

# Priorities *for* People

**Robert Chisholm and the NDP:  
Working with Nova Scotians**





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# A Message to Nova Scotians



Since I was elected leader of the Nova Scotia New Democrats in 1996, I've been listening and talking to people all across the province about the things that matter most to them. And I've been asking what they want from their government.

They tell me that what they want is a government that listens to them and keeps its promises. That's why the Nova Scotia New Democrats have prepared *Priorities for People*.

*Priorities for People* sets out the priorities for Nova Scotia New Democrats. It tells you what we will do to deal with the things you care about, and it tells you how we plan to keep our promises.

Nova Scotians want a government that will support individuals, families and communities through job creation, a renewed health care system, and education and opportunities for young Nova Scotians. They want a government that makes wise and responsible use of the

province's financial resources and provides a fairer tax system.. They want a government that is open, honest and accountable, and they want a government that keeps its promises.

As we look to a new century, the people of Nova Scotia are asking for a different kind of government, a kind that puts the needs of people ahead of private greed. They don't want a return to the bad old Tory days. They reject the Savage-MacLellan Liberals who say one thing during the election but do another after.

This election is about choosing men and women who will fight for the things you care about. *Priorities for People* tells you how New Democrats will deal with the issues of greatest concern to Nova Scotians - jobs, health care, education and opportunities for young people, and a fair tax system. It reaffirms our commitment to provide open and honest government, and to pay for new programs, not by increasing the deficit, but through economic growth and redirecting resources from existing programs.

There are many other issues of importance to Nova Scotians - including the environment, social welfare, equality issues and workplace concerns. Although these are not addressed directly in *Priorities for People*, we have long recognized their importance to Nova Scotians and are committed to addressing them.

On behalf of all New Democrats across the province, I ask for your support in our struggle to make Nova Scotia a better place for you, your family and your community.

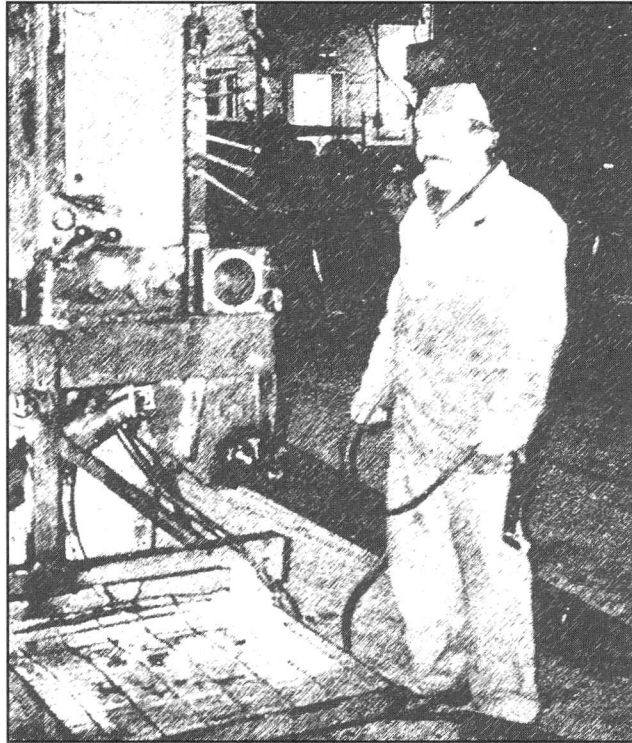
Sincerely,



Robert Chisholm,  
Leader, Nova Scotia NDP







## **Priority: Jobs**

*More jobs have to be the priority goal of the government of Nova Scotia. More jobs mean less poverty, homelessness, crime and illness. Government must do more than talk about jobs. More jobs mean more people paying taxes, better financed social programs and a balanced budget.*



**I**n the economy of the 21st Century, people will be our most crucial resource. Government's responsibility is to ensure the needed skills are there so that Nova Scotia will prosper. Every government action must help to generate jobs. Success will come through co-operation between government and workers, industry, co-ops, small business, credit unions, banks and educational and training institutions.

Job creation must have a focal point within government. Government must be made accountable for its job-creation record.

- An NDP government would conduct a Jobs Audit to determine if government programs are contributing to job creation;
- An NDP government would ensure that a Jobs Impact Statement accompanies all significant government actions;
- An NDP government would appoint a Jobs Commissioner with the responsibility to advise government on job creation strategies and report regularly on the effectiveness of job creation initiatives.

Nova Scotia is a small province in a big world. Our ability to create jobs is limited by national and international monetary and fiscal policies

## DISAPPEARING JOBS

Jobs have been disappearing in Nova Scotia during the 1990s. Under the Tories the number of full-time jobs dropped from 323,000 to 298,000 between 1990 and 1993. Under the Liberals, the "jobless recovery" brought the annual average back to only 311,000 in 1997. The Liberals and Tories have failed to stand up to the large corporations as they have discarded thousands of workers in pursuit of better profits. MT&T and Nova Scotia Power, which have shed hundreds of jobs while increasing profits, are examples of this destructive phenomenon.

## LEFTOVER DEBT

The ability of the Nova Scotia government to have a positive impact on the economy is also limited by the huge debt that remains from 25 years of Liberal and Tory mismanagement. In the 1990s, their approach to the debt problem they created has been to cut, slash, privatize and eliminate government jobs and programs while putting their faith in the private sector to create jobs. It hasn't worked.

as well as trade agreements. But we can do better than the Liberals and Tories. New Democrats would fight job-destroying federal fiscal, monetary and trade policies. We will work with like-minded governments to replace these policies with ones that support job creation.

Liberals and Tories do the bidding of the banks and big corporations. New Democrats believe in corporate responsibility. We know that we won't have a healthy economy by giving in to the demands of large corporations and slashing the public sector. We believe government must play a positive role in the economy.

Total government employment (federal, provincial and municipal) has been dropping through the 1990s. That's one reason for Nova Scotia's high unemployment. Total public sector employment in Nova Scotia dropped more than 10 per cent since 1991, 2<sup>1/2</sup> times the national rate. Between 1991 and 1995, nearly 11,000 public sector jobs disappeared in Nova Scotia, 2,131 of them in public hospitals.

- Both provincial and federal government must re-invest in public services that people want and need, namely health care and education. An NDP government would renew public sector employment to make sure that basic public services are maintained.

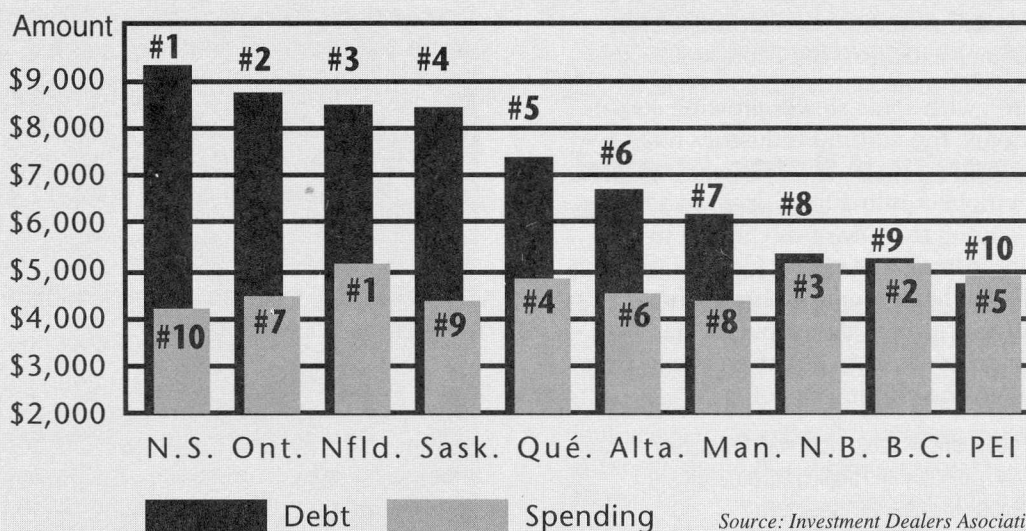
- Nova Scotians know that employers are making increasing use of overtime. The result is that some people are working too much, others too little. An NDP government would work with employees and employers to minimize the use of overtime especially compulsory overtime. Fewer overtime hours will mean more employment overall.
- Part-time employment has been growing in Nova Scotia in the last decade. Nearly 50 per cent of part-time workers would prefer to work full-time. While promoting job sharing as a means of creating employment, an NDP government would amend the Labour Standards Code to ensure that benefits are extended to part-time workers, thereby eliminating any advantage for hiring part-time workers where a full-time worker could do the job.
- The economy is best served by corporations that are responsible members of the community and the province. They have a responsibility to provide jobs for Nova Scotians. To ensure that corporations live up to their responsibilities, an NDP government would strengthen the Industry Closing Act to require corporations to consult with employees and communities to examine all possible alternatives before mass layoffs can occur.

## Jobs and natural resources

We need to get the maximum number of jobs from our natural resources. For too long, Nova Scotians have exported unprocessed products of the sea, forests and mines. Jobs for our people have gone abroad with them. The Sable offshore project provided Nova Scotia with the opportunity to change that pattern. But the Savage-MacLellan Liberals lacked the leadership and will to stand up to the big oil companies.

- The export of unprocessed and semi-processed resources must be reduced by royalty and stumpage policies that encourage the creation of value-added products. In the case of Sable Gas, an NDP government would work to ensure that natural gas liquids will stay in Nova Scotia to create petrochemical industry jobs for Nova Scotians.
- The Sable Offshore Energy Project must benefit all Nova Scotians. An NDP government would devise a comprehensive energy strategy that utilizes coal and natural gas resources to produce competitively-priced energy for business and consumers, thus producing stable long-term jobs.

## Debt and Program Spending Per Capita by Province, 1995-96





- The royalties from the first phase of the Sable project do not provide sufficient return to the people of Nova Scotia. An NDP government would re-negotiate the Liberals' sellout royalty agreement so that Nova Scotians receive a fair return from all additional offshore development.

## Jobs with a future

Nova Scotia's natural beauty and lifestyle will increasingly be one of this province's greatest economic assets. Our natural resources must therefore be developed in a way that will not jeopardize our environment or put at risk jobs in our tourism and growing eco-tourism sector. Ways must be found to enable our traditional resource industries to co-exist with new job opportunities that are developing from our unique cultural and natural assets.

- An NDP government would proceed with Protected Sites legislation and ensure that controversial decisions like the listing/de-listing of the Jim Campbell's Barren can be made only through legislation passed in the House of Assembly.
- An NDP government would support the growth of eco-tourism.

Nova Scotia's cultural industries have been a welcome source of employment in both our urban centres and our rural communities. Culture is a growth industry. Studies show that for every \$1 committed to the cultural sector, nearly \$3 comes back into the economy.

Yet compared with some slower-growing sectors of our economy, the cultural industries had to endure years of neglect by the Liberals and Tories. Provincial funding for culture at \$57 per capita was among the lowest in Canada in 1995-96, according to Statistics Canada. Since then, the Federal-Provincial Cooperation Agreement on Cultural Development has expired. There needs to be a new emphasis on job creation in the cultural sector.

- An NDP government would work with the cultural community to identify and implement strategies to maximize jobs in this expanding sector.

## MISMANAGED RESOURCES

The Liberals and Tories have mismanaged the province's natural resources. The Westray disaster and \$450 million in losses at Nova Scotia Resources are part of the Tory legacy. The Liberals have also bungled offshore development and failed to stand up to the big petroleum companies on behalf of Nova Scotians.

For the entire decade of the '90s, the Liberals and Tories have talked about the high tech and information technology sector. Our educational institutions have done their part by producing skilled graduates. But Liberal and Tory policies have not paid off in the growth and development of an indigenous high-technology sector. Too many of Nova Scotia's scarce resources have gone to outside companies, too few to Nova Scotia-based enterprises. Dynatek, with over \$20-million in public investment for only a handful of jobs, is one symbol of the failure of the Liberal-Tory approach. Another is OSP Consultants. Instead of providing high-paying, IT jobs, this government-assisted company provides low-end technology employment, at low wages. We can no longer afford those kinds of investments. Assistance to the high technology sector must be more carefully targeted.

- An NDP government would consult with Nova Scotia firms and individuals in the high-tech sector to develop a comprehensive provincial policy to guide the growth and development of the Nova Scotia IT sector.
- An NDP government would work to secure Nova Scotia's fair share of federal support for high technology undertakings.

Nova Scotia has the people and the resources we need for a secure and prosperous future. New Democrats are committed to developing and implementing policies and programs to make sure we get the greatest possible jobs return from those resources.

- We need to develop and improve Nova Scotia's physical and social infrastructure. In cooperation with the federal government and municipalities, an NDP government would devise a viable long-term plan for projects and services such as:
  - Improved water and sewage treatment facilities
  - Expansion and improvement of social housing programs
  - Creation of additional child care spaces to meet designated needs.

## Jobs in Cape Breton

Nova Scotia is a province with more than one economy. Metropolitan Halifax and nearby communities form an economic unit in which growth has been stronger and the unemployment rate is below 10 per cent. While the NDP's economic policies would have a positive effect throughout the Province, Cape Breton Island - where unemployment has reached nearly 30 per cent under the Liberals - requires specific attention.

For too long, the Cape Breton economy has been treated like a political football. Important decisions about coal, steel and natural gas have been made in back rooms without any public participation. This kind of decision-making must end.

### NEGLECTING CAPE BRETON

The Liberals and Tories have tolerated official unemployment in Cape Breton that has approached 25 per cent. They have allowed labour force participation rates that are ten percentage points and more below the provincial average. Failed policies of throwing millions at fly-by-night corporations have given way to a policy vacuum and silence as jobs disappear. It is time for a new approach, one that supports Cape Bretoners in their efforts to control their own economy.

- An NDP government would conduct open, public, consultation with employers, small entrepreneurs, organized labour, fishery workers, the federal government, municipalities and community groups to develop a long-term economic development plan for Cape Breton.

Cape Breton needs jobs now. While the economic blueprint is being worked on, action must be taken on several fronts.

- An NDP government is committed to halting privatization of the Donkin Mine and carrying out a immediate study to determine the viability of developing Donkin as part of a three mine Devco operation.
- An NDP government is committed to negotiating, together with public sector unions, a plan for decentralizing provincial government offices or other facilities to Cape Breton and other high unemployment areas.
- An NDP government is committed to legislation requiring that, subject to Utility and Review Board oversight, Nova Scotia Power Inc. buy its fuel from Nova Scotia sources.
- An NDP government is committed to working with Devco to devise strategies for marketing Cape Breton coal abroad and encouraging investment in clean coal technology and alternative uses for coal.
- In consultation with community groups, an NDP government would work with the federal government to devise immediate plans to clean up the tar ponds and other contaminated sites.

## Jobs in small business and co-ops

Policies which increase over-all demand in the economy will benefit small business, the main creator of jobs in the Nova Scotia economy. The NDP would use re-directed resources to support a variety of forms of small business, including co-operatives, community-owned enterprises and non-profit organizations. New Democrats would also strengthen the role of co-operatives and credit unions.



- An NDP government would review specific government programs that affect small business, micro-enterprises and self employment to make sure that those programs provide the support that is needed.

Nova Scotia lacks easy access to capital. To remedy that problem, we need to get more of the savings of Nova Scotians invested here. As Nova Scotians save for their retirement, they will also be able to build a future for their children here at home.

- More than one third of the assets controlled by large Canadian corporations consists of workers' money that has accumulated in occupational pension plans. An NDP government would encourage unions representing workers covered by these plans to gain control of these funds to ensure that a larger portion of them can be invested to preserve and create jobs in Nova Scotia.
- An NDP government would work with labour to increase the role of legitimate labour-sponsored venture capital funds in Nova Scotia's economy.
- An NDP government would promote and facilitate the formation of lending circles and other micro-credit programs.
- The role of existing co-operatives and credit unions would be enhanced by an NDP government to ensure that credit unions have the same opportunity as banks to obtain government business, hold lawyers' trust deposits and participate in programs like student loans and small business venture capital programs.

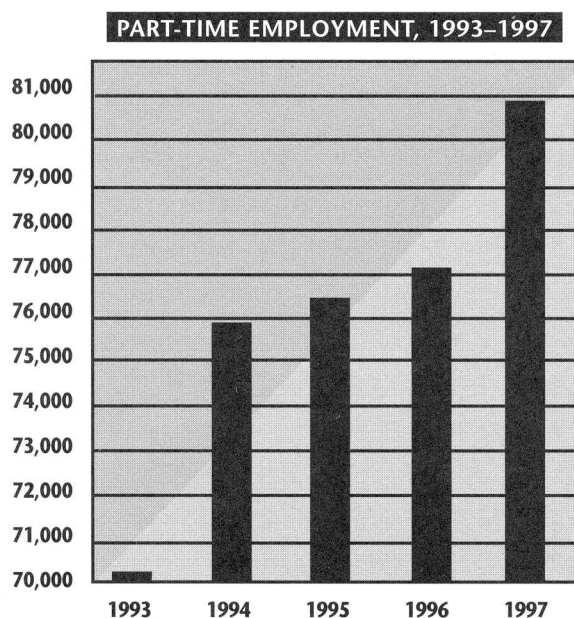
## Jobs and the environment

New Democrats endorse the principle of sustainability as the cornerstone of economic policy. Sustainable practices create jobs. Sustainable forestry, fishing and farming practices will ensure existing jobs and the natural environment for future generations of Nova Scotians, while creating new "Green Collar" jobs.

- An NDP government would work to establish a sustainable allowable annual cut and back it up with adequate monitoring and enforcement to prevent over-harvesting and the harvesting of immature trees.
- An NDP government would provide adequate support for silviculture programs.
- An NDP government would devise a strategy for maximizing forestry employment.
- An NDP government would promote fisheries policies grounded in the principles of community economic development and the assumption that a sustainable fishery should be achieved by reducing harvesting capacity, not fishers.
- An NDP government would establish a voluntary program for the promotion of sustainable agriculture.

With growing concern about the need to reduce emissions that cause global warming, there is an urgent need to bolster energy efficiency of homes and work places.

- An NDP government would work with the federal government, municipalities and power utilities to devise a retro-fit program that would create jobs and improve energy efficiency.



Source: Statistics Canada

## Jobs through training

Strong support for training initiatives is an essential part of meeting job creation targets. In today's economy, a key strategic asset for any community is the skill of its labour force. Federal cuts and downloading have put more pressure on the province to spend declining training funds wisely and ensure that private training organizations are operating in the best interests of students.

- An NDP government would pressure the Chrétien Liberals to restore cuts to federal spending on training and to support for community colleges.
- An NDP government would guarantee better access to training opportunities by providing adequate student assistance and child care programs.
- An NDP government would develop a community economic development strategy focusing on the employment needs of people with disabilities by working with federal bodies like the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Nova Scotians need all the jobs we can get. Long-established Nova Scotia companies should not have to recruit outside the province because of a severe lack of skilled labour. That's exactly what's happening, according to the Nova Scotia Labour Force Development Board. There must be a better fit between the needs of employers and the training provided to Nova Scotians.

- An NDP government would create a human resource development plan for the province to coordinate the supply and demand of trained workers and to encourage skill development among employed Nova Scotians.

The success or failure of firms, especially those using new technologies and manufacturing processes, will depend increasingly on knowledge and its application. The key to continued prosperity is the development of industries which rely on well-paid, highly educated, highly trained men and women. This challenge cannot be addressed just by changing program guidelines or by increased spending. It requires a new way of making decisions about

## CORPORATE HAND-OUTS

For years, the Liberals and Tories have paid lip service to community economic development, but when the chips are down, they give in to the big corporations like Westray, Dynatek, Michelin, Newbridge, AT&T and the big banks. From 1994-95 to 1996-97 the Liberals spent \$18 million on Community Economic Development, shared among dozens of communities throughout the province. But they gave \$27 million to just one corporation - Michelin.

## ABANDONING JOB TRAINING

The Chrétien Liberals slashed federal spending on training nearly 30 per cent between 1993 and 1996. They now are turning over responsibility for training to the provinces, without passing on adequate financial resources. Community colleges have had a double hit - the Canada Health and Social Transfer cut general funding for colleges, and individual programs are hurt by the federal withdrawal of direct purchase of training.

## BAD RISKS

Over the last six years, bad loans and investments have cost the taxpayers of Nova Scotia nearly \$100 million in write-offs. The number of jobs created did not warrant this kind of risk.



training and labour force development. The key is cooperation - among employers, workers, educators, trainers and representatives of community and social action groups.

- An NDP government would establish a new training mechanism involving government, labour, business, non-profit employers, women and minorities in shaping a system of training and learning that is driven by employer needs and the experience of its clients.

## Jobs in our communities

Grassroots economic development is essential to the future of Nova Scotia, especially for rural and coastal communities, but community economic development will not succeed without the range of policies underlying the NDP commitment to job creation.

An NDP government would focus its specific development efforts and programs on grassroots entities - whether conventional small business, self-employment, worker co-operatives, community-run firms or training and investment entities. The goal must be to give local communities the resources, the leadership

and the support to take charge of their futures. Enterprises with firm roots in the community won't hold the province to ransom by threatening to move operations out of Nova Scotia.

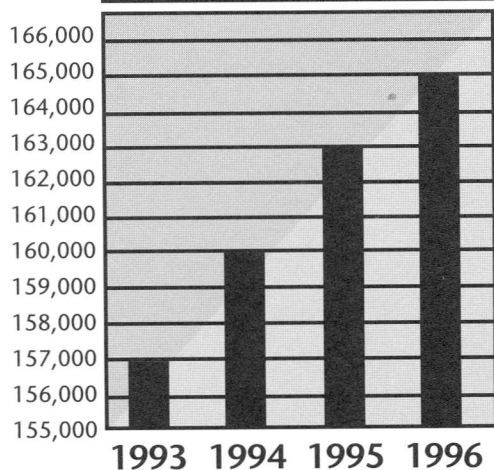
- An NDP government would shift support from large corporations, who can stand on their own feet, to local enterprises that need support to start up or expand.
- Basic community development must come before economic growth. An NDP government would assemble a small team of community development professionals to coordinate and support community development projects.

The Liberal approach of creating Regional Development Agencies to implement community economic development from the top down failed to produce results and even worked to undermine the existing community economic development processes.

- An NDP government would ensure that regionally-based support and promotion agencies are limited to assisting the activities of community entities, which must be the main engines of development.

### GROWTH OF POVERTY

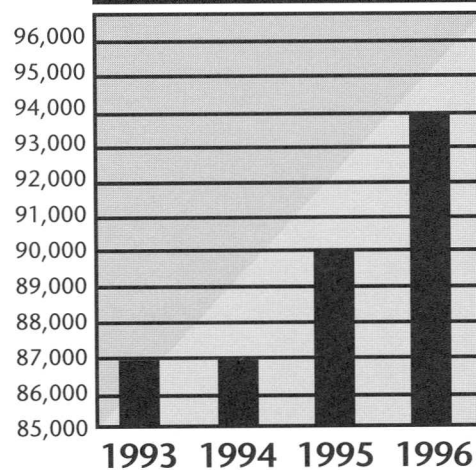
#### Low-Income Persons - Nova Scotia



Source: Statistics Canada, Cat. 13-569-XPB

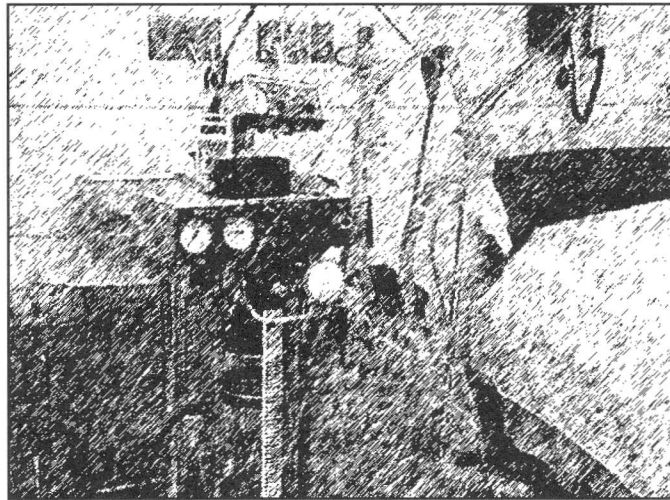
### GROWTH OF POVERTY

#### Low-Income Women - Nova Scotia



Source: Statistics Canada, Cat. 13-569-XPB

# Priority: Renew Health Care



## Restore faith in health care

One of the most important jobs of any provincial government is to make sure that citizens have a health care system they can count on. New Democrats invented Medicare in this country and only they can save it from years of mismanagement, cost-cutting and privatization by the Liberals and Tories.

The Nova Scotia NDP has always recognized that good health is a result of many factors, and that poverty is the biggest single contributor to poor health. The NDP has emphasized the need for health reform that focuses on preventing illness, developing primary health care services and supporting community involvement in health care planning.

Our vision for the health system calls for fundamental structural changes, with both consumers and health providers participating in decisions. But that is a long-term vision. Structural changes of this nature require time and a commitment of resources. They cannot take place in an atmosphere of chaos caused by ill-planned spending cuts and general down

## DESTROYING THE SYSTEM

Between them, the Tories and Liberals have almost destroyed the publicly-funded health care system that New Democrats fought so long and hard to bring about. The Conservatives allowed politics to dictate health care policy, putting off the reforms needed to make our health care system more effective, affordable and responsive. The provincial Liberals hijacked the reform process and used it as a smoke screen for cutbacks and privatization. The federal Liberals, supported by MP Russell MacLellan, completed the destruction by cutting \$7 billion from the budget that funds health care.

sizing. They cannot be successfully implemented when hundreds of health care workers have lost their jobs and hundreds more fear for their jobs. These changes cannot take place if Nova Scotians lack confidence that health care will be there when they need it. The first task would be to restore faith in the health care system. To do that we must also restore the confidence of those who work in the system.

- An NDP government would commit to the principles of Medicare, taking whatever steps are required to ensure:
  - universal coverage for all Nova Scotians;
  - fair access by all Nova Scotians to the health services they need;
  - comprehensive coverage for all health concerns;
  - portability of health care in Canada;
  - public administration of health care in Nova Scotia;
- An NDP government would conduct a full evaluation of the effect of Liberal health care restructuring and cutbacks and identify priority areas for re-investment.
- An NDP government would review health care regionalization to ensure that, in keeping with the original intent of health care reform, decisions are driven by community health boards.
- An NDP government would re-constitute the Provincial Health Council as an independent source of information and support for community health boards.

## **Reaffirm health care principles**

Two-tier Medicare doesn't save money. It just delays treatment so that, in the end, there are extra costs. The NDP would oppose a two-tier health care system because such a system is unfair. It says there will be one level of medical care for those who can afford it, an inferior level for those who can't.

We would stop the erosion of universal coverage caused by the de-listing of services and the introduction of user fees. Since health care is not a commodity like any other, we would stop the expansion of for-profit services covered by Medicare.

- An NDP government would ban extra-billing, user fees and surcharges by physicians practising under Medicare.
- An NDP government would prevent any further privatization of health care services or facilities that cannot be shown clearly and openly to be in the public interest.

Once the health care system has been stabilized, the NDP would proceed with structural reforms and programs of prevention and promotion that would keep costs down and permit the introduction of better services to all parts of Nova Scotia.

- An NDP government would make sure that services to patients are provided by the most appropriate professional while guaranteeing the freedom to choose for patients.
- An NDP government would introduce alternatives to paying physicians by fee-for-service, provided those alternatives reduce costs while maintaining high quality services.
- An NDP government would promote the establishment of community health clinics staffed by multi-disciplinary teams made up of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and midwives, closely linked with a comprehensive system of home care.
- An NDP government would reduce costs to the medical system through better addiction treatment programs, improved enforcement and education around workplace safety and health, and a fairer workers' compensation system to ensure health care costs are paid by employers' premiums, not MSI.
- An NDP government would make health promotion and sickness prevention a high priority.
- An NDP government would ensure that the first priority of physicians trained in Nova Scotia is meeting the needs of Nova Scotians.

## Reinvest in the health care system

Health care reform is necessary in order to free up resources for reinvestment in health care, especially in areas that have been cut or chronically under-funded by the Liberals and Tories. Priorities for an NDP government include:

- Improving mental health services, especially for adolescents;
- Implementing attendant care and technical aids programs to recognize that such services are essential to full participation in society by disabled Nova Scotians;
- Improving coverage and reducing premiums for Pharmacare;
- Reinstating dollars cut from the Children's Dental Health program.

## USER FEES FOR HEALTH CARE

The Liberals and Tories claim they are opposed to a two-tier health system. Then they open the door to just such a system and the further erosion of Medicare by cutting funding and failing to enact meaningful reforms. A system - begun under the Tories and continued by the Liberals - that permits tray fees, suture fees or facility fees, does not guarantee equal access to medical services regardless of income.

## BAD MEDICINE

The Liberals failed to deal with the threat to Medicare posed by user fees and extra billing. They watched passively as deep reductions in federal transfer payments inflicted further damage to health care in Nova Scotia. Then, as the election approached, they claimed to be throwing millions of new dollars at health care in a vain attempt to stop the bleeding.





# Priority: Improve Education and Create Opportunities for Young Nova Scotians

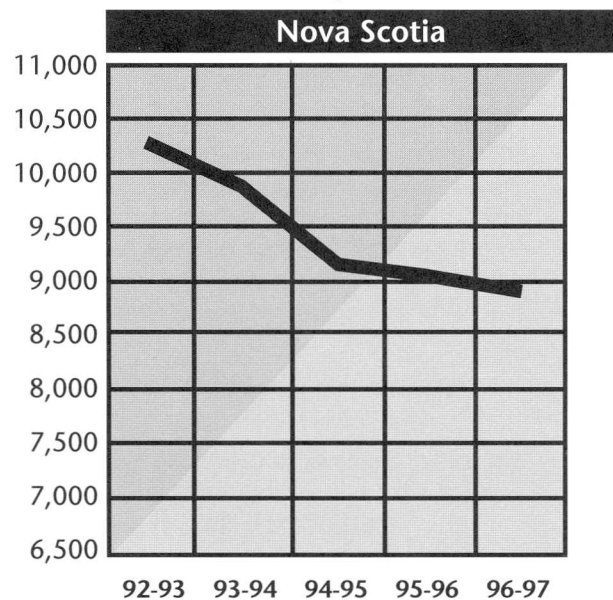


## Commit to quality education

Education is an investment in the future. The NDP would recognize education, including life-long learning, as a right of every Nova Scotian, and would confirm that access to education is the cornerstone to a more just society. An NDP government would give concrete support to students, parents and educators by:

- Stopping the downloading of educational costs and move toward 100 per cent provincial funding of an expanded core program;
- Reaffirming support for equal educational opportunity by ensuring adequate public funding of education to reduce the inequities between rural and urban schools;
- Reaffirming the provision of adequate support services for all children by addressing the \$33 million deficiency in special education funding identified by the Funding Review Work Group. This support would include targeted reductions in class sizes and pupil-teacher ratios.

TEACHER CUTS, 1993-1997



Source: Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 81-003

New Democrats do not say that every school that is now open should stay open. However, New Democrats believe that for many communities, including urban communities, the local school is crucial to community survival.

- An NDP government would review initiatives like site-based planning and school councils to ensure schools are centres of learning, first for children, then for the wider community.
- An NDP government would ensure that schools continue to operate in rural and coastal communities by implementing a small schools policy that promotes a range of strategies to maintain and enhance the quality of education in rural and coastal areas.
- An NDP government would conduct a public review of the Liberal-imposed structure of amalgamated boards to ensure it is meeting the needs of students, educators, parents and communities.

## **Bring common sense to school construction**

Private financing and ownership of schools is not the answer to Nova Scotia's need for good, healthy schools. It will lead to a two-tier system in which some students will continue in portable classrooms or environmentally hazardous conditions while others attend

## **FEDERAL CUTS, PROVINCIAL CUTS**

Funding for post-secondary education has been under pressure in Nova Scotia for years. The federal Liberals reduced funding with their Canada Health and Social Transfer introduced with the 1995 budget. The provincial Liberals have matched their federal counterparts almost cut for cut. The result is rapidly rising tuition fees and a threat to accessibility. Income contingent loan payment schemes are not the answer.

## **TRIPLE-P TROUBLES**

In the midst of crushing funding cutbacks that left many students and teachers in desperate straits, the Liberals embarked on a politically-inspired \$400-million school building spree. The Liberals called this their Triple P approach (Public-private partnerships). As the Halifax Chronicle-Herald put it, the program quickly became "pricey, problem-plagued and highly political."

\$30-million educational palaces. Triple-P schools may lead to an immediate school building boom, but in the long run, the lease-back approach will see millions of dollars sucked out of the classroom and into the pockets of financiers and friends of the Liberal Party.

- An NDP government would scrap the Liberals ill-conceived Triple-P policy.
- An NDP government would speed up needed renovations and new school construction through an arm's-length publicly-administered body, such as the Municipal Finance Corporation.

## **Create post-secondary education opportunities for all young Nova Scotians**

Education provides young Nova Scotians with the best chance to qualify for secure, high-wage, high-skill jobs. New Democrats are committed to the provision of quality post-secondary education, available to everyone.

- An NDP government would freeze tuition fee increases.
- An NDP government would reinstate a provincial bursary program to broaden access to post-secondary education and reduce the student loan debt burden.

## **YOUTH HARDEST HIT**

Young workers and students are being penalized for decades of mismanagement and economic failure. Youth unemployment has become a permanent fixture of the last 20 years. For a long time, youth were simply ignored in their plight. Now, with higher education costs, tougher UI regulations and a workfare scheme, youth are not just being ignored, they're being punished.

## **Help Young Nova Scotians get a start in the work world**

Young people would benefit from the New Democratic Party's jobs and education strategies. However, specific steps would also be required to help young people enter the workforce.

- An NDP government would work with employers in both the private and public sectors to establish on-the-job training programs and/or apprenticeship programs for recent graduates.
- An NDP government would work with employers and educators to improve school-to-work transition programs.
- An NDP government would increase support and funding for young entrepreneur programs, including financial advice, marketing support and access to loans.
- An NDP government would strengthen the role of the Youth Advisory Council, giving it a mandate to present annual report cards to the House of Assembly on the government's record on issues important to young Nova Scotians.

## **MORTGAGING THE FUTURE**

Through economic mismanagement, bad budgeting and corporate giveaways, the Liberals and Tories have mortgaged the future of Nova Scotia. To pay off that mortgage, they have undermined the educational services needed by young Nova Scotians. Then they claim their budget-cutting is in the interests of future generations. They talk about the importance of educational opportunities then reduce resources for public education and training.

## **STARVING PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Under the Liberals, provincial grants for public education have dropped by \$50 million in three years. The Liberals also misled us about school board amalgamation. They said amalgamation would put resources into the classroom. Instead, it is leading to school closures.

## **WRONG DIAGNOSIS OF OUR FINANCIAL CONDITION**

Nova Scotia has the highest per capita debt of any Canadian province and the lowest per capita spending on programs, according to data compiled by the Investment Dealers Association of Canada. Yet the Liberals and Tories keep telling us that spending on programs that people want and need - like health care and education - is responsible for the province's unhealthy fiscal situation. It's not only the wrong diagnosis, it's unfair to Nova Scotians.

# Priority: Make the tax system fairer

## Develop a fair tax system for ordinary Nova Scotians

Ordinary Nova Scotians are carrying too much of the tax burden. In 1970-71, corporate tax revenue contributed 20 per cent to Nova Scotia's income tax revenue. In 1997-98, the corporate contribution was only 10 per cent.

Corporations use loopholes to avoid paying their taxes. In 1994, Sobeys's Empire company owed \$56 million in deferred taxes while Sobeys's Atlantic Shopping Centres had \$41 million in deferred taxes that same year. The Liberals' BST compounded the unfairness by shifting \$200 million in taxes off corporations in Nova Scotia while raising taxes on basic necessities.

The government requires tax revenue to pay for needed public services, but it must be raised in a manner that is fair to everyone. Regressive taxes like the GST/PST and user fees, favoured by the Tories and Liberals, must be minimized.

- An NDP government would scrap the back room BST deal signed between the federal and provincial Liberals and set up a Fair Tax Commission. During the 18-month notice period the FTC would consult Nova Scotians on the best way to replace the BST deal and reduce the tax impact on low and middle-income people of consumption-based taxes. At the same time, the Commission must ensure that adequate revenues are available to support essential public service. The Fair Tax Commission would have the responsibility to develop a plan for ensuring the tax system is fair for all Nova Scotians as well as monitoring, assessing and recommending changes to the tax system.

## Base taxes on the ability to pay

When it comes to taxing corporations and wealthy individuals, the government of Nova Scotia is limited by policies at the federal level and in other provinces. These policies have seen our public sector brought to the verge of bankruptcy while billions of dollars are squirrelled away in distant tax havens, billions more in corporate taxes are deferred and great personal wealth remains untaxed. The Fair Tax Commission would be mandated to explore means through which Nova Scotia can close these tax loopholes.

### BROKEN PROMISES, HIGHER TAXES

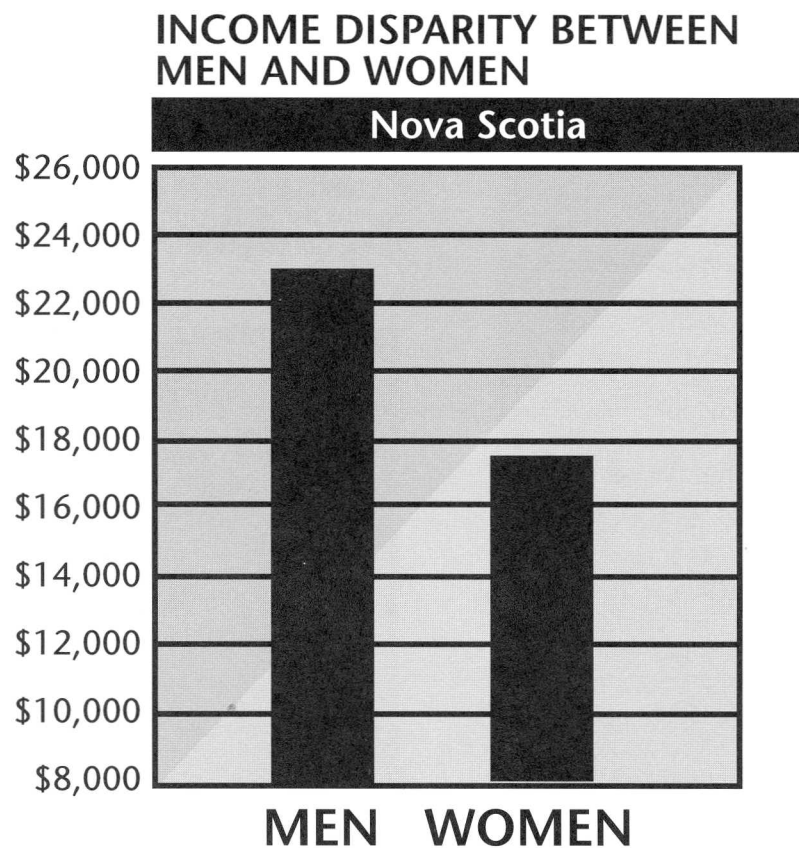
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During the 1993 election, the Liberals promised not to raise taxes. Immediately after the election, they raised the PST from 10 to 11 per cent, imposed a three per cent tax on power bills, added two cents a litre to the gasoline and diesel fuel tax and even taxed flea markets. Pharmacare premiums were introduced. Marriage licence fees increased 185 per cent. Campground fees jumped 64 per cent. Ferry fares doubled or tripled in some cases, highway tolls were introduced and municipal taxes were increased due to provincial down loading. All the while, the Liberals handed out even more corporate tax breaks.



While the Fair Tax Commission is doing its work, we must ensure that resources are available to restore public services decimated by the Liberals and Tories. It would also be necessary to provide immediate tax relief to low income Nova Scotians affected by the BST.

New revenue may be required in the short term to repair the damage caused by the BST. Since corporations have been the main beneficiaries of the BST, an NDP government would consider imposing temporary levies on corporations which have benefitted from the BST.



*Source: Statistics Canada, Cat. 13-569-XPB*

# Priority: Make Government Open, Honest and Accountable

## Clean up government patronage

During their 15 years in power, the Tories' patronage politics made Nova Scotia a national laughing stock. The Liberals under Savage were not better, just different. They removed patronage from low-level highways jobs, but kept the gravy train rolling for high-priced lawyers and consultants.

The province's finances cannot stand any more favours for Liberal and Tory insiders. Neither our democratic fabric nor our economy can endure the stifling of initiative resulting from the heavy-handed patronage being pursued by the MacLellan Liberals. The NDP believes that government must be open and that old patronage practices must be abandoned.

- An NDP government would extend the requirement for open tendering to all contracts over \$5,000, including professional services, and put an end to the abuse of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to thwart open competitive tendering.
- An NDP government would bring greater transparency to the dealings between government and corporations receiving favours from government.
- An NDP government would open up the procedures of bodies like the Judicial Council, the Medical Board and similar agencies exercising judicial powers.
- An NDP government would improve the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to close loopholes and extend its scope to municipalities, school boards, colleges, hospitals, self-governing bodies such as regional and community health boards, as well as any private corporation in partnership with government.

## KEEPING PATRONAGE IN THE FAMILY

Russell MacLellan brought back Buchanan-style patronage with a vengeance. He hired his brother as communications director in his office and gave him a \$13,000 a year raise. He rewarded the supporters of his leadership bid with high-paying jobs in the civil service at the expense of ordinary Nova Scotians.

## NO RESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY

Under the Liberals high-handed, top-down government which promises one thing and does the opposite, democracy has been driven to a new low in Nova Scotia. Broken election promises, broken contracts, imposed amalgamations and cynical propaganda campaigns are the hallmarks of the Savage-MacLellan administration.

- An NDP government would expand the role of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner into that of an Ethics Commissioner.
- An NDP government would enact whistle blower legislation to protect workers who report unsafe, environmentally dangerous or other questionable conditions.
- An NDP government would modernize the House of Assembly by providing for the election of the Speaker.

## **Make government accountable to people**

New Democrats believe that governing in the late 1990's and beyond can no longer mean making decisions for the people of Nova Scotia. It should mean working side-by-side with citizens, workers, businesses and others, in a manner that is fair for all Nova Scotians, to achieve economic stability, employment, healthy communities and a sound education system. Government must be a facilitator - working with other parties to ensure there is a consensus as to what must be done. Municipal governments are the cornerstone of democracy and must be consulted and respected.

- An NDP government would work to establish a true partnership between the province and its cities, towns and rural municipalities, and to end the arbitrary downloading of debt and the unilateral restructuring of municipal services.
- An NDP government would ensure a greater role for residents in the decision-making process within their communities, through local councils with powers in the area of land use planning and rezoning applications.

The Liberals and Tories have made a practice of using their legislative majorities to ram through measures that, though they are both unpopular and unwise, may be hard to reverse. The Tory privatization of Nova Scotia Power and the Liberal Casino and Highway 104 deals are examples. The NDP joined with the vast majority of Nova Scotians in opposing these schemes.

- An NDP government would not permit any privatization of public services, including public/private partnering, unless a full public consultation involving affected employees concludes that such privatization is in the public interest.
- An NDP government would carry out public consultations with a view to reducing the negative social impact of gambling in Nova Scotia.
- An NDP government would carry out public consultations to develop a sustainable energy framework for Nova Scotia and to clarify the role of Nova Scotia Power in that framework.
- An NDP government would conduct a review of the amalgamation of Halifax and Cape Breton regional municipalities and would submit to a vote any major changes in municipal governance.

## **The need for responsible spending**

The Liberals have been sloppy, deceitful managers of the public purse. Evidence of that includes their failure to control their own spending and the "cooking the books" identified by the Auditor General in 1997. The Finance Minister admitted his use of "sleight of hand" for the 1997-98 fiscal year.

Nova Scotia's financial situation is difficult. However, income is not the problem. The Liberals' regressive, unfair tax increases, fee hikes, plus profits from gambling and liquor, have caused government income to grow much faster than the income of ordinary Nova Scotians.

The Liberals also enjoyed lower than expected interest rates, and the BST bribe from their Ottawa cousins. By March 31 the Liberals will have collected at least \$1.3 billion more than they predicted in their own Blueprint for Recovery. Lower debt costs due to lower interest rates had saved Nova Scotians another \$132 million by 1997.

The problem is irresponsible spending. The Liberals promised to reduce spending by \$262 million by 1997-98. They actually increased operating expenditures by \$375 million, despite wage roll backs and slashing transfers to schools, universities and hospitals.

Administrative waste has continued. Money is wasted on jobs and contracts for government friends. Large profitable corporations get expensive subsidies. Cabinet minister's pet projects - like the \$30 million Horton Super School - deplete scarce resources.

The result? Public servants work more for less pay. Nova Scotians pay more and get less.

*(Details on revenues and expenditures can be found in Appendix A.)*

## **Manage wisely for the benefit of all Nova Scotians**

An NDP government would ensure that Nova Scotia lives within its means. We are committed to reinvesting in priority areas - jobs, health care and education.

The true state of Nova Scotia's finances won't be known until after the election. The ability to carry out even the modest new expenditures proposed in this document will depend upon the true state of the province's books.

Reinvestment in priority areas is also limited by the debts the Liberals owe to public servants - debts that are coming due since the freeze on public service bargaining ended on November 1.

Continued spending cuts and devolution by the federal Liberals create special problems. So does the prospect of another Quebec referendum before the end of the century.

Despite Liberal pre-election claims that "The Tide Has Turned", the government and people of Nova Scotia face uncertain times and great challenges. In this environment, government must have the right priorities - jobs, health care and education - not costly rewards for its supporters and hand-outs to the banks and large corporations. Government must have the energy and skill to ensure that these priorities are achieved.

When governments like the Savage-MacLellan regime cynically cut and slash early in their mandate, then promise everything to everybody at election time, they are not just insulting the voters' intelligence. They are hurting the economy and

endangering the effective operation of our health care and education systems.

The time has come to end the shell games that have characterised the Liberal years. Government must level with the people of Nova Scotia.

- An NDP government would appoint the Nova Scotia Auditor General as the sole auditor of the province's accounts.
- An NDP government would provide Nova Scotia's independent Auditor General with sufficient resources for a thorough, timely and public audit of the Province's financial affairs prior to the preparation of the first NDP budget.

## **THE WRONG SPENDING PRIORITIES**

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The Highway 104 toll was an early example of Liberal mismanagement. Nova Scotia motorists will pay through the nose to use the road. But all Nova Scotians will pay a heavy price because the Liberals signed a deal that puts most of the risk on the taxpayers and gives all of the profits to their private partners.

The Liberals failed to learn from the highway 104 fiasco. Instead they extended the costly practice of public/private partnering to school construction, forcing future generations of students to pay the cost of their bad policies.

The Liberals promised to reduce administrative spending by five per cent a year. That commitment was never taken seriously. The bad example was set right at the top with expenditures in the Executive Council, the Premier's Office and Priorities and Planning escalating sharply after the Liberals took over. Things got worse when Russell MacLellan took over, carrying out a costly staff purge in the Premier's Office and stuffing the Priorities and Planning Committee with his political supporters.

The Liberal government has continued the wasteful practice of hiring its own private sector auditors rather than giving the job to the Provincial Auditor to save the province some \$100,000 per year.



# Priority: Keep our Promises

## A realistic time table

**I**t is vital to Nova Scotians' belief in the political system that governments live up to the promises they make. The initiatives outlined in this document cover a full four- to five-year mandate. Their full achievement depends to a large extent on our ability to afford them. Therefore, we must have a clear picture of Nova Scotia's financial circumstances from the Provincial Auditor before we finalize a time table for carrying out the undertakings set out in this document.

While that overall review is taking place, a new NDP government would proceed immediately to prepare the immediate implementation of many of those commitments, including:

Appoint Auditor General as sole auditor  
Appoint Jobs Commissioner  
Begin Jobs Audit and Jobs Impact Statements  
Review royalties and benefits from Sable development  
Begin consultations on jobs plan for Cape Breton  
Halt Donkin privatization and do viability studies  
Place immediate moratorium on handouts to big corporations  
Serve notice on BST deal  
Appoint Fair Tax Commission  
Evaluate effects of Liberal health care cuts  
Devise overtime and part-time strategy  
Review overall royalty and stumpage policies  
Enact Protected Places Legislation  
Establish and enforce forest harvest limits  
Establish an Ethics Commissioner  
Develop high technology policy  
Begin public sector decentralization negotiations  
Empower URB on NSP fuel purchase

Commence clean coal initiatives  
Accelerate environmental clean up plans  
Review programs for small enterprises, co-ops and credit unions  
Begin formation of human resource development plan  
Re-focus role of RDAs  
Develop CED strategy for people with disabilities  
Re-focus health care regionalization  
Freeze health care privatization  
Develop alternatives to Triple P school policy  
Implement open public policy on privatizations  
Begin public consultations on sustainable energy policy  
Establish gambling review  
Strengthen Youth Advisory Council  
On-the-job and school-to-work transition programs for youth  
Better relations with municipalities  
Extend open tendering requirements  
Increase transparency of government-corporate dealings  
Provide for elected Speaker

# Priority: Keep our Promises

## Priorities for Re-investment

Once the Auditor General's independent review of the books is complete, an NDP government would have the information it needs to begin necessary re-investment in health care, education and job creation. If funds are available either through natural growth, fairer fiscal arrangements with the federal government, redeployment of resources or short term tax changes, the NDP's priorities for re-investment are:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Ban extra billing  | Reduce urban/rural educational inequities               |
| Reinstate Children's Dental Program  | Small schools initiatives                               |
| Address physician supply problem   | Address deficit in special needs funding                |
| Freeze tuition fees  | Programs to reduce student debt                         |
| Green collar initiatives   | Promote eco-tourism                                     |
| Addressing deficiencies identified in health care evaluation                               | Programs to maximize employment in forest industry      |
| Promote community health clinics   | Monitor and enforce forest TAC                          |
| Investment in health promotion, sickness prevention, worker safety and addiction treatment | Re-invest in silviculture                               |
| Promote community health board role  | Strategies for job creation in cultural industries      |
| Improved mental health services  | Develop long-term infrastructure plan                   |
| Improved attendant care services and technical aids for disabled                           | Deploy community development workers as stimulus to CED |
| Reduce Pharmacare premiums   | Better programs for young entrepreneurs                 |
| Accelerated school construction program  | Public review of school board amalgamation              |
| End downloading of educational costs   | Review HRM and other municipal amalgamations            |

# Priority: Keep our Promises

## Longer-term initiatives

**A**s an NDP government nears the mid-way point of its mandate, the Fair Tax Commission would have produced its recommendations for replacing the BST with a fairer system of taxation. The important job for the final years of an NDP mandate would focus on implementing those taxation recommendations, along with recommendations flowing from the consultation processes established early in the mandate. In addition, the NDP would begin work on implementing the remaining commitments in *Priorities for People*.

Strengthen the Industry Closing Act

Pension Fund initiatives

Promote lending circles

Increase presence of labour-sponsored venture funds

Open up procedures of bodies exercising judicial powers

Overhaul and extend Freedom of Information Act

Enact whistle-blower legislation

Explore establishment of new training mechanism

Sustainable agriculture initiative

Enhanced role for allied medical professionals

Increase alternatives to fee-for-service remuneration

Reduce of class sizes and/or pupil-teacher ratios

Enhance community development role of local school

Better local control in municipal matters

Establish Ethics Commissioner

Enact Whistle Blower legislation

Sustainable agriculture initiative

Develop new training mechanism

# Appendix A

The Liberal's Blueprint for Recovery, published with their first budget on Sept. 30, 1993, predicted that between 1993 and 1997 revenues would grow by \$318 million. In fact, revenues grew by \$724 million over the four year period. As Table 1 shows, actual revenue exceeded projected revenue in every Liberal budget.

**Table 1. Rising Revenues**

Year	Blueprint Sept. 30, 1993	Actual (Public Accounts)	Difference
1993-94	\$3.506-m	\$3.548-m	\$42-m
1994-95	\$3.635-m	\$3.861-m	\$226-m
1995-96	\$3.723-m	\$3.968-m	\$245-m
1996-97	\$3.821-m	\$4.246-m	\$425-m
1997-98	\$3.916-m	\$4.272-m	\$355-m
Total			\$1.293-b

**Table 2. Skyrocketing Expenditures**

As Table 2 shows, the Liberals overspent the targets in Blueprint for Recovery in three of the five years of their administration. The total cost of the miscalculation was a stunning \$1.359-billion.

Year	Blueprint Sept. 30, 1993	Actual (Public Accounts)	Difference
1993-94	\$3.052-m	\$3.025-m.	(\$27-m)
1994-95	\$3.047-m	\$3.033-m	(\$24-m)
1995-96	\$2.909-m	\$3.071-m.	\$162-m
1996-97	\$2.845-m	\$3.383-m	\$538-m
1997-98	\$2.790-m	\$3.400-m	\$610-m
Total			\$1.359-b





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