

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats

On Your Side

Platform, 1995

Provincial Election 1995

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Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side

This election is not about promises. It is about performance.

For eight years, Frank McKenna's Government in Fredericton has had the power to make whatever choices it wanted.

On issue after issue, Frank McKenna's Government chose the side of the large corporations and their powerful leaders ... the Irvings, Noranda, Roger Stone, George Petty, and others.

On issue after issue, Frank McKenna was on *their* side.

On issue after issue, Elizabeth Weir was on *your* side.

Frank McKenna chose profits for polluters over clean air for New Brunswickers. Elizabeth Weir was on your side for clean air.

Frank McKenna chose profits for corporations over fair treatment for injured workers. Elizabeth Weir was on your side for fairness and safety in the workplace.

Frank McKenna chose profits for Wackenhut Corporation ... and patronage for his own political career ... at the expense of both taxpayers and the young offenders who need all the help we can give them to get back on track. Elizabeth Weir was on your side for good services and saying no to profit from prisons.

Frank McKenna chose strikebreaking over the rights of workers. Elizabeth Weir was on your side for workers' rights.

In this election, you can make your choice ... to put more voices in Fredericton on your side. More New Democrats on your side. More pressure on Frank McKenna to listen to you.

Time and again, Elizabeth Weir kept Frank McKenna's Government honest on a whole range of issues. Time and again, Elizabeth Weir exposed the flaws, and showed whose interests were really being served by the choices made by Frank McKenna's Government. Time and again, Elizabeth Weir asked about principles and values when Frank McKenna's Government forgot ... decency, fairness, honesty, treating people with the respect they deserve.

Here is how Telegraph Journal columnist Jackie Webster described the performance of Elizabeth Weir:

She is the human dynamo who single-handedly, is the de facto Official Opposition. She is without doubt, the most effective member of the legislature, respected by Liberals, Tories and CoR alike. More effective than the Premier? Certainly. In terms of resources, the Premier has the entire administration behind him, while Elizabeth Weir operates as the lone member of her party in the legislature, and with extremely limited financial resources.

That is performance! You know that is what you will get with Elizabeth Weir and the New Democrats. You can count on us! Not just at election time. Hard work, day in and day out.

In this election, every New Democrat elected to work with Elizabeth Weir is another voice ... and more resources ... on **your** side.

You know the choices that Frank McKenna's Government in Fredericton has made over the past eight years. You also know the choices that Bernard Valcourt and Brian Mulroney's Government in Ottawa made over most of that same time. It doesn't have to be that way!

There are other choices that could be made ... common sense choices, things that could easily be done, things that would make life better for all New Brunswickers.

This is our commitment to New Brunswickers. Elizabeth Weir ... and more New Democrats ... on your side. Day in and day out. Struggling for common sense choices that would make your life and that of your family better.

Equality:

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats want to build a society where security, health and well being are guaranteed.

We work for equality so that everyone has the opportunity for meaningful work, satisfying activity and shared responsibility. We believe that social and economic equality can best be achieved through equitable access to reasonable income, universal quality health care, affordable, affordable child care and secure housing.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: For Values and Principles in Government

Governments make choices every day.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe those government choices should reflect the basic values of our New Brunswick community.

Too often the choices made by Frank McKenna's Government in Fredericton have failed the test. So did the choices of the government of Brian Mulroney and Bernard Valcourt in Ottawa.

Too often, Frank McKenna, Brian Mulroney and Bernard Valcourt made decisions in the interests of the powerful and the privileged, decisions that did not show respect for the dignity of every New Brunswicker, no matter what their circumstances, decisions that were arrogant, hard hearted, and undemocratic, decisions driven by patronage and favouritism, decisions that were an appalling waste of money. Too often they didn't listen to you.

Too often, Frank McKenna, Brian Mulroney and Bernard Valcourt made decisions that put government on your back rather than on your side.

No wonder so many people feel very let down and angry at government decisions! It is time to get back to principles and values in government.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats are devoted to doing everything in our power to build, together with all New Brunswickers, a society based on these basic values:

Equality:

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats want to build a society where security, health and well being are guaranteed.

We work for equality so that everyone has the opportunity for meaningful work, satisfying activity, and shared responsibility. We believe that social and economic equality can best be achieved through equitable access to reasonable income, universal quality health care and education, affordable child care and secure housing.

We seek social justice for all in a society which values diversity and does not tolerate discrimination. We are committed to a just and equitable distribution of wealth and to a society where all members contribute according to their ability and receive according to their needs.

Democracy:

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe that democracy is the cornerstone of a society based on human dignity and equality.

Democratic control of our political, social and economic institutions is essential to our ability to eliminate poverty, unemployment and ever increasing concentrations of wealth and power.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats are committed to ensuring that governments operate on the basis of accountability, openness and citizen involvement. We hold firm to the belief that the dignity and freedom of the individual is a basic right that must be maintained and extended. We recognize the right of individuals to have a voice in matters that affect their lives and to have a greater control in the economy, the workplace, and the family.

Sustainability:

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats seek to develop social and economic structures which find an ecologically sustainable balance between the needs of our generation and the needs of future generations.

We believe this means working to create a society in which our use of renewable and nonrenewable resources does not exceed our ability to regenerate resources or develop renewable alternatives.

Community:

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats are committed to the creation of a society in which a strong sense of community places concern for health and well being of all New Brunswickers ahead of the pursuit of individual gain.

We encourage community cultural and artistic expression in order to enhance the spirit of community and the values of respect, caring and compassion.

Cooperation:

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe that cooperation is a fundamental principle of social and economic development where the responsibilities and benefits are distributed fairly and equitably.

We can all achieve much by working cooperatively through trade unions, social movements, and cooperative businesses such as farmers' and housing co-ops, credit unions, and other worker owned enterprises.

Government decisions must reflect the natural capacity of people to live cooperatively, to accept collective responsibility, and to work for the betterment of all.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats make a solemn pledge to New Brunswickers to consider every decision and action of government on the basis of fundamental values ... equality, democracy, sustainability, community and cooperation.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats

On Your Side: For Better Health Care

In 1962, the Tommy Douglas Government in Saskatchewan took on the Liberal and Conservative Parties, the medical establishment, the commercial media, and the large majority of the province's corporations in one of the greatest political battles in Canadian history - and introduced Medicare.

Canada has been a much better place ever since.

New Democrats pioneered Medicare; we've fought to preserve universality; and, we remain committed to publicly funded health care.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats say "no" to the creeping Americanization of our health care system, through user fees, private clinics outside of Medicare, and other forms of privatization.

While other Parties are willing to cut back health services, we oppose:

- ◆ the diversion of precious health care dollars to inefficient additional layers of private-sector administration;
- ◆ the diversion of still more precious health care dollars to profits for shareholders;
- ◆ the "cherry picking" of lucrative services for profit;
- ◆ inefficient competition among institutions rather than efficient cooperation;
- ◆ decisions made on the basis of profit rather than what is best for the patient and society;
- ◆ withholding health care from those who can not afford it.

That is not our way. There are better choices.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work to strengthen and improve health care through measures that help people stay well rather than patch them up after they are sick.

- ◆ increasing resources for community based prevention programs;
- ◆ increased use of nurse-practitioners, particularly in rural areas which lack primary care physicians;
- ◆ increased resources for screening and early intervention for pre-school children;
- ◆ more mobile clinics and screening services to deal with early detection of such diseases as breast cancer;
- ◆ workplace based wellness programs;
- ◆ introduction of community based health maintenance organizations and community clinics with integrated teams of health care providers and therapists;
- ◆ an increased mandate, and increased resources, for public health nurses and healthy life-style programs in our schools.

Frank McKenna's Government has imposed many changes on our health care system, without proper consultation, and through undemocratic means.

Elizabeth Weir and the New Democrats believe that changes to our health system have to start with democratic decision making that involves the public and the workers who will be affected by the changes. This includes:

- ◆ public hearings prior to the introduction of major changes in health care facilities, such as closing, downsizing, or substantially changing the mandate of a facility;
- ◆ appointing a Public Intervenor, similar to that appointed for hearings before the Public Utilities Board, to assist effected groups to prepare and present their case before these public hearings;

- ◆ replacing the government appointed Regional Hospital Corporation Boards with Boards on which one third are directly elected by the public, one third are representatives of health care providers and the final one third are appointed by government after vetting by a Legislature Committee;
- ◆ full consultation with representatives of Seniors prior to the introduction of major changes in their health care benefits under Medicare or the Prescription drug Program.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work to ensure that those who make decisions about our health care are both responsible and accountable through:

- ◆ requiring public meetings of Regional Hospital Corporation Boards for all decisions except confidential personnel matters;
- ◆ amending the Right To Information Act so that it applies to hospitals and the Regional Hospital Corporations;
- ◆ amending the Ombudsman's Act to give the Ombudsman the authority to investigate and resolve complaints involving hospitals, the Regional Hospital Corporation or professional licensing bodies such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats recognize that widely shared economic prosperity is the missing element of our health care system; leading to better nutrition, better housing, better education, reduced substance abuse, and general improvements in the health status of New Brunswickers.

In this sense we know that our programs to fight poverty, illiteracy and substandard housing are also part of our program for better health care for New Brunswickers.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: for A New Deal on Economic Development and Jobs

Working hard to increase economic activity and create jobs is what New Brunswickers expect from every elected representative and every political party.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats are committed to working day after day to create stable, long term, full time, high paying jobs for New Brunswickers. We are committed to an active, targeted and determined policy to create full time, high paying jobs.

Frank McKenna has chosen to sell New Brunswick as the Arkansas of the North. He has chosen to pull down worker's benefits, such as Worker's Compensation, and job standards to attract mostly low wage and part time jobs moved to New Brunswick by large corporations.

The results are less positive than Frank McKenna would have you believe. According to Statistics Canada, only 2,000 more people were working full time in 1994 than in 1989, and there were actually 2,000 more people in New Brunswick looking for jobs than there were in 1989. And even those who are working are seeing their average weekly after tax incomes declining.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe in a "Made in New Brunswick" jobs strategy, recognizing the role of small business as the engine of job creation and based on increased local involvement in economic development decisions. There are no magic or easy answers. We are committed to:

- ◆ an active, targeted and determined policy to create jobs;
- ◆ building brick by brick and step by step a more equal, fair, prosperous and just economy ... one that will raise the standard of living of all New Brunswickers;
- ◆ "bottom up" economics built on the strengths of communities, the skills, hard work and good judgement of the people in those communities, working together cooperatively to improve their lives;
- ◆ working with local communities to create jobs by assisting them with obtaining the help they need: investment capital, research and development, expertise and advice, infrastructure, coordination, marketing and life long skills upgrading.

- ◆ achieving in the long term sustainable full employment: environmentally, economically, and fiscally.

By “full employment” we mean an economy that can provide a good job to everyone able to work and wanting paid employment.

By “environmentally sustainable” full employment, we mean an economy that can provide for the whole population within the carrying capacity of the environment.

By “economically sustainable” full employment we mean an economy built on the basis of a strong, innovative, high skill, high wage, high value added economy.

By “fiscally sustainable” full employment, we mean an economy built on a real improvement in economic output, not a spike in temporary employment financed by debt.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats would work hard to:

- ◆ create and strengthen Regional Development Commissions in every region of the province, with representation from local business, financial, social, and labour organizations, as well as representatives of local government, to promote development and job creation and to act as a focus for government assistance;
- ◆ take steps to increase the availability of investment capital to small businesses, through increased use of Community Development Bonds, guaranteed by the province, to act as a vehicle for local investors and financial institutions to contribute their capital to assist in the financing of development projects;
- ◆ provide greater research and development support to small businesses;
- ◆ provide increased training support to train new employees in small businesses;
- ◆ provide increased marketing support for NB products, particularly for NB artisans and crafts people;
- ◆ continue to develop new tourism infrastructure;
- ◆ work with the private sector and the federal government to bring the “Information Highway” to every home in NB within the next decade;

- ◆ provide assistance to companies to implement early retirement provisions for older workers in order to increase the opportunities for highly skilled younger workers such as those at Saint John Shipbuilding;
- ◆ provide for Registered Retraining Plans, similar to RRSPs, to allow individual New Brunswickers and their employers to plan for life long learning and retraining, and to set aside funds to help it happen.
- ◆ create, together with the private sector, an Economic Development Fund for the Acadian Peninsula, modelled on "Action North", to improve the economic situation in this region of the province that has been specifically affected by the fishing crisis and by the restructuring of federal social programs.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe there are no easy answers to the economic problems that face New Brunswick. We have great confidence in the ability of New Brunswickers to work hard and creatively to establish a more fair and prosperous economy.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: For An Environmental Bill of Rights

New Democrats believe in environmental policies which promote and assist responsible actions by individuals and their communities, while being firm with those few who knowingly pollute.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work to ensure that individual New Brunswickers have the tools to make their concerns heard through an Environmental Bill of Rights which:

- ◆ guarantees a legally enforceable right to a clean environment;
- ◆ requires every government department to prepare, after broad public consultation, a statement of its environmental objectives and to actively pursue those objectives;
- ◆ allows any citizen to file a complaint against a department which is not actively pursuing its environmental objectives;
- ◆ requires reasonable public notice to be given of any change to acts, regulations, actions or practices which could potentially have environmental consequences;
- ◆ requires public hearings before changes which have potentially substantial consequences;
- ◆ establishes an Environmental Commissioner with powers similar to those of the Provincial Human Rights Commissioner; to receive complaints from individual citizens, to investigate those complaints, to assist in negotiated solutions to the complaint where possible, to hold formal hearings of a complaint and to issue legally binding awards if complaints are upheld;
- ◆ provides legal protection against reprisals for any citizen who files a complaint, including employees who complain of practices by their employer that violate environmental regulations.

- ◆ simplifies the rules for Environmental Impact Assessments to ensure that they are more accessible to individuals;
- ◆ provides for a Public Intervenor to act in the public interest in Environmental Impact Assessments and to assist citizens in their participation in such hearings;
- ◆ establishes an independent Environmental Impact Assessment panel that will hold public hearings regarding projects that require an Environmental Impact Assessment;
- ◆ provides a legal framework for workplace Environment Committees, similar to existing Health and Safety Committees, for employers and employees to deal with environmental issues of importance to their business;
- ◆ provides the legal framework for investigators in the Department of the Environment to issue tickets for environmental offenses, similar to those issued for traffic violations;
- ◆ protects citizens' groups against the awarding of legal costs in legal actions which were not demonstrably malicious;
- ◆ entrenches "the polluter pays" principle for costs of environmental cleanups.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: For Clean Air

New Democrats believe in environmental policies which promote and assist responsible actions by individuals and their communities, while being firm with those few who knowingly pollute.

Eight years ago, Frank McKenna promised New Brunswickers a Clean Air Act. He never delivered on this promise.

The effects of this negligence have been striking.

Saint John has the most acidified air in all of Canada. NB Power's Colson Cove plant continues to be the biggest sulphur dioxide polluter in the province. The Irving Refinery has increased its sulphur dioxide emissions.

Community air quality standards are outdated and do not reflect modern research about what is necessary to protect the health of people. The "trigger points" at which industries are requested to reduce emissions and at which they are required to shut down are much too high for protection of people's health. The Minister is very hesitant to invoke either mandatory or voluntary shut downs even when the "trigger points" are exceeded.

Saint John has the highest rates of respiratory disease in Canada, and the extra medical costs associated with these high rates total \$6 million in 1994. And, tragically, at least one death has occurred.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe that this neglect must end and will introduce a Clean Air Bill in the next session of the Legislature which will build on the Environmental Bill of Rights by:

- ◆ guaranteeing a legally enforceable right to clean air;

- ◆ defining modern and up to date community air quality standards which reflect current knowledge of what pollutants and what levels of these pollutants represent a threat to health or to the long term future of the environment. In addition to the pollutants covered by the existing standards, dust and respirable particulates, ozone, metals, benzene and hydrocarbons will be included in the revised standards.
- ◆ lowering the "trigger points" for both voluntary and mandatory shut downs to a point consistent with maintenance of good health;
- ◆ establishing a community action plan to protect the health of citizens in the danger zone, particularly those with asthma and other respiratory conditions which make them more vulnerable than other people, when the trigger points are exceeded;
- ◆ improving the system of health hazard advisories so that susceptible people can take measures to protect themselves when air quality is poor;
- ◆ removing ministerial discretion so that the Minister is required to act when a trigger point is passed;
- ◆ making actions under the Clean Air Act subject to the protections of the Environmental Bill of Rights so that individuals could file complaints if the standards of the Clean Air Act are not respected;
- ◆ setting more aggressive sulphur dioxide emission targets, with a yearly schedule of decreases and an overall target of a further ten-fold reduction in emissions by 2000, beyond the emission reduction standards already in place for that year.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: For Better Education

Hidden under the education rhetoric of Frank McKenna's government lies an unfortunate truth. Cutbacks are the cornerstone of Frank McKenna's education policy ... cutbacks of teachers, teaching assistants, supplies and school maintenance and repairs.

At the same time, more and more demands are being placed on the education system. Many of the effects of Frank McKenna's failed social policies show up in the classroom, adding an extra burden on teachers. Teachers are stretched to the limit by increasing demands and declining resources.

And while this is happening, more and more decisions about our schools are being centralized and made at a great distance from the parents and teachers in the community. It all has to stop.

The Canadian Education Association's extensive study of "exemplary schools" found that common characteristics of excellent schools were strong ties to parents and community, a high involvement by teachers in decision making and a high level of school autonomy and freedom from centralized bureaucratic control.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work hard for:

- ◆ an emphasis on community based schools with a high level of autonomy to ensure that parents and teachers, working together, can take greater initiatives to meet the educational needs of the community;
- ◆ a reduction in centralized bureaucratic control over budget and staffing decisions;
- ◆ an increased role for both parents and teachers in the decision making processes;
- ◆ stable, long term budgeting to allow greater ability to plan for the future and undertake long term initiatives at the individual school level;

- ◆ providing a proper level of support for special needs students in the schools, including increased numbers of teaching assistants, increased training for teaching assistants, and improved assessment, counselling, nursing and support services for these students;
- ◆ an increased emphasis on healthy lifestyle education as a step toward reducing long term health care costs;
- ◆ removal of the pay differential for kindergarten teachers.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe that our education system should remain a public community resource. We are opposed to turning it, or significant parts of it, over to profit making private corporations.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe that an accessible, high quality, higher education system is an integral part of creating "Made In New Brunswick" economic opportunities. We will work hard for improvements to the higher education system including:

- ◆ stable, and predictable funding for institutions of higher education based on a five year rolling budget to enable those institutions to carry out realistic long term planning;
- ◆ setting the objective of funding institutions of higher education at levels at least equal to the Canadian average on a dollars per student basis;
- ◆ treating any federal government cuts to transfer payments as cuts to general revenues, rather than passing them along directly as cuts to health care, post secondary education and social assistance;
- ◆ freezing tuitions at 1995 levels to get them back into line with tuition rates in other parts of Canada;

- ◆ placing a realistic cap on total lifetime debt from student loans, by forgiving loans above the cap;
- ◆ increasing support for high academic achievers by offering a graduated scale of loan write-offs related to academic performance;
- ◆ eliminating the "parental contribution" requirement from student loans so that students can borrow according to their needs rather than according to their parent's income;
- ◆ cancelling the credit check requirement imposed on students, most of whom have not established a credit rating, who are applying for student loans;
- ◆ reforming Boards of Governors to make them more representative of the broader New Brunswick community by reducing the number of direct government appointments;
- ◆ increasing assistance to students who wish to start a small business either during the summer or at graduation;
- ◆ creating a Youth Job Corps to allow students to pay off their student loans at the same time as they receive practical experience working in such fields as childcare, literacy training, community work, rehabilitation programs, and environmental protection;
- ◆ increasing the provincial contribution to research and development through a program of grants designed to pay the indirect costs of research funded by national or international funding agencies.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: For Open and Fair Government

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will push hard to make government more fair and more open.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe in strict conflict of interest guidelines for government ministers, including:

- ◆ full public disclosure of personal interests and investments for all cabinet ministers and members of their immediate family, prior to taking office;
- ◆ placing all investments in a blind trust over which the minister or members of the minister's immediate family have no control, and the policies of which are not reported to the minister or members of his/her immediate family;
- ◆ full public disclosure of other sources of income, including the existence of trust funds or other means which will provide income in the future;
- ◆ a ban on ministers receiving personal gain from organizations, corporations or individuals with whom the minister had dealings in his/her capacity as minister, for a period of 5 years after ceasing to be minister;
- ◆ The Ombudsman should have the right to demand more information from a minister, when, in his/her opinion, the minister has not provided sufficient information.
- ◆ The Ombudsman should also have the power and resources to receive complaints, investigate them and publicly report on the results of the investigation.

Government spends a great deal of public money on goods and services. It is fundamental to fairness that all New Brunswickers have a fair opportunity to sell their goods and services to the government. Goods and services must be judged fairly on their quality and price, not on "who you know". There can be no hint that being a friend of government is a requirement to obtain government business.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe in fair and open tendering of government contracts, and will work hard to ensure that:

- ◆ all government purchases of goods and services are publicly tendered, except for incidental day to day requirements;
- ◆ that the Provincial Ombudsman be given the specific responsibility of receiving and investigating complaints that tenders are biased;

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work hard for changes to the patronage ridden appointment system to government boards, commissions, agencies and tribunals to ensure that All New Brunswickers should have the opportunity to be considered for government appointments by insisting that:

- ◆ the positions are publicly advertised, together with the responsibilities, remuneration etc;
- ◆ applications and/or suggestions from the public can be received;
- ◆ the qualifications of appointees to government boards, commissions, agencies and tribunals which make decisions or exercise authority proposed by the government should be examined in public hearings by an all Party Committee of the Legislature and those appointments deemed not qualified by the Committee should not be made.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will propose amendments to the Human Rights Code to prevent discrimination on the basis of political affiliation.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: For Better and Secure Housing

Adequate and secure housing is one of the basic needs of life. For too many New Brunswickers, it remains a distant dream. Too many New Brunswickers are victims of high rents and landlords who don't adequately maintain their properties.

Too many New Brunswickers suffer arbitrary evictions for nothing more than angering their landlord.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will introduce amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act to extend its provisions to cover rooming houses and to establish a Tenants Appeal Board with the following powers:

- ◆ to hear complaints from tenants about rent increases and to require landlords to publicly justify those increases;
- ◆ to require landlords to show just cause and to provide reasonable notice before evicting a tenant;
- ◆ to hear complaints from tenants about poor maintenance of properties and to order appropriate repairs;

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will also work to reduce the effective tax rate paid by tenants to that paid by people who own their homes.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will also introduce a Tenants Association Act giving tenants in buildings with more than five units the right to form an association with legally binding powers to deal with landlords over rents and conditions of the building.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: for True Social Welfare Reform

Article 25 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of him/herself and her/his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medicare; and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond her/his control.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats respect this international declaration and will work to have its principles reflected in the social programs of New Brunswick.

We believe that New Brunswickers want to achieve and maintain this kind of caring and compassionate society.

Every society needs social programs to provide for those who can not earn a livelihood by reason of sickness, disability or old age. In New Brunswick, chronic unemployment also demands social programs to meet the needs of those for whom there are no jobs.

For the past eight years, Frank McKenna's government has been tolerant of poverty and intolerant of the victims of poverty. This was emphasized by the introduction of a draconian Social Assistance Act that commentators referred to as a return to the principles of the Elizabethan Poor Laws.

For the past eight years, Elizabeth Weir has resisted Frank McKenna's ill conceived and mean spirited approach to social policy.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work to repeal Frank McKenna's Social Assistance Act and replace it with a Social Welfare Act that will:

- ◆ recognize that poverty is not a choice but is usually a consequence of social conditions beyond the control of the individual
- ◆ incorporates regulations that are fiscally responsible and respect the fundamental worth and dignity of every human being
- ◆ provides a level of benefits sufficient to provide for the necessities of life in New Brunswick
- ◆ provides regular increases in income maintenance benefits and supplementary allowances as the real cost of living rises
- ◆ provides age related allowances for food and clothing for children
- ◆ provides for the full cost of utilities to be considered when calculating the shelter allowance
- ◆ provides increased support services to adolescent parents attending school
- ◆ stops the practice of deducting student loans and bursaries from the monthly benefits of post-secondary students

Elizabeth Weir and the New Democrats believe that ordinary families deserve a break, and will work for:

- ◆ elimination of income taxes for individuals earning less than \$15,000 a year
- ◆ provision of health cards for families earning less than \$15,000 per year
- ◆ a better deal for minimum wage and part time workers

Elizabeth Weir and the New Democrats will work to limit the damage of video gambling by

- ◆ restricting video gambling machines to licensed premises accessible only to those over 18
- ◆ applying the proceeds directly to the funding of social programs

Family violence is an everyday occurrence in New Brunswick. It is unacceptable and must not be tolerated.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work to reduce family violence and to assist the victims by;

- ◆ instructing police to exercise zero tolerance for family violence;
- ◆ requiring mandatory reporting by physicians of suspected incidents of family violence;
- ◆ increased availability of preventive family counselling services, and counselling for both perpetrators and victims;
- ◆ support for a comprehensive province wide network of Transition Houses to provide shelter and assistance to victims of family violence.

New Brunswick has far too many children living in poverty ... nearly one out of every five. Many still go to school hungry, and can not achieve their full potential. Malnutrition places their health and development at risk.

Elizabeth Weir and the New Democrats will work to ensure that every child can get the nutrition they need to reach their potential by:

- ◆ beginning with a school breakfast program in elementary schools;
- ◆ later expanding the program to junior high and high schools, and to include a lunch program as funding becomes available.

Elizabeth Weir and the New Democrats will work for other measures to improve the social programs in New Brunswick, including

- ◆ requiring all appointees to the Social Welfare Appeals Board to be examined by a Legislature Committee to ensure they have the necessary experience with social agencies and understanding of the day to day pressures on those relying on social assistance;
- ◆ providing an advocate for anyone appearing before the Social Welfare Appeals Board;
- ◆ restoring an adequate Victim's Services budget;
- ◆ allowing single parents to keep up to \$200 of their child support payments before deductions are made from their benefits, thereby putting them on the same basis as those who work part time and are allowed to keep up to about \$200 of their wages before deductions are made;
- ◆ restoring Civil Legal Aid Services;
- ◆ providing adequate and stable funding for Community Volunteer Agencies such as food banks, used clothing depots, used furniture depots etc who provide services to low income individuals and families.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats ...

On Your Side: for Opportunities in the Workplace

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats offer a clear alternative to the disrespect Frank McKenna has shown to workers and their rights. We are committed to restoring trust in the bargaining process, based on genuine respect for workers and the unions who represent them. This must include:

- ◆ respect for existing collective agreements;
- ◆ negotiating fairly on new agreements;
- ◆ establishing a comprehensive policy on technological change in the workplace;
- ◆ streamlining the certification and bargaining processes;
- ◆ prohibiting the use of strike breakers in legal strikes;
- ◆ providing binding arbitration for first collective agreements;
- ◆ strengthening mediation services to help solve disputes before they result in a strike or lockout;
- ◆ removing political influence on the provincial mediators by moving them to work directly for the independent Labour and Employment Board;

Every year, about 20 New Brunswickers are killed on the job. This is an appalling record in an advanced country. In addition, nearly half a million workdays are lost every year in New Brunswick because of injuries on the job. This is an unacceptable loss to both the workers and the economy. Frank McKenna's Government did little to solve the problem of preventing accidents, in fact, Frank McKenna's choice was to blame the injured workers and slash their benefits.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work to make every workplace safer by pressing for:

- ◆ strengthening of the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- ◆ ensuring that injured workers receive adequate compensation;
- ◆ removing the so called "deeming" provisions so that injured workers are compensated on the basis of the position they held when they were injured.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe that a fair and prosperous society is based on an economy which provides every citizen with the opportunity to earn a decent livelihood and to participate in the economic life of the province. We need jobs that people are proud to perform, that have decent wages and good working conditions, for every person who needs paid work. To do this, we will work for:

- ◆ good quality social and community services, like education, health care, and high quality, affordable day care;
- ◆ broadened control of the economy by encouraging the development of cooperatives, credit unions and family farms;
- ◆ reducing our over dependence on the corporate giants Irving, McCains, Noranda and Repap by encouraging community based and cooperative alternatives;
- ◆ ensuring that economic development is controlled by the people of the community, and is responsive to their needs rather than the needs of corporate shareholders and New York bankers.
- ◆ clear environmental protection laws which encourage a sustainable economy.

Part-time workers are increasing as a percentage of the overall New Brunswick workforce. Over the past 5 years, the rate of increase in part time employees is ten times greater than the rate of increase in full time employment. Nearly 20% of all New Brunswick employees work at part time jobs.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats will work hard for fair treatment of part time workers by introducing a Bill to:

- ◆ provide benefits such as pay, health benefits and pension plans on a pro-rated basis to part-time workers; and,
- ◆ guarantee three hours' pay whenever a part-time employee is called in to work.

Credit Unions, Caisse Populaire and Cooperatives invest their assets in the province and are locally run. They are one of the principle means by which people and communities can gain a measure of economic control of their lives.

Elizabeth Weir and New Democrats believe an enhanced role for cooperatives and credit unions should be provided through:

- ◆ encouraging cooperatives in all sectors of the economy;
- ◆ guaranteeing cooperatives a fair share of natural resources;
- ◆ inviting cooperatives to participate actively in economic, social and environmental planning at the community level;
- ◆ organizing worker cooperatives to take over the assets of viable companies when the owners wish to cease doing business in New Brunswick;
- ◆ requiring that such companies sell their assets to employees at a reasonable price;
- ◆ guaranteeing joint worker control of pension funds, and encouraging their use for socially beneficial projects.