

PLATFORM 1982

The New Brunswick Liberal program will stimulate economic recovery and ease the social consequences caused by current provincial economic conditions.

Stimulating the economy will require new innovative approaches. We have gone beyond the point in this province when continued spending in the traditional way is contributing positively to economic renewal. Instead, government economic and social policy decisions during the past 12 years in New Brunswick have produced an increasingly dependent society.

Sixty thousand social assistance recipients ...forty thousand people unemployed....one in every seven New Brunswickers directly dependent on government assistance just to survive. This is the legacy of twelve years of Hatfield rule in New Brunswick.

It's time to give New Brunswickers the opportunity to develop their maximum potential.

The platform of the New Brunswick Liberal Party reflects our goal to achieve economic recovery in New Brunswick by putting our people back to work. It is only through employment that people will escape the trap of dependency and poverty.

It is also through employment that the province of New Brunswick can find its way back to economic stability. Working people generate revenues which government needs to finance essential services.

All of the policies we endorse have been formulated with economic recovery and renewal in mind. Most have a self-financing aspect, based on the fact that increased revenues result from increased employment.

Where new policies are proposed, such as the programs for senior citizens they are done to address the real financial and social needs of the most vulnerable citizens of the province during the current tough economic times.

The steps we will take to stimulate the New Brunswick economy by reviving the work ethic in New Brunswickers will not conflict with private enterprise. To the contrary, getting New Brunswick working again will have very positive benefits for the business and industrial communities: a renewed climate of confidence for investment and responsible management of the economy.

The socio-economic policies which the Liberal Party of New Brunswick endorses are the fundamental change in approach that our province needs.

We are committed to a co-ordinated attack on economic problems on the one hand and social consequences on the other.

After 12 years of economic deterioration and declining levels of public services, it's time for a change to new initiatives. The Liberal Party has the team to get New Brunswick working again.

## JOBS

The most compelling issue in New Brunswick today is unemployment and the fear of losing a job. The economic price of unemployment is staggering. The social consequences are often tragic.

Job creation and job preservation are the focus of our policies. It is our commitment to create 20,000 jobs by the end of 1983.

To assist us in achieving that commitment, a Premier's Council on Economic Development will be established. The Council will advise the government on implementation of short and long-term economic strategies. The Council, consisting of the province's leading industrialists, business people and labor leaders will be asked to take to the national and international business communities an invitation to invest in the huge potential of our province and people.

A Liberal government will establish a \$20-million Small Business Development Fund. It will be used to assist New Brunswickers who have innovative and imaginative ideas but are unable to obtain financing through conventional lending sources or existing government programs.

Small businesses, with long-term viability potential which are encountering financial problems because of current interest rates will also be able to obtain low-interest loans to carry them through periods of financial difficulty.

A third element of this fund is the Youth Business Opportunities Project. Interest-free loans will be provided to students over 18 for small business projects in the period April 1 to October 1 each year. Extensions of the loans will be provided to students who are able to continue their education also and operate their small business projects.

Small business offers the greatest potential for expanded job opportunities. During the past 12 years, piecemeal taxation policies, red tape and a preference for investing in promoters from outside New Brunswick have reduced small business to a minor consideration in economic planning. It's time to change this negative and destructive attitude.

Inequities in the present taxation of small business will be a major consideration of a Commission which will recommend revision of the provincial taxation system.

Red tape, a major impediment to small business development, will be reduced to a minimum.

A major thrust of job creation programs will be short-term public works projects coupled with long-term development policies, based on stimulating private enterprise.

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The New Brunswick Liberal Party believes that the majority of people on social assistance and unemployment insurance want to work and will work if they are given the opportunity to do so.

For these people, a Liberal government will turn a welfare cheque into paycheque. We will negotiate an agreement with the Government of Canada to create jobs for employable social assistance recipients through the use of social assistance funds and a provincial supplement of \$60 per week. Persons in need and unable to work will receive financial assistance to live in dignity.

Maximum use will be made of the federal unemployment insurance job creation program to put unemployed persons back to work.

A variety of public works projects will be initiated to match the skills of the unemployed to the needs of communities across the province. These will include:

- (1) A massive reforestation program of planting, thinning, and clearing;
- (2) Upgrading of sub-standard housing, including removal of ureaformaldehyde insulation and home repairs for senior citizens;
- (3) Renovating public buildings to make them accessible to the disabled;
- (4) Wide-ranging tourism development with projects from maintenance of public campgrounds to control of soil erosion on the province's beaches;

(5) Community services, including support to senior citizens and child care projects;

(6) Having skilled people teach needed skills to those who have none;

(7) A provincial marketing strategy to promote the sale of goods produced by New Brunswick crafts people.

A Liberal government will respond to the crucial need for effective employment strategies for youth. We will put in place a program of job creation and training geared to the unemployed young people of our province.

A Rural Recreation Program will be introduced which will employ jobless young people and fill recreational vacuums across the Province.

The primary objective of a Liberal government is to revitalize the economy of New Brunswick, emphasizing maximum employment through innovative use of our people and resources.

## INTEREST, BUSINESS RECOVERY

The effects of high interest rates on homeowners, would-be homeowners, and small businesses will continue to be felt for some time in New Brunswick. We are committed to reducing the effects of high interest rates.

We will stimulate recovery from interest rate pressure on the Provincial economy, by holding farm adjustment board and small business loans to a maximum of 12 per cent.

Our Mortgage Assistance Program will provide interest rates of 12.5% for homeowners renewing their mortgages or purchasing a new home, effective from September 20, 1982.

Assistance is available for 18 months on purchases of existing homes and for those renewing their mortgages on their present homes, from September 20, 1982.

Persons buying newly constructed homes or persons building their own homes will qualify for assistance for 24 months, from September 20, 1982.

In both instances, the mortgage interest rate will be fixed at 12.5 per cent. On a 25-year \$35,000 mortgage, the payment will be \$373 a month for the duration of the program.

The 12.5 per cent interest rate will apply to the first \$40,000 of the mortgage.



The Plan will stimulate 2,500 housing starts, reviving employment opportunities in housing construction and forest industries. As many as 10,000 jobs can be created in the building of new homes.

A rent control tribunal will be established with powers to roll back excessive rent increases. This protection of tenants from unfair exploitation will be effective from July 1, 1982.

## SENIOR CITIZENS

Rapid inflation in the last decade has created economic conditions which are especially difficult for the senior citizens of our province, most of whom live on low fixed incomes.

A Liberal government will make it possible for senior citizens to remain in their own homes as long as their physical and mental health permits.

Vastly improved in-home services will be provided, including health care, home-making, recreational, visitation, transportation and counselling programs.

We will eliminate provincial and municipal property taxes on residences owned and occupied by persons 65 years of age and over, compensating municipalities for lost revenues. Ownership of these properties is the result of hard work and accumulated savings for which the senior citizens of our province have been taxed enough over the years.

The Medicare program will be extended to pay for all eye and dental care for persons 65 years of age and over, including the full costs of eye glasses and dentures.

## ENERGY

The Liberal Party of New Brunswick believes that the people of New Brunswick should benefit from excessive profits of the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission.

During the last three years actual profits have amounted to \$116-million, compared with projections of \$49-million, based on a uniform system of accounting.

There have been seven power rate increases totalling more than 200 per cent between 1975 and 1981.

A Liberal government will eliminate the monthly service charge on residential and general service electricity bills, effective April 1, 1982. The charges were introduced by the Hatfield government in 1977.

This policy means an annual average saving of approximately \$100 for every family and small business in New Brunswick, retroactive to April 1, 1982. A Liberal government will credit the December bills of families and small businesses for the service charge they have paid since April, an average of about \$70.00. The same benefit will be provided to customers of Civic Hydro, Saint John, Edmundston Light and Power Co. and the Perth-Andover Electric Light Commission.

Currently, the N. B. Power residential service charge is \$7.90 a month in urban areas and \$8.90 in rural areas. The small business rate is \$7.90. These charges are higher than in seven Canadian jurisdictions.

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Rate increases proposed by N.B. Power will be subject to examination and approval of a revamped Public Utilities Board.

## EDUCATION

Economic renewal depends on an education system which gives people the tools to obtain productive employment. A Liberal government is committed to a revitalization of the educational system in New Brunswick, thus restoring education to the priority position it lost under the Hatfield administration.

A Liberal government is committed to a universal system of public kindergartens to be operative September 1, 1983. Four hundred new jobs will be created for teachers. Approximately 12,000 New Brunswick children will gain the same opportunity for kindergartens which most Canadians of their age have enjoyed for years.

We recognize the need for a skilled and educated labour force to realize the future potential of New Brunswick. We are committed to:

(1) A complete revamping of the Community College system in New Brunswick, with emphasis on expanded course offerings and effective forecasting of labour market needs;

(2) A review of high school curricula with the aim of making them more relevant to the demands of the labour market. There will be province-wide implementation of a Life Skill course to equip students with such skills as consumer awareness, credit management, personal development and other basic knowledge.

(3) Promotion of a federal-provincial task force to study post-secondary education in all aspects;

(4) Negotiation of an agreement with the government of Canada to ensure that student loans are available without consideration of a parental contribution table. This recognizes that young people are prepared to accept responsibility for financing their own educations.

A Young government will create a Youth Advisory Board to research, recommend and oversee implementation on issues of concern to youth of New Brunswick.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### FORESTRY

For New Brunswick to achieve an effective economic recovery, it is essential to initiate measures to protect and enhance our natural resources.

A strong, vital forest is fundamental to the future of New Brunswick. It must provide maximum benefits to the province, particularly in terms of jobs.

We will amend the Crown Lands and Forests Act to return day-to-day control, administration and management of the forests to the people through their government.

A long-term wood supply will be guaranteed to major companies.

Cutting rights and a guaranteed wood supply at fair prices for smaller operators will be assured.

A Liberal government will give immediate attention to weight restriction and weight regulations which are adversely affecting those who haul wood from the forests to the processors.

Recent experience in Ontario has demonstrated that the budworm is susceptible to elimination by means other than the current chemical spray method in New Brunswick.

Intensive research can lead to a means of controlling the budworm which will enable us to end the current method of spraying within four years.

To achieve that goal, a \$2-million- a- year Forest Protection Research Fund will be established, to stimulate a more concerted attack on a situation causing increasing concern to a growing number of New Brunswickers.



## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture ranks third among the primary industries of New Brunswick in its contribution to real domestic production. The on-farm agricultural labour force has been stagnant at 6,000 jobs, since 1970. Effective agricultural policies can mean a substantial increase in the present 18,000 spin-off jobs in transportation, food-processing, and agricultural services. Yet, after 10 years of Hatfield government there are 26% fewer farms in New Brunswick and 19% fewer acres of farmland.

The Liberal Party of New Brunswick has consistently maintained that the key to a vital and vigorous agricultural community is for government policies which promote agricultural development and protect farmers' investments.

A Liberal government will establish a special Agriculture Development Fund of \$5-million on April 1, 1983. The purpose of the Agriculture Development Fund is to maintain and stimulate land development, drainage, land clearing, and land utilization. Community initiatives and market opportunities will also be aided by this fund.

The Agriculture Development Fund will provide money to continue and expand programs in the Agriculture Subsidiary Agreement, which expires March 31, 1983.

To cushion the effects of high interest rates on farmers, a Liberal government will hold farm Adjustment Board interest rates to 12%. This will provide the stability that farmers need to cope with interest rates and the high costs of long-term mortgage financing.

In consultation with farm organizations, concerted action will be taken to correct problems in the potato industry, including rising costs, declining yields, inadequate marketing and production, negligible research, insufficient experimentation and low levels of agricultural field services.

Agricultural courses will be available at the high school level to stimulate interest of young New Brunswickers in farming as a vocation.

## FISHERIES

Much more must be done to expand the potential of the provincial fishing industry.

The Department of Fisheries will take a more aggressive position in representing the interests of all sectors of the industry.

A Fisheries School will be established in Charlotte County.

Winter training programs and courses will keep fishermen up-to-date on new technology, quality improvement and marketing.

Additional boat service facilities will be established in Gloucester, Northumberland, Kent and Charlotte Counties.

Grants of up to 50 per cent of the cost will be paid to fishermen purchasing modern, effective life-saving equipment.

Interest-free long-term loans of up to 50 per cent of the cost will be available to commercial fishermen wishing to convert their boat engines from gasoline to diesel fuel.

## YOUTH

A Liberal government is committed to the establishment of a Youth Advisory Board.

The Youth Advisory Board will be made up of high school, community college, and university students as well as working youth. It will provide a direct line of communication to the Premier.

In co-operation with the insurance industry, we will seek to end discrimination against accident-free young drivers.

We are committed to the creation of jobs in New Brunswick to give young people a future in their own province.

A special program will be the Youth Business Opportunities Project, providing students over 18 with interest-free loans to establish small business enterprises.

To assist students in obtaining post-secondary education, we will negotiate with the Government of Canada to remove the parental contribution table on student loan applicants for both university and community college students. This will permit the student to receive aid on the basis of actual need.

The Community College system will be completely revamped. Emphasis will be put on ensuring access to community colleges so that all who desire training can receive it. Course offerings will be based on effective forecasting of the job market.

High school curricula will be adjusted ensuring that courses will provide students with the ability to meet the requirements of the job markets of the future.

A Young government will introduce rent controls to ensure that tenants are protected against excessive rent increases.

There are many issues in New Brunswick which cannot be categorized but which demand government action.

These include:

#### EQUALITY OF RIGHTS

A Liberal government will, in the spirit of the Official Languages Act and equality of opportunity, ensure that both official language groups receive public services in the language of their choice and that they participate fully in decision-making at every level of the public service.

#### HIGHWAY PATROL

The Liberal Party regards the Highway Patrol as having been established as the nucleus of a politically dominated police force. A provincial police force is unacceptable to us and to the majority of New Brunswick citizens.

The Highway Patrol will be disbanded with their duties being resumed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

As many as possible members of the Highway Patrol will be re-assigned to other duties, including enforcement of weight restrictions and non-criminal motor vehicle infractions.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

A comprehensive ambulance service will be established.

Leasing of a government aircraft will be terminated, to be replaced by Ambulance Helicopters based at strategic locations in the province to ensure rapid access to emergency and regional hospital services.