertaken by My Government--but it is not the only one. We are convinced that the law must adequately reflect the changing social, economic and cultural milieu of Newfoundland and Labrador. We intend at an early date to appoint the Newfoundland Law Reform Commission in order to provide a continuing mechanism for recommending to Government needed reforms in the law.

The second new vital area relates to the need to intensify our efforts to protect our natural environment from pollution. Our approach to the need to protect the environment must reflect our ability to destroy that which we value so much for recreational purposes and upon which our commercial fisheries depend. It must also show the level of our determination to prevent such disasters. The House will be asked to pass an Environmental Assessment Act so that the impact of all publicly funded or authorized projects can be properly assessed and our heritage and culture. The mood of this House should reflect the energy and spirit of our people.

Our people's readiness to embark upon this next and perhaps greatest stage of development has already been foretold by our artists whose telling pride in our past has helped preserve our heritage. By artists I include the artist in all of us; the wistful singer of an old song, the teller of an old tale and the dreamer of old dreams. However, the professional and serious amateur in our arts community must now be encouraged more than ever to chronicle our past, analyze our present and portend our future. It is vital that they be assisted so that the energies of our arts community, young and old alike, can help propel our society as a whole towards our mutual goal of an economically sound and socially just society.

In recognition of this critical role, My Government will be introducing in the present Session a Bill to incorporate the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. The mandate of the Arts Council will be to advise Government on arts policy and to take a direct role in funding the arts community throughout the Province in areas such as traditional music, dance, painting, writing, drama and folk arts. Private contributions to the arts will be encouraged through an arts Fund to which the Province will make an initial contribution.

You will be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

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

My Government believes that our people are determined to march forward in a dynamic and confident manner and that they sense, perhaps for the first time, they can truly gain control of their social and economic destiny. Moreover, the general framework of Confederation is being appropriately modified to give us as a Province the rights and powers by which this great and historic dream can be realized.

The great question posed today is whether we in this Province are ready to move away from a paternalistic centralized federalism. Are we ready to trust more in our own abilities as a society than in Federal.

Thus, by the lot of history, it falls to the particular Members of this Honourable House to answer these very basic questions, the answers to which will shape our society for the foreseeable future.

Seldom has such an awesome responsibility fallen on the Members of this House.

It is, I am sure, the prayer of all our people, that Divine Providence will guide you in all your deliberations.