

PLATFORM

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF NOVA SCOTIA

As your Government, the purpose of our program and policies is to increase opportunity and raise the living standards of Nova Scotians, to achieve the maximum development of all our resources, especially the resources of our people.

As your Government, we believe the Program of Voluntary Economic Planning must play a central role in the continuing processes of economic development. Voluntary Economic Planning requires a close and continuing association of government and private citizen in establishing and achieving realistic, though challenging, economic goals.

All the resources of government will be pledged to this co-ordinated effort. To avoid conflict and inefficiency and redundant effort, all levels of government and agencies concerned must co-ordinate their plans and policies in Nova Scotia, including those of your Provincial Government, the Atlantic Development Board, the Cape Breton Development Corporation, ARDA, and other federal and municipal bodies.

The Government of Nova Scotia is prepared to undertake a substantial and wide ranging program to assist in the reorganization and rejuvenation of our rural economy in order

to make maximum use of the resources, of the land, and of the available skills of those who live on the land. Provincial officials are now giving detailed study to proposals of an ARDA task force for the nine Northern and Eastern Counties.

Notwithstanding these proposals, it will be the policy of the Government of Nova Scotia that government development programs and policies will be available to all sections of the Province in similar circumstances, in the belief that programs now appropriate for the nine Northern and Eastern Counties would be equally appropriate to other sections of Nova Scotia. Such programs as these, in the interests of rural redevelopment, will require the additional expenditure in the next term of office of many tens of millions of dollars by the Province, in association with the Government of Canada.

A large scale program of the nature proposed will be of constructive assistance to thousands of rural Nova Scotians, and the experience of your Provincial Government in recent years justifies its belief that a comprehensive development program can be successful. To achieve the desired objectives in rural development and redevelopment, the Government of Nova Scotia proposes to open negotiations with the Government of Canada.

The government believes that a firmly based agriculture industry, yielding a reasonable return for a reasonable effort, is of basic importance to the economic well being of the Province

and will continue to formulate and carry out policies based on this belief.

One problem of farming, arising from relatively low net income, is to find the capital to finance the heavy investments needed in order to meet the changing competitive situation of today and the future.

Recognizing this, many useful programs of assistance have been implemented, some of them this year, such as, new arrangements to ease the cost of borrowing for farm improvement, elimination of municipal taxation on farm equipment and livestock, a land consolidation program, and an extension of the government's fertilizer assistance program.

It is clear heavy additional assistance is needed. The government will provide additional help from provincial resources and has already requested the Government of Canada to begin discussions with the purpose of trying to work out with the Government of Canada a shared system of capital grants in order to provide more help than can be supplied from provincial resources alone.

If Nova Scotians as individuals and Nova Scotia as a Province are to enjoy reasonably equal opportunity in the modern economic community, we must provide an adequate program in education and training. Therefore, we shall continue to forward our comprehensive program and strive to maintain the present spirit

of co-operation with local authorities, teachers and administrators, which is essential to the continuing steady improvement of our education system. We believe that the requirements for further desirable administrative arrangements can be achieved without discord.

The Foundation Program for education will continue to be reviewed annually, and action taken based upon recommendations of a Committee representing the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, the Association of Urban and Municipal School Boards, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, and the Department of Education.

Having assumed full responsibility for Vocational Schools, and having launched the Municipal Services Plan, the next major step the Government will take to assist Municipal Governments and municipal taxpayers will be to increase further the provincial share of the cost of the Public School system by increasing grants toward school construction and debt service charges, and by steadily increasing the provincial share of the cost of operating the Foundation Program for education.

The Government of Nova Scotia, further, has urged the Federal Government to equalize Municipal, as well as Provincial, revenues. Were this done, some \$40,000,000 in additional revenues would be available each year to Nova Scotia, and this would be used to reduce the cost of education to Municipal

Governments. Our proposal had seemed to be accepted in principle by Federal authorities and we expect the Government of Canada ultimately to act upon it, although not under the existing tax sharing agreement.

The Government will further encourage the recruitment of teachers and the steady improvement of their qualifications. We will proceed with the recommendation of the Fletcher Committee to establish an Institute of Education.

Tenders will be called this spring and summer for the construction of seven new Regional Vocational Schools to be built without cost to the municipalities, excepting the acquisition of the necessary land. Negotiations are in progress for local school authorities to take over at value the existing Vocational School at Yarmouth, as a result of the decision of the Provincial Administration to build a new Regional Vocational School on a larger site. Expansion is expected for all existing Vocational Schools within the near future. With the financial assistance of the Federal Government, the Provincial Government is now building a Technical Institute to serve Eastern Nova Scotia. Facilities of the Nova Scotia Technical Institute at Halifax and the Survey School at Lawrencetown are to be expanded.

So that the increasing number of Nova Scotians seeking entrance to our Universities will not be denied, further large scale assistance to higher education will be necessary. It will be the policy of this Government to provide such assistance, as

recommended by the University Grants Committee.

Your Government believes the interests of the community are best served when all qualified students seeking education beyond high school are able to obtain it. The present Student Loans provided by the Federal Government are now supplemented by a Bursary Plan initiated by the Government of Nova Scotia and extended further in this current year. Nova Scotia's Bursary Plan will be further extended, as and when the Federal Government enacts its Scholarship Program.

Adult Education will be encouraged, and to that end, the cost sharing proportions of the Foundation Program this year are being applied to the cost sharing of Adult Education courses, while preserving the 50% minimum, thus substantially reducing the percentage of cost formerly borne by less well-to-do municipal units and thereby increasing their ability to sponsor Adult Education courses. In co-operation with Federal authorities, the Provincial Government proposes to build three new Centers for Adult Vocational Training, with places for 4,500 students.

Because the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes the problems of our Municipal Governments in providing adequate services without imposing excessive taxation, the Province has assumed full responsibility for many costly services, including the operation of municipal mental hospitals, as well as general hospitals; the Province has increased its share of the mounting

cost of the Public School system and relieved Municipal Government of all financial responsibility for Vocational Training. In addition, the Province is now assisting, under its Municipal Services Program, in providing fire and police protection, street lighting and paving, and sewer and water services.

The Government of Nova Scotia recognizes the importance of vigorous and progressive Municipal Government. It is our intention to assume an increased percentage of the cost of the Public School system as these costs increase and to further improve the Municipal Services Program in the light of study and experience, in order to provide an increasing measure of Provincial co-operation with Municipal Governments and taxpayers.

Attractive communities with adequate services are essential to provincial development and, as well, to the health and well being of Nova Scotians.

The Provincial Government intends to further encourage prudent Community Planning, and to encourage adjoining communities to consider new arrangements for local government and co-operation.

A Provincial Water Commission will be established to co-ordinate the new systems of water supply being developed by the Atlantic Development Board and by the Province; and to provide local authorities with technical, professional and other assistance in meeting their water problems. Increased efforts will be

made to meet the problem of water pollution.

As part of our policy to improve transportation facilities, we will assist municipalities to establish local airfields for light aircraft.

We continue to regard the development of manufacturing industries as of basic importance to the future of Nova Scotia. Our development programs will be vigorously continued through the Department of Trade and Industry, through Industrial Estates Limited, and through our participation in the Cape Breton Development Corporation. Special attention will continue to be given to the steel industry in Cape Breton.

The present Board of Industrial Estates Limited has been increasingly active during the past ten years, and the responsibilities of this Provincial Crown Corporation have vastly increased. We propose to enlarge the present Board, providing for more regional representation and more citizen participation in this vital effort.

We will encourage the exploration and development of our mineral resources, giving attention to the increased significance of the potential of our off-shore mineral resources.

The Government will participate substantially in the proposed Cape Breton Development Corporation.

The emphasis in Welfare for the past several years has been on the development of new programs and strengthening old programs with additional financial assistance and higher standards.

The Government believes that in the immediate future the emphasis on Rehabilitation Services must be greatly increased and additional funds will be made available for this purpose.

The Government proposes to establish a Housing Incentive Program to encourage the municipal level of government and co-operative groups to make new housing starts and increase the supply of housing where this may be most needed. To accomplish this, the Province will make grants to Municipal Units and approved Agencies for units constructed for the encouragement of housing.

The Government will appoint a Youth Director to serve an Inter-Departmental Committee to co-ordinate all government programs concerned with youth, for the purpose of ensuring the maximum opportunity to develop the full potential of this great resource.

It is our aim to achieve portability of pensions, to the extent this is feasible in the near future, and we will co-operate with the other Provinces to achieve this objective, which appears likely to take the form of vesting arrangements.

It being now approximately ten years since this Government appointed the MacKinnon Commission to recommend changes in the Workmen's Compensation Act, we propose to overhaul the present legislation to keep it up to date with present requirements.

Part 3 of this Act is already under study by a Commission.

We will support the efforts of the Continuing Committee of Labour and Management to improve industrial relations in Nova Scotia.

The program to achieve full equality in human rights will be pursued vigorously through the Human Rights Commission.

The Government of Nova Scotia, in co-operation with the Government of Canada, will provide the people of this Province with a full and comprehensive program of insured physicians' services effective July 1st, 1968. These benefits will apply to all residents of Nova Scotia and will be provided without charge to the individual.

The Government proposes to embark upon a program of Government-supported legal aid. An advisory body is being established to prepare recommendations as to the form and extent of this program.

We will appoint a representative, bi-partisan Commission to consider the problems arising from the increasing costs of election campaigns and the financing of political parties. Among other questions, the Commission will be asked to consider and recommend whether appropriate expenses of candidates should be financed from the Public Treasury, whether limits should be

placed by law on the election expenditures of candidates and parties, and whether candidates and parties should in future make a disclosure of political contributions.

We will continue to promote the development of the Tourist Industry. Additional campsites at Provincial Parks are to be provided, as well as expanded accommodation, restaurant and recreational facilities. We will undertake the development of one or more planned resort complexes so as to determine the usefulness of this concept.

We are sufficiently encouraged by the increasing rate of growth of our Tourist Industry to anticipate that the number of visitors to our Province within the next decade can, with proper planning, be doubled.

Adequate highways are essential to the needs of a modern economy. We intend to proceed as rapidly as possible with the improvement of main arterial traffic routes to all-weather standard, making season weight restrictions unnecessary on such routes.

In view of the progress on the Trans Canada Highway, greater emphasis will be placed upon the improvement of Trunks 1 and 3 in Western Nova Scotia. It is the intention, and funds have been voted, to accelerate rapidly the engineering and construction to make Routes 1 and 3 all-weather routes of satisfactory standard.

Tourist Road projects, such as the Fundy Trail, the Fleur-de-Lys Highway, the Chedabucto Trail, the Lighthouse Trail, and others, are approved as desirable and important projects. The rate of progress with these must depend upon the amount of highway assistance available from federal sources.

Secondary road improvement, the resurfacing of worn pavements and the replacement of obsolete bridges will continue.

Heavy emphasis will continue to be placed on highway safety.

While we emphasize that a good future in Nova Scotia requires of us that we help ourselves to the utmost, we recognize that rapid improvement depends also upon federal policies, and federal and provincial co-operation.

We will urge and participate in the most rapid examination of the feasibility of the development of Fundy power and the development of such power, if feasible.

We will continue to press for the improvement and expansion of ferry services between Western Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and New England. We will continue to offer a capital grant towards expanded service with New England.

We will continue to press for full equalization under tax sharing programs with the Government of Canada. We will continue to urge a satisfactory settlement of off-shore mineral rights.

We will continue to stress to the federal authorities the economic importance of Armed Forces Bases within Nova Scotia.

We emphasize the economic possibilities of our great deep water ports. We will support the Port of Halifax Commission in its efforts to exploit the advantages of deep water of Halifax Harbour. We are pressing forward to ensure that developments in the Strait of Canso area proceed in a manner consistent with maximum development of advantages offered there.

The Program of Protection for Consumers will be expanded. Proposed legislation regarding itinerant vendors has been drafted and published for study. A Consumers Protection Division will be created in the Department of the Provincial Secretary.

So that the Government may provide maximum practical assistance in meeting the problems of senior citizens, we propose to establish an Inter-Departmental Committee on the problems of the aged, served by a permanent Director.

We will continue the modernization, expansion and diversification of our fishing industry, with heavy emphasis upon opportunities for training and retraining.

Emphasis will be placed upon improved utilization and increased productivity of our forests. We will extend the application of the Forest Improvement Act and encourage the development of industries to use the forest material now wasted. We propose to increase our holding of Crown Lands and to commence a program of consolidation of land-holdings. Our aim will be to assist the saw-mill industry to improve its competitive position through rationalization of land holdings and improved access roads. We will continue to encourage the organization of small woodlot owners.