

Dr. JON GERRARD and the Manitoba Liberal Party



PRESCRIPTION for PROGRESS

Platform 2007



Letter from Liberal Leader Dr. Jon Gerrard



In this election, Manitobans have an opportunity to choose a party that is committed to innovation and renewal for our province. A party that recognizes the vital role that government can play in improving people's lives through better public health care, a higher quality education system, and programs that protect and nurture the most vulnerable in our society.

Our goal in developing the Manitoba Liberal Party's 2007 Platform, *Prescription for Progress*, was to create a document that articulates a realistic,

practical and innovative vision to address the most important challenges facing Manitoba.

Many of these challenges are the result of neglect on the part of successive NDP and Tory governments. While these parties are seen as being ideologically opposed, the NDP and the PC's are both parties that are, at their core, resistant to change and reluctant to embrace innovation. This is reflected in the way they govern and in the harmful policies pursued by both the Doer government and the Filmon Tories.

This poses a major challenge for Manitoba, where embracing innovation and change is vitally important for the health and well-being of our citizens, our environment and our economy.

Under the NDP and PC's, Manitobans have endured:

- unacceptable health care waiting lists
- underfunded universities that are ranked at the bottom of national surveys by Maclean's
- high school drop out rates that are among the worst in Canada
- underfunded municipal infrastructure
- total neglect of the health of Lake Winnipeg
- the job-killing payroll tax on their backs
- the continuing decline of downtown Winnipeg and sprawling suburban developments
- a failure to defend the most vulnerable people in our society: children and people with disabilities.

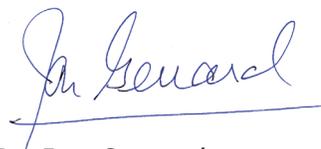
Time and time again, the Manitoba Liberal Party has been the first to identify problems and provide innovative policy solutions.

This is true of health care, where we were the first party to introduce the idea of a health care guarantee and the first to push for preventive medicine. We pushed for the adoption of mandatory exercise programs in schools to promote children's health. We are the only party to consistently call for the abolition of the payroll tax.

In 1999, we were the only party to talk about the environment, and made the health of Lake Winnipeg a major priority in our 2003 platform.

In writing *The Manitoba Liberal Prescription for Progress* we have sought to set ourselves apart as the only party that recognizes the most important issues facing our province, and the only party that has a plan to deal with them. I believe that we have succeeded.

I look forward to demonstrating to Manitobans that Liberal values in government will change their lives for the better.



Dr. Jon Gerrard
Leader, Manitoba Liberal Party

Manitoba Liberals on Health Care

Our Goal: to Deliver Timely Access to Quality Care

Under the Filmon Tories, wait times were a disaster. But eight years after Gary Doer and the NDP took office, Manitoba spends more of its provincial budget on health care than any other province, yet is ranked last by the Conference Board of Canada.

Manitobans are still waiting too long for many procedures and it is harder to find a family physician, especially in rural areas. When it comes to health care, neither the NDP nor the Tories have delivered in the past, nor do they have plans for the future: their focus has been on the health care bureaucracy. Manitoba Liberals focus on the patient.

Manitoba Liberal health care priorities are clear: cutting wait times for major and diagnostic procedures; improving community health care, especially for rural areas; improving the recruitment of family doctors; doing more to fight preventable diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes and infant dental care; making health care safer by creating a Medical Procedure Improvement Team; and make improving Aboriginal health care a major priority.

Among all the provinces, Manitoba spends the highest percentage of GDP (7.4%) and the highest proportion of its provincial budget (43.0%) on health care

A 2006 Conference Board of Canada report on health care placed Manitoba LAST - tenth out of ten provinces.

Manitoba had the greatest percentage of patients who had to wait more than a month for diagnostic services or a specialist

Median wait time for hip replacements: 29 weeks
Median wait time for an MRI scan: 8 months

Sources: *The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba (ICAM) MB Check-Up 2005 & WRHA wait times*

The Liberal Health Care Guarantee: Creating and Enforcing a Patients' Bill of Rights

The NDP have had eight years to improve wait times, but too many Manitobans are still waiting too long. Manitoba Liberals are committed to making sure you get the care you need when you need it with a renewed commitment to the Manitoba Liberal Health Care Guarantee. We will establish:

- 1) **A Manitoba Patients' Bill of Rights** that establishes a legally enforceable guarantee of timely access to quality care.
- 2) **A Medical Standards Quality Council** which will use the best medical and scientific evidence to establish provincial standards for wait times.
- 3) **An Enforcement Office** which will have the authority to send patients for immediate care if they have not been treated within the mandated time. Patients can be sent either to another regional health authority within Manitoba, or to another province. The Enforcement Office will then deduct the costs of the services provided from the budget of the RHA which failed to deliver the service on time.

In 2003, Dr. Jon Gerrard was the first leader in Canada to call for a health care guarantee. In 2005, Conservatives made it one of their "five priorities" for their election campaign.

Fund Health Care Delivery, Not Bureaucracy

NDP and PC governments have tried to control health care costs by rationing care for Manitobans: for example, the WRHA only buys so many hip joints a year. If a patient exceeds the quota, they have to wait until next year's budget, even if operating rooms sit dark. It is a system focused on the needs of the health care bureaucracy instead of the patient.

Manitoba Liberals will end the rationing of care and re-focus Manitoba's health care system on the patient. We will end the PC-NDP practice of funding "global budgets" without accountability and fund the delivery of quality health care services instead. This change will force administrators and regional health authorities to meet the needs of their patients and funding will flow to frontline health care providers - family doctors, nurses, and other caregivers - instead of bureaucracy.

Reducing Medical Errors in the Health Care System

The human cost of medical errors is incalculable, and the dollar cost is huge. Manitoba Liberals will create a blame-free reporting system so that

The Care You Need When You Need It

Preventing Illness: Better Medicine and Better Management

Major chronic diseases, including cancer, heart attacks and strokes, and diabetes consume 75% of the health care budget. The NDP has only made token investments in prevention. Manitoba Liberals would make the following areas of prevention a priority where the NDP has failed to deliver:

Preventing Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is treatable and can be prevented by changes to diet and exercise. We need to identify people at risk BEFORE they develop the disease

Preventing Obesity

Implementing daily mandatory exercise

for school age children and investing in recreational infrastructure for community centres will help improve physical fitness and reduce the risk of heart disease.

Preventing Dental Cavities in Children

Three-year old children are being airlifted out of northern, rural communities with tooth decay so bad they need every tooth pulled. Children are suffering needlessly and it costs the province millions. Better education and cheaper milk prices are the answer to this entirely preventable health crisis.

Preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Too many children are being born in Manitoba with FASD, with enormous human and financial costs. As many as half of all children with FASD may go undiagnosed and untreated yet each child born with FASD is estimated to cost taxpayers as much as \$2-million over their lifetime. Yet in the 90's the Tories scrapped Manitoba's provincial FASD registry, and the NDP has never reinstated it. Manitoba Liberals will reinstate the FASD registry and launch an intensive public education and prevention effort for FASD.

medical errors are reported and analyzed, and a Medical Procedure Improvement Team to ensure action is taken to prevent them from happening again. We will also invest in information technology to improve communication and consistency of patients' records.

Creating Specialized Health Care Teams

Under the NDP and Tories, medical experts with international reputations are leaving the province in frustration. Dr. Meir Kryger and Dr. Maria Melanson, who specialized in Sleep Disorders and Multiple Sclerosis respectively, both left Manitoba in the last 12 months because of a lack of support for their teams. Manitoba Liberals will help create multidisciplinary teams to provide Manitobans with the best possible care.

Build New Long-Term Care Spaces

A shortage of long-term spaces means that patients with chronic care needs are spending weeks in hospital when they should be cared for in homes. Manitoba Liberals will invest in more long-term care facilities to create more spaces.

Improve Aboriginal Health Care

The NDP and Tories have neglected aboriginal health in Manitoba, with serious consequences for First Peoples and Metis communities. While the province has squabbled over jurisdiction, patients have suffered. Manitoba Liberals will make Aboriginal Health Care a priority, including access to care, milk, and clean drinking water.

Improving Mental Health Care

Manitoba spends more on mental health care than any province except B.C., but our spending on community mental health supports are the lowest in the country. In January 2007 Chris Summerville, executive director of the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, had this to say about mental health care in our province: "We're doing it backwards. Government just doesn't get it." Studies show that community programs are not only cheaper to provide, they are more effective in addressing mental illness in the long-term. Manitoba Liberals will focus on providing community care for mental health. Aside from improving treatment for those suffering from mental illness, skilled intervention can also help avert crises - and costs - in both child and family services and justice.

"A family physician shortage is among the biggest hurdles contributing to wait times. Five million Canadians do not have a family doctor.

Preventable medical errors contribute to as many as 24,000 deaths in Canada each year. [They] are often the result of several small mistakes, which technology can easily remedy. For example, electronic medical records can reduce errors from misread handwriting."
- **Canadian Medical Association Journal 2004**

With 3.5% of Canada's population, **Manitoba likely has 850 deaths each year due to medical errors.**

18% of hospital admissions may be due to mistakes in the use of drugs

Manitoba Liberals on Social Policy

Caring for Manitoba's Most Vulnerable Citizens

One of the most important responsibilities of any government is the duty to protect those who cannot protect themselves, especially children. The Manitoba government, under both the NDP and Tories, has failed in that duty.

Concerns about the practice of warehousing foster children in downtown hotels was first raised in 1998 under the Tories. Last year, the number of kids in hotels reached an all-time high, having increased an astonishing 245% since 1998. This number is all the more appalling because the expense of keeping children in hotels can be 17 times higher than foster care.

Worse, the NDP's bungled restructuring of Child and Family Services in 2003 has had tragic consequences. The

Auditor General and Manitoba Children's Advocate found that CFS failed to do background checks, including criminal record and child abuse checks on prospective foster parents, failed to certify foster homes, and lost track of children in care. The result is that between 2000 and 2006, 31 children died by homicide in care or shortly after leaving care.

There have been further financial scandals at Hydra House - an organization charged with the care of disabled children and adults whose owners were fleecing taxpayers, and Aiyawin, where funds for low-income housing were diverted for improvements that never took place.

Manitoba Liberals will make the protection of our society's most vulnerable a priority.

First report on the use of hotels in "emergency care" situations: 1998

The Children's Advocate said the use of hotels should be curtailed in 2002/03

In 2006 the number of children in hotels hit a 10-year high

Cost per day to house a child in foster care: \$19.29 - \$25.13

Cost per day to house a child in a hotel: \$305 per day

In 2005-06, care for children in hotels cost Manitobans \$3.24 million

Sources:

Manitoba Government; Children's Advocate Annual Report, 2000-01.

Supporting Children & Families

The challenge of lifting children and families out of poverty is significant, but the benefits to children, families, and our society are tremendous. Manitoba Liberals will set the goal of reducing child poverty by 50% in four years and take a comprehensive approach to reducing child poverty, by improving incomes, enhancing social programs and improving affordable housing.

Providing Better Support for Low-Income Families with Children

Manitoba Liberals will:

- Increase the housing allowance portion of social assistance, and index it to inflation
- Ensure that contractors with the Provincial Government pay workers a living wage
- Improve the Child Related Income Supplement
- Reduce transit fares for all passengers.

Overhaul Child & Family Services

Manitoba Liberals will:

- Increase resources to Child and Family Services in order to increase support to frontline workers and reduce caseloads
- Invest in new information technology to improve tracking of children in care.

Improving Outcomes for Youth at Risk

Manitoba Liberals will implement the January 2007 recommendations of Manitoba's Children's Advocate to improve outcomes for youth leaving Manitoba's Child Welfare System. We will make greater support, stability and safety the major priorities for children's care. That includes:

- Extending the "aging out" of children in care from 18 to 21
- Emphasizing lifeskills preparation
- Developing support networks and mentoring programs.

Restoring Government's Duty to Protect

Encourage a Safe and Stable Environment for Foster Children

If foster parents choose to adopt a foster child, their funding to support that child ends. Manitoba Liberals will create a fund to provide transitional funding for foster parents who choose to adopt foster children.

Completely Overhaul Manitoba Housing

Manitoba Housing facilities are failing to serve either their original purpose or the people who live in them. In one Manitoba Housing apartment block, tenants were subjected to massive rent hikes because it was exempt from rent control. Originally conceived as a means to provide affordable housing for low-income families, facilities have in many cases deteriorated into dangerous slums where more than 90% of the tenants are unemployed. In others, shoddy repairs and maintenance are routine while tenant upgrades are treated as vandalism.

Manitoba Liberals will:

Creating New Affordable Mixed-Income Housing for Families

Manitoba Liberals will build new Manitoba Housing facilities following a mixed-income co-operative model, with both publicly subsidized units as well as open market-value units.

Long-standing residents who have a personal investment in the facility will have the right to make physical improvements to units without harassment from Manitoba Housing.

Encouraging Pride in Ownership

Manitoba Liberals will assist Manitoba Housing facilities develop a business plan to move towards tenant-management or co-operative ownership, based on consultation with facility residents.

Protecting Children from Exploitation

An inquest in January 2007 heard that hundreds of vulnerable Winnipeg children, some as young as eight years old, are selling their bodies to adult men, **yet "not one person has been prosecuted under the sections of the Child and Family Services Act dealing with child protection."** Police say it is because the Province will not provide the resources. **Manitoba Liberals will create and fund a dedicated police unit to deal with sexually exploited children.**

Workplace Safety

The government also has a duty to ensure that Manitobans are not being exploited or endangered at work. The NDP has a reputation as a party that cares about the "working man." While in power, Gary Doer and the NDP have found the time to ban the secret ballot for union certification, force the unionization of the Floodway, and shield himself and his supporters at the Manitoba Federation of Labour from the embarrassment of the Crocus inquiry.

Yet under the NDP, **Manitoba remains the most dangerous place to work in Canada.** Manitoba has the highest rate of on-the-job injuries in Canada, and highest rate of time-lost injuries. The workplace injury rate is twice the national average. Businesses with less than 20 employees are exempted from establishing a workplace health and safety committee.

Since Manitoba pledged in 2002 to improve worker safety, 600 companies have ignored safety orders without any consequences.

Manitoba Liberals will increase resources available to safety inspectors and ensure that businesses that ignore safety warnings pay their fines.

At \$16.53/hr., Manitoba had the second lowest average hourly earnings of all the provinces in 2005.

Number of hours of full-time, full-year work required to reach the poverty line at Manitoba's 2006 minimum wage:

Single Parent, One Child: 65.45 hours a week

Two Parents, one child: 80.47 hours/week

Manitoba has the highest male infant mortality rate of all the provinces.

When it comes to years of life lost to unintentional injury, Manitoba places third highest for males and second highest for females

The province pledged in 2002 to improve worker safety. Since then, 600 companies have ignored safety orders, but the NDP has ignored safety inspectors' requests for fines.

Sources: Conference Board of Canada, Statistics Canada, Winnipeg Free Press, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

Manitoba Liberals on the Environment

Creating an Environmental Legacy for Future Generations

Dr. Jon Gerrard has always been a champion of the environment and has made the Manitoba Liberal Party a leader in promoting better environmental policy and sustainable development for Manitoba.

Researchers have known since 1999 that toxic algae in Lake Winnipeg was a serious problem, but in 2006 the problem was worse than ever. Despite eight years of promises, and three separate reports on the future of Lake Winnipeg, the NDP has yet to enact a single effective program to reduce the amount of pollution flowing into the lake, and

refused to assist the City of Winnipeg with funding in order to accelerate the construction of water treatment plants. Instead, municipalities all over Manitoba, including Winnipeg, are still dumping raw sewage into lakes and rivers.

As for the Tories, they have been completely silent on the environment.

The Manitoba Liberals will make the environment a major priority, engaging governments, producers and citizens alike to embrace environmental best practices, clean up our lakes and rivers, and build a green economy in Manitoba.

Buying oil and gas adds \$800 million a year to Manitoba's trade deficit

Greenhouse gas emissions in have gone UP under the NDP

One tonne of Methane = 21 tonnes of CO₂

1 tonne of Nitrous Oxide = 310 tonnes of CO₂

Curbing agricultural methane and nitrous oxide could reduce Manitoba's greenhouse gas emissions more than eliminating carbon dioxide from cars, trucks, planes and tractors combined

Work in North Dakota shows nitrous oxide emissions can be reduced by 50%

In the last decade, energy efficiency has added more to the Canadian power supply than all new power plants put together

Conservation programs could free up as much power for export as the \$900-million Wuskwatim Dam

Sources: Industry Canada, David Suzuki Foundation, Husky Canada, Ralph Torrie

Addressing Climate Change: Reducing Manitoba's Greenhouse Emissions and Fossil Fuel Consumption

Imported oil, gas, and coal are not only major sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Manitoba; they are also one of the biggest contributors to Manitoba's trade deficit. **Reducing Manitoba's reliance on oil and gas is therefore both an economic and an environmental imperative.** Manitoba Liberal climate change policy focuses on reducing agricultural emissions, improved energy efficiency, and the development of homegrown renewable energy alternatives.

Encourage people to swap gas guzzlers for energy tea-totallers

Manitoba Liberals will remove the PST from the most fuel efficient vehicles and provide an additional \$500 bonus for the purchase of a "green" vehicle if owners are taking a gas-guzzling "beater" or SUV off the road.

Reward Producers for Environmental Services

The David Suzuki Foundation has criticized the NDP for having no strategy for reducing agricultural production of greenhouse gases. Manitoba Liberals will encourage the use of innovative technologies, fertilizers and feed and pay producers to follow best practices both for greenhouse gas reductions and water management.

Encourage Renewable-Energy Mass Transit

Manitoba Liberals will require that all transit buses in Manitoba are green by 2012. We will support public transit by providing free transit passes for seniors and post-secondary students, and increase funding for transit to reduce fares for all riders. We will work with the City of Winnipeg to allow carpoolers to drive in bus/taxi lanes.

Supporting Green Energy Alternatives

Manitoba Liberals will investigate the development of industrial scale bio-diesel production in Manitoba, including recycling of waste oil as well as primary processing from crops. We will provide incentives for converting existing vehicles to bio-diesel. We will also provide incentives for geothermal heat and wind power generation.

Increase Conservation Programs Through Hydro

Energy experts have said that Hydro's efforts at energy conservation are "window-dressing." Manitoba Liberals will encourage aggressive conservation programs including improved consumer retrofits and encouraging companies and institutions to use waste heat to generate their own power. These measures can help create jobs in both construction and high-tech while at the same time freeing up more power for export.

Cleaning Up The Sixth Great Lake: Lake Winnipeg

After decades of neglect under the NDP and the PC's, protecting and restoring Manitoba's lakes and rivers to health requires a multi-pronged strategy. There are many contributors to the pollution in our waterways, and for too long this has been an excuse for finger-pointing and delays.

Scientists have declared that Lake Winnipeg is at risk of being a "dead lake" due to years of excess pollution from a variety of sources. Manitoba Liberals propose a comprehensive strategy to deal with the problem through better regulation, new investments in clean water infrastructure, encouraging environmental best practices and a sustained lobbying effort to encourage other provinces and states to reduce their impact on the Lake Winnipeg watershed.

Make a Major Investment in Water Treatment Facilities

Because of its aging infrastructure, the City of Winnipeg is a major contributor to Lake Winnipeg's decline, and the poor quality of rural municipalities' waste systems are endangering both the environment and drinking water in many communities. But there are faster, cheaper ways of reducing phosphorous in wastewater than the NDP has been pursuing. Manitoba Liberals will make investing in clean water infrastructure a major priority so that Winnipeg can accelerate the construction of water treatment plants, and so that municipalities can improve their water treatment systems.

Stronger Regulations

Immediately Ban phosphorous in dishwashing detergents This single measure will reduce 2% of the phosphorous flowing into Manitoba's lakes and streams.

Implement a Green Tax on Cosmetic Fertilizers Runoff from fertilizer use for green lawns are a major and unnecessary source of phosphorous.

Ban the practice of spreading of manure on snow This practice increases the nutrient load in spring runoff and must end.

Encourage water conservation by making low-flow faucets and toilets mandatory in new construction, and provide incentives and rebates for their use in retrofits.

Defend The Lake Winnipeg Watershed

Manitoba Liberals will join with the Federal Government to lobby States and Provinces whose waters flow into Manitoba to set concrete goals, a timeline, and strategies to reduce the contaminants flowing into our province.

Reducing Pollution through Prevention, Education and Partnership

Our lakes and rivers are needlessly exposed to pollutants when people dispose of antibiotics, other drugs, perfumes and disinfectants by pouring them down the drain. Manitoba Liberals will launch a public education campaign and encourage safe disposal sites at participating stores.

Better Science for Best Practices

Manitoba Liberals will fund research for the establishment of a series of small "model" watersheds to do the research required before applying solutions basin-wide.

In 2003, it was estimated that algal blooms covered close to 8,000 square kilometers of the surface of Lake Winnipeg. On 29 August 2005, the bloom covered 50% of the lake - about 13,000 square kilometers.

In 2002 when the City of Winnipeg accidentally released 437 million litres of raw sewage into the Red River, no provincial water regulations were broken - because there weren't any.

City of Winnipeg effluent may vary from 5 to 35 per cent of the total Red River phosphorus loading

23,000 Manitobans live along the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Many rely on it for their drinking water.

Annual Economic Value of Lake Winnipeg:
Recreation & Tourism: \$100 million
Freshwater Fishery: \$20 million plus
Hydro: \$350 to \$580 million

Sources: Restoring the Health of Lake Winnipeg, A Report by the Lake Winnipeg Implementation Committee

Manitoba Liberals on the Economy

Our Goal: to Make Manitoba a “Have” Province by 2020

Manitoba Liberals recognize our diverse economy is the result of our hardworking multicultural population and an abundance of natural resources. But the NDP and Tories have repeatedly failed either to capitalize on Manitoba’s strengths or address the central challenges facing Manitoba’s economy.

In the 1990’s, fearing competition from developing countries, the Filmon Tories joined a “race to the bottom” to keep workers’ wages low. The NDP’s focus has been on creating unionized public sector jobs. Neither government focused on improving the incomes of all Manitobans: as a result, Manitobans have some of the lowest wages and highest poverty rates in Canada.

The NDP record is one of low job growth, research and

development at half the national average, and record numbers of people leaving the province. Since the NDP were elected in 1999, over 28,000 people have left Manitoba, hitting a 10-year high in 2006 of 6,771. As for the Tories, average outmigration through the 1990’s under the Tories was 5,111 a year.

Manitoba is the only western province to be a “have not province,” and Gary Doer and the NDP have no strategy to improve the situation: rather, we have become ever more dependent on Federal transfer payments.

Manitoba Liberals are committed to giving people reasons to stay in Manitoba: good jobs, higher wages, a better climate for business and innovation, and better infrastructure.

Manitoba is the ONLY province where disposable income went DOWN in 2005 - the lowest in Canada

From 2000 to 2005, Manitoba’s exports grew by only 3%

From 1996 to 2005, Manitoba had an international trade deficit for 9 out of 10 years

Manitoba is the ONLY province to have a trade deficit with the U.S.

Manitoba’s accumulated trade debt to the U.S. between 1996 and 2005 was \$10.1 billion

Between 2004/5 and 2005/6, Manitoba’s debt went up by \$100 million

The Manitoba Liberal Party is the only party to consistently call for the elimination of the Payroll Tax

Manitoba Hydro: From Energy Generator to Energy Innovator

Manitoba Liberals will rebrand Manitoba Hydro as Manitoba Energy and set the goal of making it the world’s leading public utility in green energy production.

Manitoba Hydro is said to have the potential to be “Manitoba’s Oil” and be a major driver of Manitoba’s economy. Under both the NDP and the Tories it has been neither. Hydro has been slow to innovate under both the NDP and PC’s, actively resisting the adoption of new technologies and alternative energy generation.

Last year’s profits were a paltry \$70 million. The NDP’s mismanagement of Hydro’s finances and bungling of the development of the Wuskwatim has put Hydro at risk of privatization by the PC’s, something which Manitoba Liberals will never allow.

Liberals will ensure a sustainable future for Hydro and that more Manitobans will share in Hydro’s wealth by expanding Hydro’s mandate beyond electricity generation to include other forms of energy, including bio-diesel, and by encouraging more aggressive conservation efforts.

We will also provide incentives for geothermal heat, and wind power generation and for the conversion of existing vehicles to bio-diesel.

Restore Investors’ Confidence in Manitoba

The impact of the Crocus Fund’s collapse goes beyond 30,000 Manitobans losing their investments. Manitoba’s businesses need venture capital and investors in Manitoba need to know that both governments and corporations will be honest, forthright and open, and held to account by regulators. The NDP’s ongoing refusal to call an inquiry into Crocus leaves Manitoba under a cloud.

Manitoba Liberals will take two steps to address the crisis brought on by the NDP:

First, **we will call a public inquiry into Crocus**, create stronger regulations for the Manitoba Securities Commission, assuring investors that Manitoba is a safe and reliable place to invest.

Second, **we will create a fund to assist small- and medium-sized businesses with start-up costs**, and provide merit-based research grants for Manitoba businesses to develop new products and services.

Commitment to Innovation and Progress

Phase out the Payroll Tax

The Payroll Tax has been singled out by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce as one of the single most important factors in stunting Manitoba's economic growth. It is a tax on job growth that, according to the Chartered Accountants of Manitoba, often results in "reduced wages for employees." The Payroll Tax has sat on the books of successive PC and NDP governments, while Manitoba Liberals have consistently called for its abolition.

Increase Funding for Research and Development

Spending on R & D in Manitoba is among the lowest in Canada, and has been sadly neglected by both the PC's and the NDP. At 0.82% of GDP, it is half the Canadian average. Manitoba Liberals' goal is to increase spending on research and development to reach or exceed the Canadian average. We will invest in partnership with post-secondary institutions and business to create better-quality, high-tech, high-paying jobs in Manitoba.

Invest More in Infrastructure

Manitoba has a substantial "infrastructure deficit". Under the Tories and the NDP, the province has spent less on roads and bridges than the minimum required to maintain them. The City of Winnipeg alone falls short by \$160 million a year. Manitobans have had to endure dangerous highways, pothole-ridden streets and rotting bridges, something Gary Doer and the NDP realized only in November 2006. There is no provincial plan to improve our province's transportation needs.

Manitoba Liberals will make infrastructure a priority and increase the amount spent after over forty years of NDP/Tory neglect. We will make a province wide-transportation network a priority, so that Manitobans will have safer streets and roads, and businesses can rely on a sound transportation infrastructure.

Reduce Personal Income Taxes

Manitoba's high personal taxes drive out highly skilled workers and make it harder for Manitoba companies to attract skilled talent. Studies have shown that "personal income tax rates explain regional growth differences more than corporate income tax rates." Liberals will proceed with tax cuts that are sustainable without risking vital social programs like health and education.

The number of people leaving Manitoba has increased under the NDP

2000: -3,456 2004: -2,565
2001: -4,323 2005: -3,832
2002: -4,344 2006: -6,771
2003: -2,875

The total inter-provincial loss over the last six years is 28,166 people.

– Statistics Canada

The average taxpayer in Manitoba means \$6,416 in revenue for the provincial government. The loss of 28,000 people translates to \$180 million a year in lost government revenue that could be spent on health care, education and infrastructure, and hundreds of millions more lost to the provincial economy.

MANITOBA UNDER THE NDP

Real wage rates went down in 2005, placing Manitoba LAST in Canada

Manitoba's job creation record between 2000 and 2005 is the worst in the country and GDP growth per capita is second lowest over that period.

The lowest job creation (3,700 net new jobs)

The workforce with the lowest educational attainment

The lowest rates in Canada for labour productivity, 86% of the national average

Lowest after-tax profits to GDP

LOWEST rate of research and development investment to GDP in Western Canada and Ontario – 0.82%, 1/2 the Canadian average of 1.64%.

The highest effective tax rates in the six regions surveyed

ONLY IN MANITOBA

Manitoba was the ONLY REGION that DECREASED its numbers of workers with a masters or higher level education (-2,300)

Manitoba was the ONLY province to see a DECREASE (-1.3%) in real per capita disposable income in 2005.

In 2005, Manitoba was the ONLY province to see a decline in its labour share of technical workers.

Sources: The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba (ICAM) MB Check-Up 2005 & Statistics Canada

Manitoba Liberals on Community Safety

A back-to-basics approach to crime prevention

Justice policy under the NDP and the Tories has shared three strategies: making headline-grabbing announcements of “tough-on-crime” policies that don’t work; underfunding police and Crown attorneys, with the result that their work suffers and cases fall apart, and blaming the Federal Liberals.

If the Federal criminal code is to blame, why are the rates for car theft, property crime and murder so much higher in Manitoba than in the rest of the country?

The answer is that the both the NDP and the Tories have let social problems fester, ignored crime prevention and failed to support front-line police work. The NDP and PC’s both had gang megatrials collapse. The PC’s justice legacy is a \$5-million high-security courthouse that has never been

used. The 2004 trial of Hells Angels and associates accused of arson and conspiracy to commit murder fell apart, having cost taxpayers \$2.2 million.

Policies to improve communities under the NDP government have failed. Government run housing remains sub-standard and residents in abysmal conditions have repeatedly pleaded with the Manitoba Housing Authority and the current NDP government for help. There has been no focus to improve Winnipeg’s crumbling downtown.

Manitoba Liberals will use practical, proven policies to reduce crime and restore community safety. We will balance strict enforcement and enhanced community policing with a commitment to addressing the root causes of crime, addressed earlier in the platform.

“Manitoba has become known in the criminal underworld as the place to be if you want to commit crimes and not get caught.”

- Author & Hells Angels Expert Yves Lavigne

Manitoba’s crime rate is 60-85% higher than the Canadian average and Ontario

Many of the NDP’s measures to shut down crystal meth labs, seize gang clubhouses and suspend the driver’s licences of “johns” have NEVER BEEN USED by police or prosecutors.

Sources: ICAM Manitoba Check-Up 2006, CBC, Winnipeg Free Press

Ensuring Safer Communities

Put More Feet on the Street

Manitoba Liberals will make funding for community policing a priority. Our goal is to strengthen the relationship between police and the communities they serve, reduce crime through an enhanced police presence, and improve response times. We will provide increased funding for:

- More police officers for the City of Winnipeg and rural communities
- Professional development programs to improve education and training for police officers
- Community safety programs

More Resources for Crown Prosecutors

Crown attorneys are so overburdened and underfunded that in December, 2006 they filed a grievance for working in “burnout” conditions. Prosecutors in Winnipeg had 300 cases each, while rural prosecutors had 700 cases each. Underfunding increases the risk of mistakes and delays that result in criminals going free. Manitoba Liberals will increase the resources

available to Crown prosecutors to ensure more effective prosecutions.

Real Consequences for Car Theft

Under the PC’s and the NDP, Manitobans have had to endure the rates of car theft rates in Canada. This is in part a result of both parties’ catastrophic failures when it comes to Child and Family Services. But car theft is a serious crime and it needs to have serious consequences. Immobilizers are not enough: we need to deter car thieves, not just make it harder to steal cars.

- Manitoba Liberals will make driving a stolen car an offense punishable by jail time under the highway traffic act.
- Driving a stolen car, or being convicted of car theft will result in being banned for life from receiving a driver’s license for repeat offenders.

Building Stronger Communities

Pride in Ownership Making It Easier To Own Your Own Home

Communities where people own their own homes are safer and more stable. Crime rates decrease and vandalism is less frequent. Liberals will make up to half of the interest paid on mortgage payments tax deductible towards the purchase of a principle residence for first time home owners.

Focus On Neighborhood Renewal Programs

We would focus on neighbourhood renewal programs that provide renters with incentives to help them to buy their own home. We will:

- Allow people receiving social assistance to keep their homes until they are back on their feet
- We will also allow housing tenants the option of using their housing allowance under social assistance to 'buy in' to co-operative housing as a resident-owner.

Youth Prevention & Intervention

The NDP has touted its "Lighthouse Program" as addressing the root causes of crime, especially youth crime. Yet Winnipeg and Manitoba have some of the highest rates of car theft and property crime in Canada. That is because the Lighthouse program has spent a pittance: between 2000 and 2004 Lighthouse funding averaged \$7,812.50 per centre per year. In 2005-2006, it averaged \$12,697 per site. This level of funding is totally inadequate when the cost of car theft alone in Manitoba is over \$20 million annually. Manitoba Liberals will make a substantive investment in community centre programming, equipment and infrastructure especially for at-risk-youth.

Promoting "Smart Growth" in Manitoba's Cities and Towns

Under the Tories and the NDP, there has been a general lack of planning when it comes to our urban centres, and it has hurt our cities. Downtown Winnipeg in particular is an embarrassment, but rather than developing a coherent long-term strategy, they have focused on one-off megaprojects which create as many problems as they solve. The barriers at Portage & Main killed street-level businesses while Portage Place led to the demise of businesses on South Portage, before going into decline.

A Manitoba Liberal Government will promote "Smart Growth" principles when it comes to developments in the City of Winnipeg and other urban centres in Manitoba. These include:

- Supporting the development of rapid transit in Winnipeg, including the option of light rail
- Making residential re-development the focus of improving City Centres in Manitoba, including Winnipeg's downtown
- Promoting dense, mixed-use residential and business development that is well-supported by public transit
- Providing incentives for "infill" developments, especially multi-family developments in and around city centres and surrounding neighbourhoods
- Bringing together the Capital Region municipalities to develop a win-win plan for the future development of the area.

Winnipeg is the car theft capital of Canada

Between 1995 and 2005 car theft in Canada as a whole dropped by 10%, but in Winnipeg it increased by 40%

Winnipeg's car theft rate is 60% higher than Edmonton or Regina, 400% higher than Calgary and 500% higher than Toronto

In 2000, the cost of auto theft in Manitoba was 22.8 million dollars

The cost between 1999 and 2005 is more than \$170-million

Number of Vehicles Stolen in Winnipeg 1995-2005

2005	11,736
2004	13,425
2003	10,454
2002	8,280
2001	10,662
2000	9,568
1999	8,710
1998	8,470
1997	9,033
1996	8,349
1995	7,887

Sources: Winnipeg Police Service, Statistics Canada

Manitoba Liberals on Education

Smarter Policies for Better Schools

Under both Tories and the NDP, the quality of education in Manitoba has suffered at all levels. Ever since Macleans' magazine began ranking universities, the University of Manitoba has regularly ranked last, because of chronic underfunding and inadequate student aid.

But the problem is also serious in primary and secondary education. Manitoba has the highest high school drop out rate in Canada and is the only province where the dropout rate went up in 2005. The consequences are serious, both for the young people whose future is put at risk, but for Manitoba's economy. Manitoba has the least-educated workforce in Canada.

In addition, the Tories and NDP have consistently failed

to retain university graduates. In 2005, Manitoba was the only region to lose workers with a masters or higher level education. Both the NDP and the PC's have neglected and underfunded colleges and universities for decades: funding per student is almost 30% less today than it was in 1980.

Under the Tories, tuitions and student debt skyrocketed. The NDP has frozen tuition in some programs but not others, and cash-strapped universities are forced to raise funds through ancillary fees.

Manitoba Liberals believe that education and training is the key to helping people fulfill their full potential, increasing incomes for individuals and families, and helping to secure Manitoba's future prosperity.

In 2005, Manitoba was the ONLY province to see a decline in the number of technical workers.

Manitoba is the ONLY region to lose workers with a masters or higher level education - 2,300 of them left the province

At 0.82% of GDP, Manitoba's investment in research and development is HALF the Canadian average of 1.62%

Manitoba's average funding per post-secondary student

**- in 1980: \$14,000
- in 2006: \$10,300**

*Sources: ICAM Manitoba Check-Up
2006, Winnipeg Free Press*

Turning Around The High School Drop Out Rate

Under the NDP watch, **Manitoba had the highest high school drop out rate in Canada** in both rural and urban areas. Manitoba Liberals will make increasing the high school graduation rate a priority, developing more cooperative education, apprenticeship and vocational programs, and develop a province-wide strategy to address access to high school education. We will adapt successful models with proven results in order to improve Manitoba's standing and secure a better future for children who are dropping out of the school system.

Expand Co-Op Placement Programs in High Schools and Post-Secondary

We need to address the job concerns of young people by co-operative work placement programs that allow graduates to work as they learn, as well as businesses facing a shortage of skilled employees. Manitoba Liberals will enhance job placement programs to better match businesses and graduates.

Cut Property Taxes by Funding Schools from General Revenues

Manitoba Liberals' goal is for K-12 education funding to be paid 80% by the provincial government and 20% from property taxes, as recommended by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. The NDP has only increased the unfairness of the current system by scrapping a tax designed to create a level playing field between school divisions while school taxes have shot up, creating hardship for homeowners and those on a fixed income.

Manitoba Liberals will make this an incremental shift based on a timetable that is realistic, sustainable and fair.

Helping Manitobans Fulfill their True Potential

Investing in Higher Education

Manitoba Liberals have three major goals when it comes to funding universities and colleges: first, to **reduce student debt and financial barriers to access**; second, to **encourage more graduates to stay in Manitoba** and third to **improve the quality of education** through increases to grants for new technology, infrastructure repairs and research and development.

Reinstate Grants and Bursaries for Stay-in-Manitoba Students

The Filmon Tories cut millions of dollars in bursary and grant programs and the NDP tuition freeze has neither increased enrollment for the less well-off nor encouraged homegrown graduates to stay in Manitoba.

Manitoba Liberals will restore the up-front grants and bursaries that were eliminated by the Tories with a condition: that the grants are only free if you stay in Manitoba. If graduates leave Manitoba, it turns into a loan and it must be paid back. Manitoba Liberals will also create a bursary fund for low-income students to ensure that no student is barred from access for financial reasons, and make sure that student aid reflects the special challenges facing rural, northern and aboriginal students, and students with disabilities.

Increase Core Funding to Universities and Community Colleges

We need to increase core funding to universities, especially by investing in new technology, libraries and infrastructure. Inadequate funding under the PC's and NDP have resulted in deteriorating facilities and equipment and have made it harder to attract and retain both faculty and students.

Invest More in Research and Development

Manitoba Liberals' goal is to increase R & D spending in Canada to the national average. We will offer better incentives for businesses as well as increasing funding for post-secondary and graduate research, and funds to build on existing industry clusters in Manitoba, including biotech, aerospace, and food processing.

Quicker Accreditation for Foreign-Trained Professional Immigrants

Manitobans know that our newest citizens want to contribute as best as they can. Many immigrants to Manitoba decide to move to Calgary, Toronto, or Vancouver after only four years, and we need to do a better job of retaining them. Manitoba Liberals recognize that we can do a better job of supporting new immigrants and moving them more efficiently into the profession they were trained for.

Manitoba has the highest high school dropout rate in Canada

Manitoba was the ONLY province to have a measurable INCREASE in the number of children at risk in 2005

Manitoba has the workforce with the lowest level of educational attainment in Canada

The "underemployment" of immigrants whose credentials are not recognized is estimated to cost the Canadian economy between four and six billion dollars annually

*Sources: Statistics Canada, ICAM
Check-Up*

Dr. Jon Gerrard and the Manitoba Liberal Party Policy and Platform Consistently Ahead of the Curve

- The FIRST Party and Leader in Canada to call for a Health Care Wait Times Guarantee in the 2003 election. The idea was “adopted” by the Harper Conservatives for their 2005 Platform
- Only AFTER the MLP 2003 platform focus on prevention did the NDP set up a Ministry of Healthy Living
- The FIRST Party and Leader to recognize the seriousness of the environmental crisis affecting Lake Winnipeg, and to make it part of the 2003 platform
- The FIRST Party and Leader to propose improved tax breaks for student loans to encourage graduates to stay in Manitoba (Platform 2003), an idea “adopted” by the NDP in the pre-election budget of 2006
- The ONLY party to consistently call for a public inquiry for Crocus. Hugh McFadyen’s first act as leader in the legislature was to abandon the Liberals and their call for an inquiry.
- The ONLY Party to consistently call for the abolition of the payroll tax, which has sat on the books of PC and NDP governments
- Infrastructure was a major priority for Liberals in 2003. In 2006 Gary Doer raided the Rainy Day fund in order to make his pre-election infrastructure promises
- The FIRST Party Leader to embrace the New Deal for the City of Winnipeg

PRESCRIPTION for PROGRESS

