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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Terre- Neuve et Labrador | 38e | 2e | Discours du Trône | 28 février 1980 | Gordon Arnaud Winter | Lieutenant Gouverneur | PC |

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

Since my last speech to the House, we have witnessed the unfolding of events which tell us that we have not only entered a new decade but a new era in the history of both the Province and the whole world.

Events far beyond our shores and beyond our power have conspired once again to place this Province in the vanguard of history.

I refer, of course, to developments in Iran and Afghanistan and to the consequent impact upon the world's energy supplies and the cooling of relations between the two great super powers. These events have created a global situation in which the energy resources of this Province have become not merely economically attractive, but the focus of the intense interest of the whole continent.

Given this context, it was perhaps only natural that a major oil find at the Hibernia location in the fall of last year would give rise to tremendous interest nationally and internationally.

As a consequence, this Province and its people will now become subject to economic and political forces unprecedented since World War 11 when our harbours and airfields were deemed vital to the Allied cause. We must always be aware of the extent and nature of the ...

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

The social, economic and political challenges which I outlined in my last speech to you still remain and My Government remains committed to the essential program laid out at that time.

However, it is apparent that, with the intensification of the interest of industrialized North America in our resources, we must be even more diligent and work all the harder in the protection of our environment, our society and our future. That is not to say that we should in any way be selfish in the management of our resources, and My Government is determined to play a responsible role within Confederation in that respect.

Indeed, My Government is confident that, in seeking to protect the legitimate interests of the people of the Province in the management of their natural resources, we shall have the full support of the majority of Canadians thus demonstrating one of the major strengths of our nation, the ability and willingness of Canadians to recognize the point of view of their fellow citizens in other Provinces.

The policies of My Government on natural resources spring from three essential principles:

First, the fisheries of Newfoundland and Labrador are the backbone of our economy and society and will remain the major component of any permanent solution to our economic problems. The development of our non-renewable resources (especially offshore oil and gas), dramatic as that may be, must be viewed primarily as a short term tool to give us the financial flexibility not merely to pay off past debts and to invest in public services, but more importantly to provide the source of investment in an expanding, dynamic fishery which will be the basis of both a vibrant economy and proud people.

In view of this, proposals for offshore oil and gas development must be carefully analysed and severely tested to ensure that the marine environment and our fisheries are being adequately protected. In this respect, any oil company proposing a particular method of production bears a heavy onus to prove that the suggested mode is environmentally safe.

A corollary to this basic aspect of our future is that My Government recognizes that rural Newfoundland remains, and must continue to be the major, vibrant and expanding dimension of our social and economic future.

Second, the Province's economic and social destiny is linked directly to the degree of control it has over its natural resources. In this respect, the responsibility of My Government and of all Members of this House is clear.

Third, the exercise of ownership and management rights over natural resources is a process which requires firm, rational and consistent policies. Our history teaches us that the mere fact of ownership is not enough; that the level of benefits accruing to our people is directly proportional to how their ownership rights are exercised by their Governments.

All areas of natural resource management must receive the most intense attention, both by Members of this Honourable House and by the people of the Province as a whole. The appropriateness of each of our natural resource policies must become the focus of intense debate and study.

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

It is with these three basic principles in mind that I would outline the guidelines which My Government shall follow in formulating its resource management policies:

First, that all My Government's policies will give effect to the essential fact that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are the rightful owners of this Province's natural resources, particularly its marine resources, and, as such, are entitled to the rightful benefits there from. My Government considers this principle to be inviolate and is determined to have this principle recognized.

Second, that the development of our non-renewable resources must always be undertaken in such a way as to protect (and indeed complement) our renewable resources which constitute the long term economic basis of our society.

Third, that the development of our primary resources must be accompanied by the maximum practical level of processing and secondary manufacturing within the Province prior to export.

The true wealth of our resources can only be obtained if they are exported from our shores, not in the raw stage, but enriched by the efforts of Newfoundland workers. In this respect, My Government will place before the House legislation to ensure that a maximum amount of processing takes place prior to the removal of any of our natural resources from the Province.

Fourth, that the net revenues or economic rent generated by resource development will, to the maximum extent possible, be captured and directed.

Throughout the planning of the large scale resource and economic developments which will occur in the next decade, My Government will be ever vigilant to ensure that such developments do not overwhelm those standards and values which constitute, in essence, what we are as a society.

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

The foregoing guidelines will be the basis of all resource development policies formulated by My Government. There are in particular three areas with potential for major expansion to which they are being applied -- fisheries, offshore oil and gas, and Labrador hydro. These three sectors will form the leading edge of resource and economic development in this Province in the 1980's and I shall now outline the intentions of My Government in that respect.

As I stated previously, the fisheries are, and must remain, the corner stone of our economy and society. Consequently, it will always receive first priority with My Government.

Indeed, the fisheries of our Province are the raison d'être of our people and society and the harvest of these resources has not only been the basis of settlement along our coasts but has permeated every aspect of the social, economic and cultural life of our Province. Control and management of these stocks (particularly of the northern cod stocks) by the government of the Province are imperative.

My Government is determined to achieve confirmation of the Province's special interest in, and rights to, the economic benefits which can be derived from the fish stocks in the seas adjacent to our shores.

The legislative jurisdiction which Canada exercises over these stocks derives solely from the entry of the Dominion of Newfoundland into the Canadian Confederation in 1949. Moreover, it was in reaction to the demands of the people and Government of this Province, and in order to protect the very lifeblood of our hundreds of small fishing communities (particularly on the northeast and Labrador Coasts) that Canada was finally persuaded to claim a 200-mile limit. In international law, the ability of Canada to claim such a limit was based primarily upon the historical and moral rights and the existing economic dependency of the small fishing communities along our coasts.

These principles would not violate the historic fishing patterns of fishermen from any other province. Nor would their implementation by the Government of Canada violate any aspect of the Constitution of Canada.

They would, however, protect the interests of the fishermen of this Province, and form the basis of an effective federal/provincial co-operative management process pending constitutional change.

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

There has not been, since Confederation, a full debate on the proper management regime to be applied to this Province's fisheries. Consequently, My Government will be presenting to this Honourable House a White Paper on the development of our fisheries and will invite comments by the various sectors of the fishery and the public as a whole upon the manner in which our fisheries can be best managed.

While the whole area of fisheries management and policy is a complex one, certain features are desirable:

(1) The fishery resources of the seas adjacent to the Province should be exploited by residents and landed in the Province subject to the historic pattern of fishing by other Canadians;

(2) That the management and licensing process must proceed from cleared criteria and in a regular manner, with sufficient public input;

(3) That the Government of the Province must play a major role in such a process to ensure that the interests of the Province are protected;

(4) That all fish landed in the Province receive the maximum amount of processing possible before removal from the Province; and

(5) That the structure of the industry favour owner-operated vessels and processing in a multitude of smaller plants to protect the continued economic viability and lifestyle of our smaller communities.

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

Offshore oil and gas constitutes a major challenge to the continued viability, and indeed the very existence, of our fishery and the society upon ...

(2) Loss, over time, through excessive industrialization and urbanization, of the basic skills that are so important to the fishery; and

(3) Competition for the labour force upon which fishery depends.

Indeed, if our offshore oil and gas resources are not properly managed, then our efforts to build a long-term, stable economy and society based on our fisheries will be all for naught. It is vital that our offshore oil and gas policies stem from that basic perspective.

In order to protect our society and to maximize our benefits, My Government will take the necessary steps to ensure that the Province's rights with respect to its offshore oil and gas resources are preserved and recognized. In this respect, My Government seeks the support of all Members of this Honourable House.

If we are to manage our offshore oil and gas resources, we must acquire the necessary skills and capability.

During this session, an amendment to the Department of Mines and Energy Act, 1973 will be introduced to formally establish an Offshore Petroleum Directorate. The mandate of this Directorate (which is already in operation) will be to administer the Province's Petroleum Regulations and to play the key role in the management of its offshore oil and gas resources.

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

It is an essential, and the most historic, feature of the province's Petroleum Regulations that for the first time the Province will from the start participate directly in the development of its own natural resources.

This will be accomplished through a 40% share of each and every producing field in addition to our royalties and taxes. This 40% interest entitles the Province not only to 40% of all oil or gas produced but, as importantly, the opportunity to guide and shape investment decisions as the biggest partner in each of the various industry/government consortia which will develop and operate the different fields.

Thus, the Province will be a major participant in all decisions relating to the development of every offshore oil or gas field. In view of the development at Hibernia, My Government will place before the House during this Session

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

Development of a commercial field cannot go forward until a lease is issued by the Province. Upon the issuance of a lease, NLPC will have the right to sit on the operating committee of the consortium holding the lease, indeed it will be a 40% partner. As such, it will be in a position to influence the hiring and purchasing practices of the consortium.

In view of the speed at which the tentative planning for the development of Hibernia is proceeding, it is the intention of My Government to request that the representatives of NLPC be given observer status on the Hibernia operating committee effective immediately (that is to say, prior to the issuance of the lease) so that the interests of the Province can be more directly reflected in all decisions of the consortium taken prior to application for lease. It is expected that the Hibernia Group led by Mobil Canada will see that such direct Provincial involvement is in the long term interest of both parties.

Offshore oil and gas poses a challenge to every sector of our society, both in terms of its opportunities and its dangers. It has the potential of affecting in the negative way, not only our fishery, but also the social and economic fabric of our society.

Consequently, My Government has established an Offshore Petroleum Impact Committee (OPIC) to co-ordinate the efforts of the Province in managing the social, economic and environmental impacts of offshore oil and gas. The Offshore Petroleum Impact Committee will specifically co-ordinate and plan activities in the following areas: development planning, education and training, fisheries and the environment, social and cultural impacts and financial effects.

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

It flows from the very fact that offshore oil can touch all aspects of our society that the public must be adequately involved in the planning process surrounding such developments. Hearings under the Public Inquiries Act are already mandatory under the Province's Petroleum Regulations with regard to the issuance of further exploratory permits or a lease for say, the Hibernia discovery.

It is the intention of My Government to hold any company wishing to surrounding the Hibernia and other discoveries is made public and will co-operate to the full extent possible with all public interest groups who wish to investigate or comment upon the impact of oil and gas. In addition, special Advisory Committees of the public will be established to work with OPIC.

This intensive preparatory work by My Government is based on the very encouraging findings at the Hibernia and Ben Nevis locations. The information from the Hibernia discovery indicates a strong probability that a commercially viable oil discovery has been made. However, this will only be known for certain after several step-out wells have been drilled, extensive production

tests conducted and development costs ascertained. It is expected that such information will be available before the end of 1980.

In the meantime, it is prudent to act on the assumption that a commercial discovery has been made. To do otherwise would be to lose what may turn out to be invaluable planning time. Given the vast potential of our shelf, even if Hibernia is not commercial, it is almost certain that such efforts will stand us in good stead when a commercial field is eventually found.

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

The development of the hydro resources of Labrador will constitute the third major focus over the next decade. Indeed, the development of our hydro resources may be critical if our own energy requirements are to be met. My Government's forecasts indicate that, even with the completion of the Hinds Lake and Upper Salmon projects, if we do not obtain additional generating capability, our Province will face an electrical generating short-fall after 1984 and will thus be dependent upon oil-fired thermal generating facilities for more than 40% of our electrical capability; this in a Province endowed with the greatest single hydro source in North America.

Indeed our dependence on unstable and expensive imported oil for such a large portion of our generating capacity is particularly disturbing in view of the fact that in 1979 more than 80% of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro's sales were to Hydro Quebec upon terms and conditions which make a mockery of the equities which are supposed to underlie our Confederation.

The present situation associated with the long term sale of power generated at the Upper Churchill is one of the most critical issues that My Government expects to face in the coming year.

It is vital, then, that we have a sound Labrador power development strategy, for without such a strategy we will continue to see vast economic benefits flow to Quebec and will face a growing shortfall in our electrical generating capability and thus an increasing dependence on the vagaries of international oil markets.

The basic objectives of My Government's Labrador power strategy will therefore be to satisfy Newfoundland's needs for stably-priced electricity in the 80's and beyond and to receive fair economic benefits from all hydro power exported as surplus to our needs as determined from time to time.

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

The particular elements of My Government's policy will be:

1. Continuation of the Province's present legal case to challenge the Upper Churchill contract and conclusion of the work of the special Task Force which My Government has set up to examine all other possible legal and legislative means to alter the terms of the Upper Churchill contract;

2. Based on the court case and on the work of the special Task Force, take the steps necessary to gain unfettered access to Upper Churchill power for the needs of consumers in the Province and to raise the price for all power exported out of the Province;

3. Develop the hydro potential of the Lower Churchill River consisting of 1700 megawatts at Gull Island and 600 megawatts at Muskrat Falls.

It should be a stern lesson to this Honourable House and to the people of our Province that we are now subject to a totally unjust power contract at the Upper Churchill. The lesson we draw from our predicament should not be limited to a determination to correct it but should extend to an insistence that in the future the constitutional rights of this Province are to be defended at all costs .

In this regard, My Government is vitally concerned about the whole issue of electrical power costs to the people of the Province given the low cost of our power sold to the Province of Quebec. In addition to the elements of our Labrador Power Policy, other alternatives are being considered, including: ...

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

My Government is deeply concerned about the long term viability of our forest industry. The destruction caused by the spruce budworm and consequent economic results has led to the establishment of a Royal Commission to study fully all aspects of this problem and to make recommendations on what has to be done to ensure that this valuable renewable resource is protected to the maximum degree possible. My Government is also aware of the continued expansion of our tourist industry. With its great potential, it is a valuable resource development tool for our future.

My Government intends to continue its reform legislative program in this Session and has now ready more than a score of new initiatives to place before you.

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

Unparalleled natural resource development and the rapid expansion of our economy will place new and potentially dangerous stresses on both our natural and social environments. Indeed, as resources are developed, it seems inevitable that changes of a physical and social nature will take place. However, we must be careful, in each instance, to first evaluate both the benefits of resource and economic development and the consequential environmental, social and economic impacts. Only then should we decide, on a rational basis, whether the resource or economic development in question is justified.

Insofar as the preservation of the natural environment is concerned, My Government, in this session, will introduce two major pieces of legislation -- the Environmental Assessment Act and the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act.

The new Environmental Assessment Act will make mandatory the assessment of the natural, social and economic impacts of a wide range of proposed undertakings and the involvement of the public in the assessment and decision-making process.

The Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act, on the other hand, will ...

Accordingly, this legislation will enable Government to set aside certain wilderness areas in the Province for the benefit and education of our people thus preserving for all times some of the natural splendours which we have inherited from our forefathers.

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

Just as our natural environment is valuable, delicate and worthy of protection, so too is our social environment. Indeed, our social environment is, if anything, more complex and intricate than any natural eco-system, encompassing as it does our heritage, customs, traditions, culture and social institutions. All of these aspects of our social environment will be subject to considerable stress in the coming decade. As I have noted previously, My Government is committed to instituting measures in resource management which will serve to stabilize and moderate the influence of large scale resource development on our life-style as we enter into a new and challenging decade.

In addition to such measures, it is essential that we maintain our collective sense as a distinctive society within Confederation and that we promote a lively debate upon our past, present and future.

In this respect, I note that during the last Session, a Select Committee from this Honourable House was appointed to enquire into and hear evidence on all matters relating to the adoption of a provincial flag and to recommend a specific design to the House. Honourable Members will remember that the Committee is to report back to the House on April 30 1980.

The cultural significance to any people of a distinctive flag is well known, and I look forward to the day when we, as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, will be able to link our collective identity with our own distinctive provincial flag.

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

The state of a people's artistic achievements is a good measure of the overall vitality of any society. I would like to re-emphasize My Government's commitment to the support of the arts community in the Province and note that, in this Session, My Government will be introducing legislation to formally incorporate the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council which has continue or if new inequities arise. This attention to the social fabric is inherent in My Government's placing first priority on the fishery and in its determination to control the impact of offshore oil and gas.

It is also vital that Government's relationship with the people reflect our democratic traditions. Indeed in this belief My Government has pursued a policy o-f free and open access to Government information. The time has now come to expand and give statutory basis to the policy. I am, therefore, pleased to inform the House that My Government intends to introduce a major reform during this Session in the form of a Bill respecting Freedom of Information. The purpose of the Freedom of Information Bill is to give all citizens the legal right to information contained in Government records subject to certain clearly defined and limited exemptions.

One of the exemptions must be personal information. Modern technology, for all its benefits, also permits scrutiny of a person's private life without his knowledge or consent and the individual frequently has no recourse at law against those who may violate his privacy.

In light of this, My Government intends to introduce a Protection of Privacy Bill that will serve to strike a balance between the need for the protection of the privacy of individuals and the public interest in freedom of information and freedom of speech.

These two bills, if passed by this Honourable House, will make this Province the first in Canada to have taken initiatives in both these areas.

In the last Session, this Honourable House approved My Government's legislation on Matrimonial Property Reform. To continue its determination to fully recognize and improve the place of women in our society, My Government will be introducing legislation to establish an Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

My Government's strong commitment to a continuous process of social reform is not limited to these measures nor to the new Elections Act which will be introduced in the present Session. It is also the source of My Government's firm intention to appoint the Law Reform Commission at an early date in order to ensure a continuing program of reform of the law.

While we are the inheritors of a noble democratic legal tradition, we must also be aware of the inequities that remain within our legal system and must harbour a deep, abiding desire to constantly reform our legal system to attain a more equitable society.

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

In my last speech to you, I stated: "that 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 abilities as a society than in Federal transfer payments? We are further challenged by the need to ensure that such a decentralization be accomplished without impairing national unity ....

Those questions remain posed not only to this Honourable House but to all our people.

Since my last speech to you, My Government has for its part answered these questions in the affirmative and has taken decisive steps to make self-reliance a reality. Throughout the whole of Canada, we have seen a growing recognition not only of the natural resource wealth and the economic potential of our Province, but also, and more importantly, the cultural and social vitality of our people.

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

The people of Canada as a whole rejoice in the progress that we have made, and are about to make, for they know that a stronger, healthier Newfoundland and Labrador means a stronger and healthier Canada.

The coming year, indeed this whole decade, will be a momentous one for this Province and its people. I have outlined the program through which My Government proposes to maximize the benefits and meet the challenges associated with the great resource developments which are upon us. Whether we desire it or not, our society is to be put to a very severe test in the coming

years. Our ability to meet the challenges that will be presented to us will determine, not only the shape, but perhaps even the continued existence of a distinctive Newfoundland society.

To face such challenges, it will be necessary for My Government to take a ...

Other stands will relate to the need for increased fisheries jurisdiction and the recognition of our offshore mineral ownership rights; still others relate to the Upper Churchill. These will, no doubt, give rise to political controversy.

However, no one should misinterpret any aspect of those controversies as evidencing any lack of commitment to the great Canadian experiment which we call Confederation. To raise ones economic sights, to restore ones dignity and to preserve ones heritage is the legitimate right of all peoples. To wish to participate as an economic and political equal with the other nine Provinces of Canada is to be good Canadians.

The year 1980 will see momentous events in the history of our federation. The referendum in Quebec and the debate upon the Ryan proposals for a new constitution will be decisive events in the future of our nation. Indeed, My Government welcomes a chance to participate in that debate and sees it as a healthy sign and evidence of a dynamic society all across the Country.

My Government will, of course, be putting forward to the Government of Canada, and to the other Provinces of Canada, a definite proposal on the constitution which will seek to express the essential dreams and aspirations of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Because of the importance of this issue, My Government's proposals with regard to the constitution will be made public for comment prior to being formally presented to the Government of Canada. It will be an historic debate and one which will no doubt greatly benefit and strengthen both the Province and the nation as a whole.

My Government feels sure that our people will wish this Province's proposal to describe a Canada in which the freedom and right to build a strong Province is not considered inconsistent with a strong, united Canada.

My Government takes the position that these two objectives, far from being inconsistent, are mutually supportive and, indeed, should be our single and ultimate goal. Though sometimes difficult to achieve, that goal is the essence of any Federation and is worthy of our every effort.

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

Let us each re-dedicate ourselves to this great goal and ask for the prayers of our people. I invoke God's blessings upon your labours and may ...