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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Terre- Neuve et Labrador | 42e | 2e | Discours du Trône | 28 février 1994 | Frederick Russel | Lieutenant Gouverneur | Liberal |

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

I take great pride and pleasure in welcoming you to the Second Session of the Forty-Second General Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland.

The emphasis of My Government in this Session of the House of Assembly will be to commence the process of truly transforming this Province into one of the most attractive locations in North American for business investment and to initiate aggressive new measures to market and promote the Province's strengths in this regard on a national and international basis.

The goal of attracting business investment as a means to create employment opportunities has been a major challenge facing every government in this Province in this century. However, the devastating Province-wide impact on our economy resulting from the collapse of the groundfish fishery during the last five years is such that it has made new business investment directed at economic diversification not only an objective but an imperative.

As well, the liberalization of world trade continues to accelerate and is expected to constitute the primary catalyst for global economic growth well into the next century. This liberalization brings both increased competition and opportunity for economic activity, and is the driving force behind the growing emphasis on international competitiveness and the fundamental economic restructuring that is now occurring in many countries. In this changing global economy, Newfoundland and Labrador must look beyond its small domestic market to achieve the level of wealth creation that will provide the citizens of this Province with higher incomes, more employment opportunities, and improved public services. This will, out of necessity, require My Government to be increasingly outward looking in its approach to economic development and to create an appropriate investment climate that supports international competitiveness.

In this context, My Government began early during its first mandate to develop a comprehensive and action oriented Strategic Economic Plan for the Province to guide economic development over the long term. With the benefit of a wide-ranging public consultation process that reached all corners of the Province, and with the support and advice provided by the Advisory Council on the Economy, My Government released its Strategic Economic Plan in June of 1992. The goal of the Plan is to bring all elements of society together - governments, business, labour, academia and others - to make the provincial economy more vibrant, productive and globally competitive. Substantial progress in implementing the Strategic Economic Plan has been made in virtually all sectors since that time and a formal status report on the Plan was recently released to the people of this Province by My First Minister.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

A key element of My Government's strategy for economic development as enunciated in the Strategic Economic Plan is that the private sector must be the engine of economic growth. The role of government is to create the economic climate in which private sector investment can occur and be successful. My Government remains committed to this important principle and will be proposing specific new measures over the coming months to significantly improve the attractiveness of the Province as a place to do business and to invest.

The clear statement in the Strategic Economic Plan that My Government will privatize appropriate public services where they can be provided by the private sector in an acceptable manner reflects this philosophy. Such an approach furthers two major objectives. First, it serves to promote and develop a stronger and more broadly based private sector in the Province. Second, it enables the use of the limited capital funds available to My Government to provide essential public services instead of investing them in commercial areas where the private sector is prepared to operate. Furthermore, there is potential through various privatization initiatives to recover some of the capital investment made by the people of this Province over time in selected government services, and thereby reduce future borrowings that would otherwise be required to sustain ongoing government operations and support new capital initiatives.

The major focus of My Government's privatization program for the past year has been with respect to Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro Corporation and Newfoundland and Labrador Computer Services Limited. The first order of business in this new Session will be consideration of My Government's proposal for restructuring the Newfoundland and Labrador electrical industry, including privatization of Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro Corporation. My Government is also continuing discussions with NewTel Enterprises Limited and its alliance partners, Anderson Consulting Limited, and Bell Sygma Incorporated, for the privatization of Newfoundland and Labrador Computer Services. My Government intends, as well, to issue a public call for proposals in the very near future for the privatization of Newfoundland Farm Products Corporation. Further privatization initiatives in appropriate areas will be announced by My Ministers during this Session.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

As a further tangible expression of My Government's determination to accelerate its efforts in promoting and developing a stronger and more effective private sector in this Province, an unprecedented and comprehensive legislative proposal will be introduced in this Session entitled "A Bill to Promote Business Investment in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador." The purpose of this Bill will be to significantly improve the business investment climate of the Province.

The first area to be addressed in this legislation will be the restructuring and refocusing of departmental activity directed at enhancing economic development in the Province. Changes will be made to all economic development departments and agencies that will focus added attention on the importance of a client centred approach to business development. The objective will be to ensure that when firms and investors express interest in pursuing specific business development opportunities in this Province, government officials are available to support and navigate them through the regulatory and development approval process such that their interest is maintained, timely decisions are made, and a positive attitude toward and image of the Province as a good place to invest is fostered and continuously reinforced.

The second area My Government intends to address will be the relatively high burden of taxation that is presently faced by the private sector and which impedes new investment and the creation of new employment opportunities in this Province. While a number of significant changes to the existing business tax structure have already been adopted by My Government, the entire taxation regime requires further attention if it is to be used as a means of promoting Newfoundland and Labrador as a highly competitive location in which to do business. Substantive changes to the existing tax structure affecting the private sector at the provincial and municipal levels will be made to provide tax holidays for new or expanding business enterprises in the Province. This will be accomplished in such a manner that existing business enterprises in the Province will not be placed at a competitive disadvantage relative to those companies and investors who are able to take advantage of the new tax regime.

The third area to be addressed in the Bill will be the labour market training domain. While My Government has already taken decisive steps to restructure and improve our basic and post-secondary educational system, additional measures will be proposed to provide enhanced labour market training incentives to new and expanding business enterprises as well as to existing businesses that need to refocus their corporate operations and upgrade their existing workforce to remain competitive. This will assist in the training and retraining of the provincial workforce to meet the demands of the changing global marketplace and to take advantage of new employment opportunities that will be created through new investment made directly by the private sector.

The fourth area in which My Government intends to introduce reform is in respect of the provincial environmental assessment process. My Ministers remain fully committed to protecting the environment and have recently adopted new measures to address particular problems related to abandoned automobile wrecks and the indiscriminate use of all-terrain vehicles. Further positive initiatives to address various other environmental challenges facing the Province are planned by My Government in the coming months. At the same time, however, My Government is concerned that the provincial environmental assessment process, as currently administered, has in some circumstances become unnecessarily burdensome to economic development in the Province, especially in terms of the length of time necessary to make decisions on individual project proposals. Consultations with all major stakeholders on the environmental assessment process have recently been concluded and appropriate reforms to streamline the overall process, without compromising the fundamental integrity of the existing Environmental Assessment Act, will be proposed in the new Bill.

The final element of this comprehensive Bill will provide for a more positive labour relations climate in the Province that will serve to attract new investment and stimulate new business enterprises. My Government recognizes its responsibility to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and that adequate safeguards to protect their interests remain in place. However, it is in the broader public interest to achieve these objectives in a balanced manner that also assures those who wish to conduct and carry on business and provide economic opportunity in this Province have a reasonable prospect of receiving an acceptable level of return on their investment without undue risk from uncertain labour relations conditions. A new approach to labour-management relations, reflective of the realities of conducting business in the ever increasing and competitive global economy, is in the common interest of all citizens of this Province.

The overall intent of the "Bill to Promote Business Investment in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador" will be to ensure that when the Province is objectively measured on the basis of its business climate, taxation levels, regulatory regime, workforce and labour relations climate, it will be judged to be among the best places, not only in Canada but in all of North America, for a business to invest and prosper.

In addition to the measures provided for in the Business Investment Bill, My Government intends to establish an independent Commission to oversee a review of all of My Government's existing regulations, with a view to substantially reducing the onerous regulatory burden that is presently imposed on those who wish to pursue or carry on economic activity in this Province. The goal will be to retain only those regulations which are absolutely essential for the orderly management of the public affairs of the Province and the protection of the general public interest in terms of appropriate health, safety and environmental standards. Each and every regulation of My Government will be evaluated in respect of its effect on the competitiveness of the private sector in national and international markets, as well as the extent to which existing regulations discourage innovation and efficiency in business operations. All unnecessarily burdensome regulations will be eliminated and steps will be taken to streamline and make the burden that remains far easier for business to bear. To ensure this objective is successfully achieved, this Honourable House will be asked to give its consent to legislation that will identify a specific sunset period beyond which all existing regulations will become null and void unless they are expressly re-confirmed by the Commission and by My Ministers through this review process.

Complementary to this overall regulatory review process, a plan will be outlined in this Honourable House for the more effective administration of My Government's land acquisition, land development and building permitting, licensing and inspection functions, including the consolidation of these functions, to the maximum extent practical, in a single agency with offices throughout the Province. This will eliminate the existing inefficiencies and duplication of service provided by a multitude of government departments and agencies in this area, and will thereby provide a more streamlined, timely and accessible "one-stop" approval process for the public, including the business community.

Now that the global economic recession has largely dissipated, it is the opportune time to act on these measures and, in parallel, to launch an aggressive and focused business prospecting initiative on a national and international basis to promote the Province and attract new investment that is essential to the economic future of Newfoundland and Labrador. The recent visits that were led by My First Minister to the United States and the Far East marked the commencement of this new business prospecting initiative. These efforts will continue in other parts of the world where promising business and economic opportunities are reasonably present.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

Contrary to popular perception among some circles, the fishery of the Province remains a positive and substantial contributor to total provincial economic output. In 1993, the value of fish products sold in the marketplace reached almost $500 million and peak employment, although primarily part-time, approximated 31,000 people. As well, the fishery is still the basic source of revenue for a large number of small communities in this Province and certain areas of the fishery are performing exceptionally well and offer opportunity for expansion.

Notwithstanding this situation, the ongoing crisis in the groundfish fishery remains a major concern for My Government since it is now clearly evident that this crisis will continue to have unprecedented implications for our economy and our people over the foreseeable future. My Government remains firm in its conviction that this problem requires attention on four inter-related fronts, all of which necessitate strong action and leadership both at the federal and provincial levels with full consultation and co-operation of all components of the industry and affected communities.

First, the magnitude of the current crisis and its impact will necessitate the continuation of a fair and equitable compensation and income adjustment program for those fisherpersons and industry workers impacted by the closure of various groundfish fisheries. The collapse of these fisheries, in the main but not exclusively, has its roots in the failure of federal fisheries management decisions. These decisions have largely led to the present situation and hence there is an obligation on the part of the Government of Canada to accept responsibility for the economic circumstances of those who have been affected by the closure of these fisheries.

Second, in recognition of the fact that the very nature and character of the fishery of the future will be fundamentally different from the fishery of the past, there is a need for the federal and provincial governments to jointly develop and implement a fisheries industry restructuring program in order to build a stronger and more viable industry in the future. This can best be achieved through a joint federal-provincial fisheries renewal board which would provide for an effective voice for the Province in important fisheries management decisions and facilitate the more effective coordination of all aspects of federal and provincial fisheries policies. My Government's specific approach to the restructuring of the fishery will be released during this Session in a "White Paper on the Fishery of the Future", which will reflect and take into account the results of the public review of an earlier discussion document released on this subject entitled "Changing Tides".

Third, the long-term impacts of the loss of a major part of the Province's fishing industry can only be mitigated through a joint federal-provincial economic restructuring agreement which provides sufficient funding to rebuild and diversify the Province's economic base. The federal Task Force on Incomes and Adjustment in the Atlantic Fishery, in its recently released report, highlighted the need for such a concerted response. My Government will be seeking the Government of Canada's full support for an initiative of this nature as a critical element of a long-term comprehensive response to the fisheries crisis.

Fourth, there is an over-riding need for the Government of Canada to adopt decisive fisheries management conservation measures to address the unprecedented decline in the groundfish resource generally, including effective measures to eliminate foreign overfishing of straddling and other groundfish stocks on and adjacent to the "Nose" and "Tail" of the Grand Banks. My Government is encouraged by the publicly stated commitment of the new federal government to address the problem of foreign overfishing in a timely manner, and welcomes the recent landmark decision by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization to place a one year moratorium on the cod fishery of the southern Grand Banks. My Government will press the Government of Canada to ensure that these new international measures are strictly complied with by all member states of NAFO and that other appropriate measures are taken to address fisheries conservation needs over the longer term and in respect of other economically important species of interest to the Province in the waters outside the 200 mile limit.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

My Government recognizes that the key to long-term economic and social development of the Province will be a well educated population. The people of the Province have clearly called for improvements in the performance of our education system. To this end, My Government has embarked on a major program of educational reform and has endeavoured to involve all key stakeholders in this process on a constructive basis. It is My Government's hope that the necessary changes which must be made to the education system will be able to be implemented with the support and cooperation of all concerned.

The first stage of reform will be a restructuring of the way in which education is governed. Legislation will be introduced to reform the structure of school boards, the provincial governing structure and the organization of schools, the principles of which have been substantially outlined in a public document entitled "Adjusting the Course". At the same time, My Government intends to move forward on a number of other initiatives stemming from the Report of the Royal Commission on the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary and Secondary Education which were outlined in a recently released report entitled "Adjusting the Course - Part II - Improving the Condition for Learning". Certain of these initiatives, particularly those having to do with the school year and school day, teacher certification, standards-setting, school accreditation and school councils, will also require the legislative consent of this Honourable House. All of this will require a comprehensive legislative package, incorporating changes to The Department of Education Act, The School Act, The Teacher Training Act, and other relevant legislation.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

While the urgency of present circumstances dictates that priority must be given to the economic challenges facing the Province, My Government remains firmly committed to addressing existing and emerging social issues through the development and implementation of a Strategic Social Plan. This initiative was announced in My Address to this Honourable House on March 4, 1993, and work commenced immediately thereafter on the essential task of updating and examining existing data, reviewing the programs of all government departments and agencies involved in the delivery of social services, and researching emerging trends and the demand for new social initiatives. The team of senior officials who have been working on this phase of the social planning process will be reporting to Cabinet shortly, and My Government will subsequently prepare a consultation document for public examination and discussion. As in the case of the Strategic Economic Plan, public meetings will be held in every region of the Province so that all concerned organizations and individuals will have every opportunity to contribute to the final stages of the planning process. Once the public consultation step is completed in the Fall of 1994, a formal Strategic Social Plan will be compiled and confirmed as My Government's policy, with implementation to begin in the 1995-96 fiscal year. It is the intention of My Government that increasing pressures and challenges arising as a consequence of the acceleration of economic and social change at home and abroad will be anticipated and addressed effectively through a planned approach in concerted and cooperative community action.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

Our Province will mark two important anniversaries during 1994.

On June 14th of this year, we will be celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the historic first trans-Atlantic flight by Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Brown of the Royal Air Force. On June 14th, 1919 at 12:58 p.m. Newfoundland time, Alcock and Brown took off in their Vickers Vimy Bomber from Lester's Field in St. John's. Sixteen hours and twelve minutes later they landed in a bog in Clifden, Ireland, to complete the first non-stop Atlantic crossing by air. This was the start of what today has become a tidal wave of thousands of aircraft passing over Newfoundland and Labrador yearly as they traverse the Atlantic Ocean.

June 6th of this year will mark the 50th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion when allied troops stormed the windswept beaches of Normandy launching the deciding battle of World War II in Europe. Of course, D-Day commemorations symbolize the final victory, as this battle was but a part of the whole. Nearly 20,000 men and women from Newfoundland and Labrador served in the army, navy and air force during the Second World War. They fought in the Battle of Britain, the Battle of the Atlantic, in North Africa, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland and elsewhere, so that we and generations yet to come could live as free men and women. During two world wars, 900,000 Canadians went to Britain and fought alongside them in the great battles of the two wars - 100,000 of them died. Up to now, no monument or memorial existed in Britain to commemorate Canada's role in these wars. On June 3rd of this year, Her Majesty the Queen will unveil the Canada Memorial at Green Park, London, to finally recognize this magnificent contribution. On June 6th, the 50th Anniversary of the actual D-Day Invasion in 1944, a Canadian Remembrance Ceremony will be held in Beny Reviers Canadian Cemetery in Normandy. His Excellency the Governor General and the Prime Minister will be at both the ceremony in London and the one in Normandy. Although on a private visit to Europe, I am privileged to say that my wife and I will also be present at both ceremonies. My Government will honour both these important anniversaries.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

During this Session My Government plans to place a number of important legislative proposals before you in addition to the legislative measures to which I have already referred. During the course of this Session, you will also be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

A full listing of My Government's legislative agenda for this Session of the House of Assembly will be tabled at the earliest opportunity so that all Members can properly prepare for the upcoming proceedings.

**Mr. Speaker and Members of the Honourable House of Assembly:**

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you commence your labours in this Second Session of the Forty-second General Assembly.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.