

STATEMENT ISSUED BY LIBERAL LEADER LEN STIRLING

MARCH 23, 1982.

I WAS BORN AND RAISED ON THE WEST COAST, IN CORNER BROOK.

IT'S WHERE I MADE MY FIRST FRIENDS, AND LEARNED THE IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES THAT I HAVE CARRIED WITH ME THROUGHOUT MY LIFETIME.

IT WAS IN CORNER BROOK THAT MY FAMILY HAD ITS HOME. TODAY, THE ROLE OF THE HOME, AND FAMILY, IS BECOMING ERODED, FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS IS THE COST OF OWNING A HOME.

FOR NEWFOUNDLANDERS AND LABRADORIANS, THE HOME, WHETHER A CABIN IN THE WOODS, A SALT BOX BY THE SHORE, OR A MODERN BUNGALOW IN A CITY SUBDIVISION, IS AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL, OF FAMILY, AND FRIENDS, AND COMMUNITY.

AT PRESENT THE PROBLEM OF OWNING A HOME IS GETTING GREATER AND GREATER; YOUNG COUPLES ARE FORCED TO FORGET ABOUT EVER OWNING ONE; OTHERS HAVE TO FEAR THE INDIGNITY OF BEING THROWN OUT ONTO THE STREET, WHEN THE MORTGAGE PAYMENT IS OVERDUE.

MEANWHILE, OUR BUILDING TRADES PEOPLE WANDER AIMLESSLY ABOUT THE UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICES, AND OUR CONTRACTORS WORRY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF BANKRUPTCY.

THIS HAS TO STOP.

MOST OF THE ATTENTION FOR SPIRALLING COSTS, ACCOMPANIED BY HIGH MORTGAGE RATES, HAS BEEN FOCUSED ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. WHILE I REALIZE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES, MOST ANALYSTS AGREE THAT THE HIGH INTEREST POLICIES OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ARE THE CAUSE OF HIGH INTERESTS HERE.

I AM NOT GOING TO SPEND MY TIME BLAMING OTHER GOVERNMENTS, EITHER NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL, HOWEVER; I INTEND TO BE PREMIER OF THIS PROVINCE, TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS WE HAVE HERE, NOT IN OTTAWA, OR WASHINGTON. I INTEND TO GOVERN IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, FOR NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR. FOR THIS REASON I WILL OFFER SOLUTIONS, NOT PROBLEMS. I WILL ENCOURAGE, NOT BLAME.

HOUSING IS CLEARLY A PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE CONSTITUTION. A LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE ON ITS DUTY TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF THIS PROVINCE, BY TAKING THE INITIATIVE TO SOLVE THE NEAR CRISIS IN HOUSING. I HAVE SPENT MANY HOURS DISCUSSING THE PROBLEMS OF HOME-OWNERS, WOULD-BE HOMEBUYERS, HOMEBUILDERS, AND THOSE IN PUBLIC HOUSING ACROSS THE PROVINCE.

IN THIS ELECTION THE LIBERAL PARTY OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR WILL BE OFFERING POSITIVE
STEPS THAT WILL BRING THE COMATOSE PROVINCIAL ECONOMY
BACK TO LIFE, AND RESTORE MUTUAL RESPECT AND TRUST
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT IN ST. JOHN'S AND THAT IN OTTAWA.

WE SAY WE WANT TO MAKE WORK, NOT WAR.

THIS IS THE FIRST PLANK IN A PLATFORM OF
INNOVATION AND IDEAS, FILLED WITH CONFIDENCE IN THE
PEOPLE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR.

THIS 10 POINT PROGRAM WHICH I OFFER TO THE
PEOPLE OF THIS PROVINCE, WILL, I FEEL, MEET THEREAL
NEEDS OF ALL OUR PEOPLE.

THE PROGRAM IS AS FOLLOWS:

1. ENACT LEGISLATION TO PREVENT FORECLOSURES.

SIMILAR LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN SASKATCHEWAN, PROTECTS THE MORTGAGE HOLDER FROM FORECLOSURE UNTIL THE END OF 1982. IT DEALS ONLY WITH THE PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

2. ARRANGE "LEASE-BACKS" WITH MORTGAGE HOLDERS IN DANGER OF DEFAULTING.

THIS TIES IN WITH (1); IN THE CASE OF A MORTGAGE HOLDER DEFAULTING, THE GOVERNMENT HAS A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO INTERVENE, SO THAT THE INDIVIDUAL WILL NOT HAVE TO SUFFER THE INDIGNITY OF LOSING HIS OR HER HOME. THE GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE Nfld. AND LABRADOR HOUSING CORPORATION WOULD TAKE ON THE ROLE OF CO-SIGNER, UNTIL THE INDIVIDUAL HAD THE MEANS TO PAY. THE NLHC WOULD LEASE THE HOUSE BACK TO THE INDIVIDUAL, UNTIL HE OR SHE COULD MAINTAIN THE PAYMENTS.

3. PROVIDE MORTGAGE SUBSIDIES FOR FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS.

THE MORTGAGE SUBSIDY WOULD LAST FOR TWELVE MONTHS, AND WOULD HAVE A 'FLOOR' OF 15% INTEREST RATE. A SIMILAR PROGRAM IN NOVA SCOTIA HAS PROVED SUCCESSFUL.

4. CUT THE RED TAPE IN DEALING WITH CROWN LAND, AND SELL IT AT A NOMINAL COST TO FIRST TIME HOME BUYERS.

THE PROBLEMS OF OBTAINING CROWN LAND ARE STILL SIGNIFICANT. THE POSSIBILITIES OF OBTAINING CROWN LAND ARE LIMITED, BY DEMANDS FOR FULL SERVICING OF THE LAND, AND THE LACK OF A COMPLETE INVENTORY OF THE CROWN LAND BORDERING OUR CITIES AND TOWNS. THESE PROBLEMS ARE NOT INSURMOUNTABLE. A LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD SET ASIDE THESE PROBLEMS, AND PUT INTO ACTION A FIVE YEAR PROGRAM TO TURN THIS LAND OVER TO FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS.

5. ESTABLISH A PROPERTY TAX WRITE-OFF.

THE INTRODUCTION OF PROPERTY TAX IN SOME COMMUNITIES HAS PROVEN A SIGNIFICANT BLOW. WE PROPOSE A "SLIDING-SCALE" PROPERTY TAX CREDIT ON THE PROVINCIAL INCOME TAX FORM.

6. BUILD MORE PUBLIC HOUSING UNDER CMHC

A LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD FIGHT FOR EVERY SINGLE FEDERAL DOLLAR AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC HOUSING CONSTRUCTION. THE P.C. GOVERNMENT WAITED SIX MONTHS TO CALL TENDERS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING. IT WAITED TO MAKE THE TENDER CALLS A PRE-ELECTION "ANNOUNCEMENT", WHILE CONTRACTORS AND POSSIBLE TENANTS HAD TO WAIT.

7. CUT THE SALES TAX ON BUILDING MATERIALS TO 6% FOR TWO YEARS.

WHILE GOVERNMENT REVENUES FROM BUILDING MATERIALS WOULD BE REDUCED, THE RESULTANT SPUR FROM INCREASED HOUSING STARTS WOULD MAKE UP FOR THAT. THE REDUCTION IN COST TO THE BUILDER WOULD BE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF \$1,500.00. THIS WOULD REDUCE THE COST OF THE HOME ITSELF, AND CREATE A GREATER DEMAND.

8. KEEP THE AHOP MORTGAGE HOLDERS IN THEIR HOMES.

OF ALL THOSE PEOPLE RENEWING THEIR MORTGAGES IN THE YEAR TO COME, THE PLIGHT OF THOSE FAMILIES IN ASSISTED HOME OWNERSHIP PROGRAM (AHOP) HOUSING IS THE SADDEST. ENCOURAGED TO BUY OR BUILD FIVE YEARS AGO, MANY ARE BEING FORCED TO MOVE WHEN THEIR MORTGAGE PAYMENTS TRIPLE OVERNIGHT. WE SAY THESE PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO THEIR HOMES, AND WOULD QUALIFY FOR SUBSIDIES FROM THE CURRENT RATE, TO 15%.

9. OPEN UP THE SUPPLY OF NLHC HOUSING, AND IMPROVE ITS QUALITY.

THE DEMAND FOR NLHC HOUSING IS GREAT; FAR MORE THAN THE SUPPLY. IF WE BELIEVE IN THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THE NEED FOR ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR THOSE LESS FORTUNATE, THEN WE MUST PROMOTE BOTH THE SUPPLY OF LOW COST HOUSING, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL DISTRICTS, AND UPGRADE ITS QUALITY.

10. OPEN UP NLHC DEVELOPMENTS, AND FREE THE ST. JOHN'S
SUBDIVISIONS TO THE OPEN MARKET.

THE PREMIER RECENTLY MADE AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE WOULD FREE UP A NUMBER OF SUBDIVISIONS IN THE PROVINCE, BY CUTTING THE PRICES ON AVAILABLE LOTS. HE FAILED TO MENTION THAT THE SUBDIVISION WHERE THESE 1,452 BUILDING LOTS WERE LOCATED HAVE GONE BEGGING FOR PROSPECTIVE BUYERS FOR YEARS, IN ACTUAL FACT, THE PREMIER DID NOT IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM OF SUBSIDIES, HE SIMPLY PERMITTED THE COST OF THOSE LOTS TO FALL FROM THE OVER INFLATED COST THEY HAD BEEN, TO A MORE REASONABLE LEVEL: CLOSE TO WHAT THE MARKET WOULD BEAR. HOWEVER, THE PREMIER DID NOT FREE SUBDIVISIONS IN THE ST. JOHN'S AREA TO THESE SAME "SUBSIDIES"; HE LEFT THEM OUT OF THE PROGRAM. CONTRACTORS TELL ME THAT THERE IS A DEMAND FOR THIS LAND, BUT IT IS OVER-VALUED AT ITS CURRENT PRICES. THE COWAN HEIGHTS DEVELOPMENT IN ST. JOHN'S HAS ONLY A FRACTION OF ITS 50 LOTS OCCUPIED.

A LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD FREE THESE LOTS UP TO THE PRESSURE OF THE MARKET PLACE, BUT NEVER PERMIT THEM TO GO ABOVE REASONABLE LEVEL. IT IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT'S JOB TO SPECULATE ON LAND.

AS WELL, THE LIBERAL PARTY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR DOES NOT FEEL IT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS TO HOLD COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE. THAT IS WHY WE HAVE RECOMMENDED IN THE PAST, AND WE PROMISE, AS A GOVERNMENT, TO DIVEST THE GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST IN THE ELIZABETH TOWERS COMPLEX, AND CHURCHILL SQUARE IN ST. JOHN'S. BOTH DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD BE UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE; AS WELL THEIR SALES WOULD GENERATE A MUCH NEEDED SOURCE OF REVENUE, IN THE MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, FOR THE PEOPLE OF OUR PROVINCE, WHICH COULD BE PUT TO WORK TO GENERATE NEW HOUSING STARTS AND SECURE HOMES UNDER OUR PROGRAM.

THESE PROPOSALS ARE EXAMPLES OF THE INNOVATION AND IMAGINATION THAT WE WILL APPLY TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR. WE DO NOT DISMISS OUR TASK LIGHTLY, AS OUR POLITICAL ADVERSARIES MIGHT. WHEN I MADE SIMILAR PROPOSALS LAST SEPTEMBER, THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSING, AND TOURISM, AND MINES, AND DEVELOPMENT, MR. WINDSOR, DISMISSED THEM IN LESS THAN 24 HOURS. OF OUR PROPOSAL ON LAND, HE HAD THE NERVE TO SUGGEST THAT THE COST OF BUILDING LOTS WAS NOT A FACTOR IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A HOUSE. THE IRONY

OF THIS STATEMENT IS THAT LAST WEEK, THE PREMIER PUT FORTH THE LOWERING OF THE COSTS OF NLHC BUILDING LOTS AS A HOUSING POLICY THAT WOULD GENERATE NEW CONSTRUCTION. I WONDER IF THE MINISTER HAS THE NERVE TO TELL THE PREMIER HIS EFFORTS ARE WORTHLESS.

THIS LIBERAL HOUSING POLICY IS NOT AN ILL-CONSIDERED STATEMENT. IT IS THE CULMINATION OF MANY HOURS OF CAREFUL RESEARCH, AND DISCUSSION. IT IS NOT ONE SIMPLE APPROACH, IT IS A COMPLEX, MULTI-FACETED WAY OF GETTING THIS PROVINCE'S TRADESMEN BACK TO WORK, IN AN INDUSTRY WHERE THERE IS 50% UNEMPLOYMENT, IT IS A WAY OF GETTING OUR SMALL BUSINESSES BACK TO WORK, BY SUPPLYING THE NEEDS OF THE HOUSING INDUSTRY; IT IS A WAY OF GETTING OUR CONTRACTORS BACK TO WORK, AND BACK TO SOLVENCY. AND MOST OF ALL, IT A WAY OF PROVIDING ACCOMODATION TO A PEOPLE WHO ARE ACCUSTOMED TO BEING ABLE TO REALIZE THE DREAM OF OWNING A HOME.

NEWFOUNDLANDERS AND LABRADORIANS ARE A PEOPLE WHO SEE NO SHAME IN DREAMING; OUR ANCESTORS DREAMED OF BUILDING A LIFE FOR THEMSELVES ON THIS ROCK BY THE SEA, AND IN THE NORTH, AND THEY SUCCEEDED. I BELIEVE IN THOSE DREAMS. I WILL WORK TO SEE THEM FULFILLED.

TERRY FOX SAID, "DREAMS COME TRUE WHEN PEOPLE TRY". FOR US IN GOVERNMENT TO FAIL TO HELP OUT PEOPLE, TO MAINTAIN THE TRADITION OF OWNING A HOME, IS TO BREAK FAITH WITH THE PEOPLE AND THE HISTORY OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR. THE HALF MEASURES OF THE P.C. GOVERNMENT ARE NOT ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH THE REAL PROBLEMS OF OUR PROVINCE. THIS DREAM, THIS GOAL, CAN REMAIN REALITY FOR OUR PEOPLE FOR YEARS TO COME, WITH INNOVATIONS LIKE THIS PROGRAM.

I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF NEWFOUNDLANDERS AND LABRADORIANS TO SUCCEED, GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY.

WE OFFER THESE MEASURES, AS OPPORTUNITIES, SO THAT WE MIGHT NOT BREAK FAITH WITH OUR PEOPLE, THEIR HOPES AND TRADITIONS.

A LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WILL SUCCEED.

WE WILL MAKE WORK
NOT WAR.