

DRAFT

POLICY STATEMENT

LIBERAL PARTY IN ALBERTA

1975

Nick Taylor

Leader

Liberal Party in Alberta

The 1975 Alberta Provincial Election Platform of the Liberal Party of Alberta has been drafted after a great deal of discussion and study regarding two critical areas of concern to the people of Alberta:

JOBS - AND - THE QUALITY OF LIFE

We believe that every Albertan is concerned about the future of this Province. Will there be jobs with meaning and a sense of fulfilment, will Albertans have an opportunity to invest directly in the business's of Alberta, resource and otherwise, --- will our small communities remain strong and healthy--- will our farmers be able to earn a decent living for their efforts --- will we be able to continue to enjoy our lakes, rivers and forests --- and will we be able to look forward to our future with confidence?

We believe that Albertans have a right to a good job here in Alberta, where they can build their homes and raise their families in prosperity, and where the jobs we create leave a person with a feeling of self-worth --- not a nameless cog in an industrial society.

We believe that all Albertans have the right to enjoy a good life in this Province, and that they should be able to look

forward to their senior years with the expectation of doing the things they have wanted to do without a burden of fear and apprehension.

We believe that Albertans have a right to invest directly in the future of Alberta and to receive a personal benefit from our natural riches.

We believe that Alberta has a tremendous potential both for the individual's growth in wealth and for the individual's growth in the QUALITY OF LIFE that can surpass any other area of North America. But these goals can only be reached by recognizing the problems that go with growth in a modern society and by a political party that has the dedication to provide the solutions to these problems.

THE REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE

We believe that the Liberal Party of Alberta presents the reasonable alternative to the conservative consenses in the Alberta Legislature.

The Liberal Party of Alberta, under the leadership of Nick Taylor can have a voice in the Legislature and provide the reasonable alternative that is essential to Alberta's future.

JOBS FOR ALBERTANS

We intend to change the pattern of exploitation of Alberta's natural resources to one of long term protection of our own needs as well as their sale at the rate we need the money rather than the rate at which the rest of the world would gladly deplete them.

This will mean government initiative in three areas:

1. Alberta's agriculture potential has been greatly enhanced by the increased use of our products throughout the world and particularly the far Eastern and Pacific Rim nations. We would establish a team of food marketing specialists and researchers who would travel the world studying at first hand the market potential of Alberta's agriculture products. Our Department of Agriculture would also investigate and aid the establishment of Alberta owned food processing plants in order to not only extract maximum profit from our food production but also to supply new markets and jobs.
2. The land itself is a resource. It can be our greatest resource if used according to its capability. The capability varies greatly by locality. With millions of acres of Crown land available for development and exploitation, the equitable use of land must be stressed. Our government would put the emphasis on developing our renewable resources,

agriculture, tourism, fishing, administrative and research centers, and timber, not oil, gas, minerals and manufacturing.

3. A comprehensive study of our industrial potential based on the primary resources. This would include an independent outside study of the natural gas reserves in this province on a district by district basis. We want to know in detail where the timber, minerals, water, oil and gas is located in Alberta, what the reserves are in each area, what the potential is, and what we are likely to need. In the interim, we would shoot for reserves of 50 years for Alberta.

THE QUALITY OF LIFE

A. Community Life

We believe that the continued growth of large urban sprawl, and what seems to be the inevitable problems related to the breakdown of human relationships and all its accompanying illnesses, must be seriously questioned.

We believe that there is a quality of life in the small communities worth preserving. We believe that the development of small communities near large urban areas as well as the creation of new ones in some areas can provide a much better life for the people of this province.

We do not believe that bigness means more efficiency --- or for that matter, that efficiency is the only criteria by which we should measure services for people.

Small communities have a community spirit --- where people care about each other --- where they are closer to their own local government --- where local governments tend to work together for a common purpose rather than the adversary system that is constantly demonstrated in our large city councils.

We believe that definite steps must be taken through Regional Planning Boards for the establishment of satellite communities to the large urban areas. Every effort should be made to put these satellite communities where they do not destroy productive agriculture lands.

This program will be brought about by three specific steps:

1. The initiative must be taken by our Regional Planning Boards. Future communities adjacent to large metropolitan areas must be set aside now, and the planning for transportation corridors, utilities and other essential services should be an ongoing matter.
2. The creation of a new concept in taxation must be established whereby the taxation base of an economic area would be combined, equalized and distributed to all the municipalities

within the area. Each municipality would still have to raise local taxes and supplementary taxes to pay for the services and amenities they decided they wanted for their citizens. We would develop a system using personal income taxes and a percentage of the mineral royalties of the province as a substitute for municipal property taxes.

3. Regional Transportation Authority. The establishment of such an authority which would have the responsibility for designing a rapid transit system for the region is imperative if we are to escape strangulation by the automobile. As each new community is established, some form of rapid transit could be provided even to the minimal extent of a collector system at an outlying central point.
4. Regional Water & Sewage Authority. Some ten municipalities now dump sewage in various degrees of treatment into the North Saskatchewan River in the immediate Edmonton area. The same is true of many other Alberta rivers. Yet we have no co-ordinating authority with any real power. We propose that this Regional Water & Sewage Authority be partially financed by the Provincial Government for at least 25 percent of the capital costs and have a mandate set and enforce standards. Immense savings can be realized by bringing in in the treatment of water and sewage under one authority and one system of major plants.

B. Housing

A Liberal government in the Province of Alberta would take the following steps to put an adequate home within the economic reach of each Alberta family. We believe that our society has progressed to where housing is now a right, rather than a privilege.

Our government would:

1. Put in a 100 percent speculators tax to stop land speculation.
2. Use provincial surpluses to supply low interest second mortgages.
3. Allow deduction of mortgage interest payments from provincial income tax on the one principal residence up to a maximum of a \$40,000 mortgage.
4. Increase the supply of serviced land in satellite towns and small towns by the province buying the land ahead of time at agricultural prices, installing the services on a competitive bid on joint plans with municipality and then turning over to free enterprise or building at cost.
5. Improve public transportation from small to larger centres in order to prevent congestion in larger centres.
6. Pass legislation forbidding the ownership of land by non-residents of Canada not only to keep land-use controls more completely in the province, but to take some of the upward pressure from foreign capital off our land prices.

CLEAN UP PROGRAM

We appeal for a massive "clean up" program for our lakes and rivers. We would establish Regional Water & Sewage Authorities throughout Alberta over a period of ten years, dealing with the most critical areas first.

The provincial government would provide weed cutting machines and dredges to begin the cleaning of our lakes and rivers. An expanded Ecology Corp within a re-vitalized Alberta Youth Corp would employ students on a contract basis in co-operation with the Student Enterprises Loan Fund.

RECYCLING PLANTS

We would establish a program of advertising and public education along with re-cycling plants, both government operated and free enterprise, to re-cycle glass, paper, metal, cloth and other waste products, in conjunction with garbage packing plants to consolidate and sterilize certain wastes before being hauled away to land fill sites. Encourage the establishment of sewage processing plants both for fertilized and for treatment for energy use.

SOCIAL WELFARE

We are aware that any system of social welfare payments is subject to certain abuses by unscrupulous people. At the same time, there is an obvious and genuine need for an effective system to aid the less fortunate in our society.

Therefore we would concentrate upon eliminating specific abuses of the system. In particular, we would allow municipalities to place caveats upon property owned by welfare recipients who have indulged in second and third mortgage manipulations.

At the same time, we would attempt to solve a serious "drop out" problem that is specific to the teenager in a welfare family. We would provide increased regular assistance for dependent children in welfare families who continue their education in university, college or any recognized training institute. These allowances would be sufficient to enable them to dress properly and feel that they are a part of their peer group.

TAXATION REFORM

1. We would immediately reduce the Provincial income taxes

from 36 percent (one of the highest in Canada) or the federal tax to 25 percent of the federal tax, a savings of \$ to Albertans.

2. We would change the property tax system to the extent that we would immediately remove the practise of penalizing a family for improving their property. Home owner taxes would be a simple formula based on the size of the house and the size of the lot --- what a man does in improving the inside of the house is his own business. We would work towards a system whereby property taxes would be levied by the province rather than the municipality, giving municipalities a set share of income and mineral taxes. Hopefully such a system would take the pressure off municipalities to grow. It would no longer be necessary to attract more and more industry and thereby more and more population. Municipalities would concentrate on quality of life within its borders rather than growth alone.
3. A Liberal government would give income tax incentives to Albertans to invest their money in Alberta projects such as food processing, tourism, timber, etc.

OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST

Albertans should have the opportunity to invest in any foreign company that establishes in Alberta. We would allow foreign

investment under new ground rules that would make it mandatory for foreign interests to form subsidiary companies in Alberta that would offer at least 55 percent of the equity shares to Albertans over a period of five years. If possible, we would have the offer made open to all Canadians, after Albertans have had first choice.

EDUCATION

1. A Liberal government would provide government support for early childhood services and pre-school kindergartens through the School Foundation Fund.
2. A Liberal government would provide capital and operating funds to municipalities for the operation of a province wide day-care center program taking special concern to work in close cooperation with the Social Service Department to see that day care centres do not replace the home in those families where the mother would rather stay home and look after her children rather than join the weekly work force.
3. A Liberal government would work to the elimination of fees at the technical school and university level. We feel that our society has progressed to the stage where we can now abolish tuition fees for post high school education as we did for high school and elementary a couple of generations ago.

4. A Liberal government would try to change the orientation of our whole education system from one that educates for a job and money making ability under the impression that the youth of our society are goal oriented in a financial sense rather than wanting to play a role in cooperative framework to make this a better land in which to live.

BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

The Liberal Party of Alberta would provide for the certification of a bargaining agent for the Civil Services employees of Alberta.

During the initial negotiations with the certified bargaining agent, a Liberal government would endeavour to reach an agreement on a provision for binding arbitration in essential services. These essential services would not be arbitrarily selected by the government, but arrived at through negotiations.

AGRICULTURE

The farmer still buys most of his equipment, supplies and material in a partially protected market where the increased earnings of organized labour and increased company profits are directly reflected in everything he buys, whereas the

farmer still have to sell his products in a largely unprotected market place.

There are no magic solutions, but we believe that we can at least begin to close the economic gap.

FARM COMMODITY INSURANCE

A Liberal government would bring in a government operated contributory complete line of commodity insurance for farmers covering animals and crops. The government would provide the initial funding and bear a percentage of the administration costs of such a plan with the policy decisions of such a plan being a joint government - insures responsibility. It would be a vital form of insurance for everyone who is in danger of losing a crop or animals from hail, disease, flood, snow, frost, pests, etc.

MOBILE LABORATORIES

A Liberal government would take more essential services to the farmer and therefore assist him in cutting down his operating expenses. Our mobile labs would make regular visits to districts and provide soil testing and preliminary testing for

animal and crop disease, as well as dispense essential information of interest to the farmers in the specific areas that the lab is located.

VETERINARY SCIENCE COLLEGE

We propose that a new Veterinary Science College be established in central Alberta. Farmers in central Alberta are raising an increasing amount of cattle, hogs, chickens and there is a heavy demand on the special services offered by veterinarians. Alberta must have its own veterinary college. Such a college would have mobile training teams circulating throughout the province offering practical advice and information in animal husbandary, nutrition, breeds, etc.

LINE-OF-CREDIT FINANCING

A Liberal government has proposed to create a Bank of Alberta from the existing Treasury Branches. The Bank of Alberta would have a special agriculture department which would be directed to provide line-of-credit financing to Alberta farmers.

The credit needs of farmers will continue to increase in the future if farmers are to have the economic facilities to expand and make greater gains from better units of operation.

Farmers have borrowed on an item by item basis for years. A time consuming and often frustrating experience that has been discarded by most other businessmen years ago.

We believe that line-of-credit financing by the Bank of Alberta will meet the demands of modern farming.

1. A farmer would estimate his probable credit needs in advance. This calls for careful planning and a realistic assessment of the farm business throughout the year, plus a good relationship between the farmer and the Agriculture Branch of the Bank.
2. The farmer would be expected to monitor his performance and modify his operation when conditions warrant change and keep the Bank informed at regular periods regarding these adjustments.
3. The farmer would submit a profit and loss statement of his past operation along with a complete inventory of farm and personal resources.
4. Provide an operating budget for the following year's operation and submit a very simple cash flow sheet.

By setting up this system of line-of-credit financing used by modern business, we believe that a farmer will be able to operate more efficiently and save a great deal of time and money on the problems of financing. In short, we recommend a

banking system that is not entirely "collateral security" conscious but instead will recognize "growth potential" without specific government funding.

LAND USE PLAN

The Liberal Party is concerned about the amount of good agricultural land that is being turned into small holdings, urban sprawl and industrial complexes near large urban centres. The Liberal Party would declare moratorium on all 20 acre development pending the introduction of our "land use plan".

We therefore propose that a "Land Use Plan" be established in Alberta that would provide guidelines for Regional Planning Authorities. Land is a unique resource that once destroyed can rarely be restored without high cost. It is imperative that we evaluate the land around our urban centres and determine its classification and possible future use.

Areas of high agricultural potential for market garden crops should be protected now since we may have to rely on these rich soils to feed more and more Canadians. Furthermore, proper planning can result in these protected areas providing excellent green belts between urban communities.

NATIONAL MARKETING LEGISLATION

We believe that, in the long run, the farmers must have more control of the marketing of their products if they are ever to receive a reasonable return for their labours and for their investments in machinery and land.

We believe that National Marketing Plans and systems are part of the answer to the problem, but it is essential that the producer become more deeply involved in the preparation of the necessary legislation and in particular, that the farmer have majority control of all national systems.

The farmer should decide what commodities he wants brought under any national marketing scheme and at what time.

At the provincial government, we would undertake the responsibility for providing hearings throughout Alberta on the various forms of marketing legislation to be considered, and would provide a discussion white paper on the establishment and function of provincial marketing boards which might come under Federal enabling legislation with emphasis on the "opting in" aspect as no marketing scheme should be put into force unless the producers want it.

ALBERTA POWER AND WATER AUTHORITY

A Liberal Government will create an Alberta Power and Water Authority which will be responsible for:

1. The construction of all dams in the Province of Alberta.
2. The distribution of power in Alberta to:
 - (a) Rural electrification associations.
 - (b) Municipalities.
 - (c) Private power companies.
3. Hold hearings on all proposed:
 - (a) dams
 - (b) diversion schemes
 - (c) irrigation programs.
4. Establish Regional Water Boards.
5. Be invested with the power to investigate, hold hearings and grant applications for power franchises in Alberta after first establishing as to whether the granting of any franchise to any private power company is in the public interest.
6. Establish a study on the long range needs for water in the Province of Alberta.
7. The Liberal government will provide funds for the Alberta Power and Water Authority in order that the Authority may, on the request of any Rural Electrification Association or

municipality, purchase the assets of that Association or municipality at a price to be negotiated and thereafter provide power directly from the Authority.

8. The Liberal long range power policy would be one of encouraging private competitive ownership of the means of generating power, the public ownership of a trunk power grid throughout the province, and the consumer cooperative ownership of the distribution facilities.

WOMENS LIBERATION

We believe that women cannot be truly liberated until we are able to provide them with certain essential freedoms to enable them to take advantage of the increasing number of choices open to the modern woman.

1. Day care centres for pre-school children.
2. Provincial government support for kindergarten and other forms of early childhood education.
3. A provincial program of family planning and birth control information and facilities.
4. Together with an "open admissions" policy for university and college entrance, grants and bursaries would be available for adult women students who are renewing their education.

5. Development of special classes within our educational system to enable women who have interrupted their education to "catch up" and "brush up".
6. A complete study of our provincial legislation to ensure that no discriminatory legislation exists in our laws.
7. Encouragement of women legislators and participation in public life.

THE CONSUMER

A Liberal government will put teeth into the Department of Consumer Affairs. The primary function of this department will be the education of the public and protection of the consumer.

This department will also be responsible for:

1. The appointment of senior representatives to provincial Boards to represent the interests of the consumer.
2. Require the licensing of credit reporting agencies in order to regulate their activities in collecting and reporting information concerning individuals.
3. Require that a copy of an adverse credit report be made available to the individual concerned and in the event that the report is in error, requiring the agency to immediately issue a corrected report.

4. A consumer education program be established as part of the education curriculum in the Alberta school systems. This program should begin at the grade six level.
5. A department to monitor prices, wholesale and on the shelf, and to report unusual changes to the Minister who will be given teeth to deal with price gougers swiftly and justly.

MEDICAL CARE COSTS

A Liberal government would introduce legislation to eliminate the cash medicare premiums in the Province of Alberta. Premiums would be collected with the income tax on a sliding scale thereby increasing efficiency, doing away with a direct subsidy and putting the heaviest charge on the high income earner.

Health care services represent our largest single expenditure in this province. It is time to recognize that preventative medicine in the form of actively sought after good health is a civic responsibility --- we must consider a large assault on the lack of physical fitness, sports facilities, etc.

NATURAL RESOURCE ROYALTIES

A Liberal government would conduct public hearings into a review of the old royalty system on natural resources. We

believe that a new system employing the "contract" method in conjunction with a publicly owned marketing board would be fairer to both free enterprise and the provincial treasury. We believe such a system would also create Canadian ownership as well as make it easier to reach a long term agreement with the federal government on taxing.

The "contract" method is one whereby free enterprise bids on selected tracts of land put out by the provincial government to enter the lands and explore, drill and develop if oil or gas is found, the oil and gas on behalf of the provincial government and deliver such oil and gas back to the provincial government at a set price (contract price) without any royalties or mineral taxes payable. The province then makes its income by re-selling this oil and gas through it's marketing board to the different purchasers at a higher price than what the oil and gas was delivered to them under contract. This method gives stability of price and regulations to the entrepreneur as well as mobility to the provincial government on the pricing of its products within Alberta, within Canada and abroad.

THE ENVIRONMENT

We recognize the concern of all Albertans for preserving an environment in which future industrial and human growth can be achieved without detriment to one or the other.

With this in mind, we would carry out an immediate survey of all potential wilderness areas, in order to establish in perpetuity many new Wilderness Parks, large enough to make ecological sense.

In the case of all future strip-mining operations, a complete rehabilitation "blue-print", together with adequate bonding, will require approval before any permits are issued. A system of forestry management licences, revokable in the case of abuse or neglect, would be instituted in a similar manner.

We would establish an independent Pollution Control Commission, which would be responsible for the setting up and enforcement of standards of air, water, noise and soil pollution control.

And a number of Regional Parks and Recreation Commissions would be created for the purpose of ensuring the formation of the necessary increased leisure areas for the citizens of the province.

We would establish a licensing authority for any new business wishing to locate in Alberta in order to control the quality and quantity of job demand the business will create in Alberta. We are interested in those businesses which encourage the growth of each Albertan's quality of life, not population growth alone.

THE LARGE CITIES

We have expanded upon our view of the necessity for encouraging the growth of smaller urban areas as an alternative to the unlimited expansion of cities such as Edmonton and Calgary. This is because we recognize, as do these cities themselves, that such untrammelled urban sprawl is not in their best interests nor in the best interests of their surrounding areas.

At the same time, we also realize that the seeds of counter-acting some of these associated problems lie in the base of the relationships between the cities and the provincial and federal governments.

We believe that those senior governments must accept such urban municipalities as a third and equal partner in the governmental structure of our country.

We would work to create a partnership between the province and these cities so that they would be in a position to broaden and/or change their tax base in order to cope with increasing needs and problems, and we would maintain standing committees to insure ongoing consultation on all matters of planning and policy-making that directly affects their future development.

NATIVE PEOPLES

We will work with the native people of Alberta to assist them in the solving of problems facing their communities and their peoples.

While we see some developments taking place on Indian reserves as a result of their access to sub-surface mineral revenues, the Metis colonies, also on Crown land, are denied access to such special funds for development purposes. We would bring in measures aimed at correcting this situation.

We would also establish a Native Development Agency. Working in conjunction with representatives of native organizations, this Agency would ensure that all proposed provincial development plans include the recognition of the needs and potential of native people, and would specify those particular resource needs --- financial, human, and physical --- desired by and included in the programs which they themselves would design.

For the Treaty Indian people of Alberta, we would assure access to all provincial services which they feel they need, and would do so without harm to their treaty relationship with the federal government.

In addition, we would urge the federal government to act

immediately to clarify those issues --- the status of the treaties in today's world, the fulfilling of treaty promises, particularly in the area of land entitlement, and the settlement of aboriginal rights claims --- which are prime concern of Alberta Indians.

GENERAL AIM

We believe Albertans are tired of this "once-every-four-years" cycle, and are not impressed by it.

Nor do we intend to conjure up wonderful visions of "pie-in-the sky" for Albertans --- visions which are incapable of being achieved without huge increases in public taxation, however much this aspect may be obscured in the standard campaign procedures.

We believe, and we reiterate this simple theme, that Albertans want the prospect of a meaningful job; the telling that Alberta belongs to them; the prospect of a place to raise their families in confidence; the prospect of a province unravaged by irresponsible industrial exploitation; the prospect of a society in which all Albertans, young and old, native and foreign-born alike, may develop their talents and abilities, and enjoy the returns of this development.

Our policy is structured toward the achievement of these basic ends for the individual, not a powerful, populous, or industrial Alberta. We, the Liberal Party, would re-dedicate government to helping the individual in his pursuit of liberty and happiness with the concentration being not only the individuals financial growth but growth of his or her quality of life. Growth in the individual's freedom and happiness will be our guiding principal.