

Now is the time...



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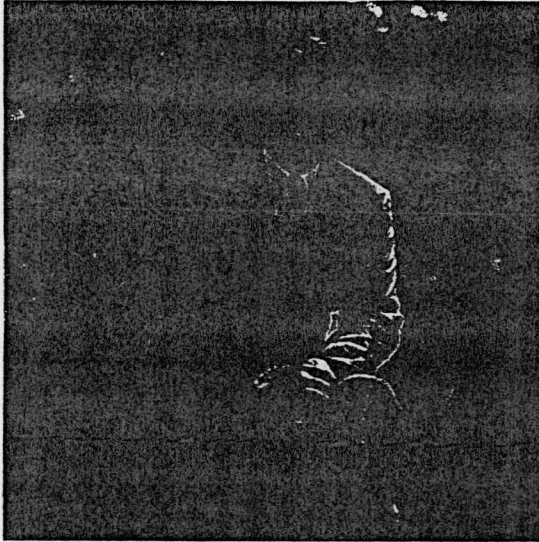

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*Russell MacLellan
Premier of Nova Scotia*

Now is the time . . . *to have your say*

A Liberal government trusts individuals to make the best decisions about their future, and we believe the role of government is to help ensure that the opportunities for a rewarding life are available to all.

A Liberal government performs that role by creating the environment for a vibrant economy, by strengthening our system of education and skills training, and by ensuring that the essential social and physical infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of Nova Scotians today and tomorrow.

Nova Scotia's economy is much stronger today than when the Liberal Party took office in 1993. Our province led the country in the creation of new full time jobs last year, and our employment levels were higher than ever. By May of this year, 8700 more Nova Scotians were working compared to a year earlier. Nova Scotians are renewing their trading and mercantile culture. Thanks to open borders, our companies and entrepreneurs are succeeding in opening up new markets for Nova Scotia goods and services, and creating wealth and opportunity here at home.

On the horizon are new opportunities in offshore energy, and an array of possibilities arising from the knowledge economy . . . in life sciences, in environmental technologies, in information technology and in our cultural industries.

As a province we are less reliant on federal transfers than at any time in a generation. We have restored order to public finances and recorded three balanced budgets.

. . . Continued

When we say Now is the Time, Liberals mean that we are now positioned to make the critical investments that will ensure our economic success and quality of life as Nova Scotians for the long-term.

Rising health costs are a threat to our public finances. That's why we are proposing a bold initiative in health care. Over the next three years we will borrow and invest \$600 million to make our health system more efficient, responsive, and affordable in the long-term. This plan outlined in our spring budget was endorsed by every major health organization in the province, but was rejected by the opposition parties.

Now is the time for investments in our education system that will guarantee our success in the long term. In particular now is the time to strengthen our community college system, so that our young people get the skills and training they need to seize the opportunities of the new economy.

Now is the time to strengthen our communities with forward-looking policies and planning.

We don't have all the answers, but we have a good start and we have a good attitude about listening to all Nova Scotians and working closely with them. We are confident that now is the time for the Liberal Plan for Nova Scotia.

The foundation of our plan is the spring budget. A re-elected Liberal government will re-introduce these budget measures within 45 days of being sworn in to office

We are launching our platform on our website (www.nsliberals.com) in the hope that Nova Scotians across the province will have the opportunity to read our plan in the their own homes, schools, cyber cafés, local libraries, or community centres. I urge you to e-mail or send us your comments, and let us know what you think of our platform, or provide your suggestions.

We will also explain our plan in advertising and direct mail to Nova Scotians, and through our excellent slate of Liberal candidates, one of the strongest teams we've ever assembled. We look forward to hearing from you during the campaign, and most important of all, on July 27.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter MacKay", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Now is the time . . .

for the Liberal Health Care Plan

Nova Scotians place a high value on a dependable, accessible health care system. We expect quality health care, delivered by the right health care provider in the right setting.

With a stronger economy, and after years of progress in restoring order to the province's finances now is the time to invest in health care. A Liberal government will borrow and invest \$600 million to ensure that our health care system can better respond to the needs of Nova Scotians today, and in the long term.

The Liberal plan for health care is based on the widely-accepted guiding principles for health care put forward by the 1993 Blueprint Committee. The Health Investment Fund will provide our hospitals with the money they need to do their job. It will also mean more nursing home beds, expanded home care programs, more nurses and doctors. The investment will also put in place a province wide health information system that links all Nova Scotians to health care professionals who may be called upon to treat them and their families.

The health investment fund will pay for equipment, services and an information network based on the true health needs of Nova Scotians. To guide us in implementing the plan, we will expand the broad consultation begun over the past year with doctors, nurses and other health care providers.

Due to an aging population and sophisticated advances in medical technology, health care is rapidly becoming more expensive. Our strategic investment will make first-class health care affordable, while providing for a legislated repayment of the fund over 14 years.

Where we are now

In 1993 the new Liberal government inherited a health care system in disrepair. The previous Conservative government had ignored its own studies and failed to make necessary changes to the health care system. As a result, Nova Scotia lagged far behind other Canadian provinces.

The new Liberal government acted immediately to secure Nova Scotia's health care system by:

- ▶ introducing Nova Scotia's's first real home care program;
- ▶ expanding the senior's drug program;
- ▶ launching the province's first physician recruitment campaign;
- ▶ creating a province-wide emergency health system;
- ▶ organizing more efficient regional health boards.

Nova Scotia's health system now provides quality care to over 35,000 Nova Scotians every day in hospitals, doctors offices, nursing homes, at home or in one of the province's fleet of modern ambulances.

But more needs to be done to make our health care system dependable for the long-term; to ensure that Nova Scotians get the right care in the right setting; and to guarantee that we get the most from health dollar.

Aside from providing funds to stabilize our hospitals and health care boards, the Health Investment Fund addresses immediate needs in the following six key areas of health care delivery.

More Full Time Nursing Services

Today, Nova Scotia has more nurses per capita employed in the hospital sector than the Canadian average. Despite this ranking, there is a need for more nurses in specialty areas like intensive care and operating rooms, as well as in nursing homes and home care.

Liberal Health Care Plan Commitment:

- improve the nurse to patient ratio over the next 3 years;
- hire 200 new full-time nursing positions and transform 200 casual nursing positions into full time jobs during over the next 12 months.

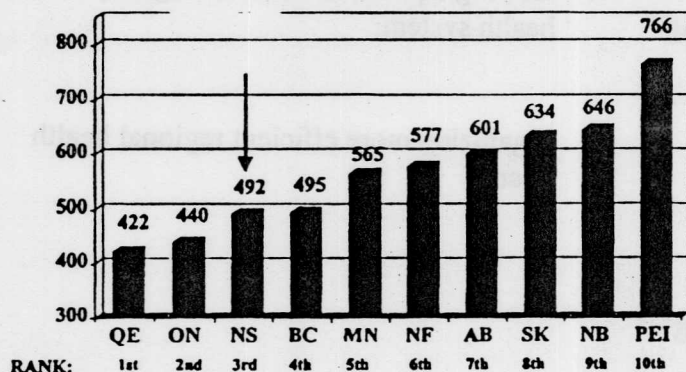
This expansion will cost \$8 million in year one

The Liberal Plan will expand nursing class sizes at Dalhousie and St Francis Xavier Universities by 75 positions beginning this fall at a cost of \$2 million. This expansion will include the establishment of a new satellite nursing program at the University College of Cape Breton.

Improved Access to Physicians

At 1900 practising physicians Nova Scotia has the highest number in active practice in a decade. Our Rural Physician Incentive Program has filled medical practices in 33 of 35 Nova Scotia communities requiring doctors. In the past two years, Nova Scotia has experienced a net gain of 142 new doctors.

Nova Scotia has the Third Best Doctor to Population Ratio
(e.g. N.S. Ratio is 492 People: 1 Physician)



(SOURCE: CPPIRI for Physician Numbers and Statistics Canada for Populations, as of 31 Dec 1998)

Liberal Health Care Plan Commitment:

- recruit fifty new physicians over three years;
- continue the campaign to recruit doctors to rural practices;
- recruit specialists for regional hospitals as well as the QEII and IWK-Grace.

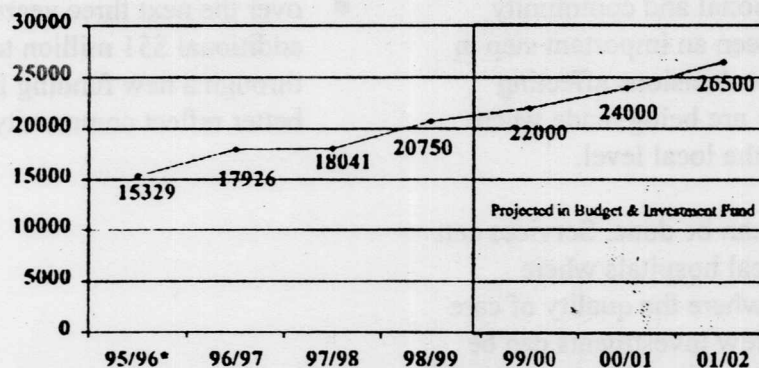
Improved Access to Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Home Care

Nova Scotia has more hospital beds per capita than the Canadian average but we still have many challenges. Inappropriate use of expensive hospital beds is consuming badly needed resources. Expanding the number of long-term care beds and the variety of home care services will bring health care closer to home for Nova Scotians. These measures will help to take some of the pressure off our hospitals and at the same time improve access to more appropriate care.

Liberal Health Care Plan Commitment:

- over the next three years, invest \$30 million to open up an additional 130 nursing home beds as well as expand the variety of long-term care options available to Nova Scotians;
- invest \$40 million in expanding home care into areas such as palliative and pediatric care, occupational and physical therapy and respite care;
- provide a single point of access to long-term care and home care.

Home Care Nova Scotia Cases Per Year



* Program started in HCNS in 1995

Source: Integrated Services Delivery Branch - DHI

Reduced Waiting Times

Waiting any length of time to receive health care service is less than ideal. The Liberal goal is to reduce wait times and ensure reasonable access to services needed.

While there has been steady progress made reducing wait times for many urgent, elective and diagnostic services and procedures, more will be done.

Liberal Health Care Plan Commitment:

- to reduce wait times, we will make a \$30 million investment for technicians and equipment for various types of body imaging, including MRI and CT scans, bone densitometry scanning, mammogram screening and other related services;
- service targets will be set and monitored in the following areas:

Service	Urgent	Diagnostic	Elective
CT Scan	1 Day		14 Days
MRI Scan	1 Day		30 Days
Cardiovascular Surgery	7 Days		30 Days
Bone Density Screening	7 Days		90 Days
Mammography	1 Day	14 Days	60 Days

Community Care and Regional Equity

Nova Scotians, regardless of where they live, should have access to quality health care services close to home.

The creation of regional and community health boards has been an important step in this direction. More decisions affecting health care delivery are being made where they should be - at the local level.

There is more that can be done. Services can be transferred to local hospitals where cost-effective and where the quality of care can be improved. New investments can be made in telemedicine to provide rural doctors with the tools they need to improve patient care.

Liberal Health Care Plan Commitment:

- over the next three years invest \$48 million in community care and prevention.
- over the next three years provide an additional \$51 million to regional boards through a new funding formula that will better reflect community needs.

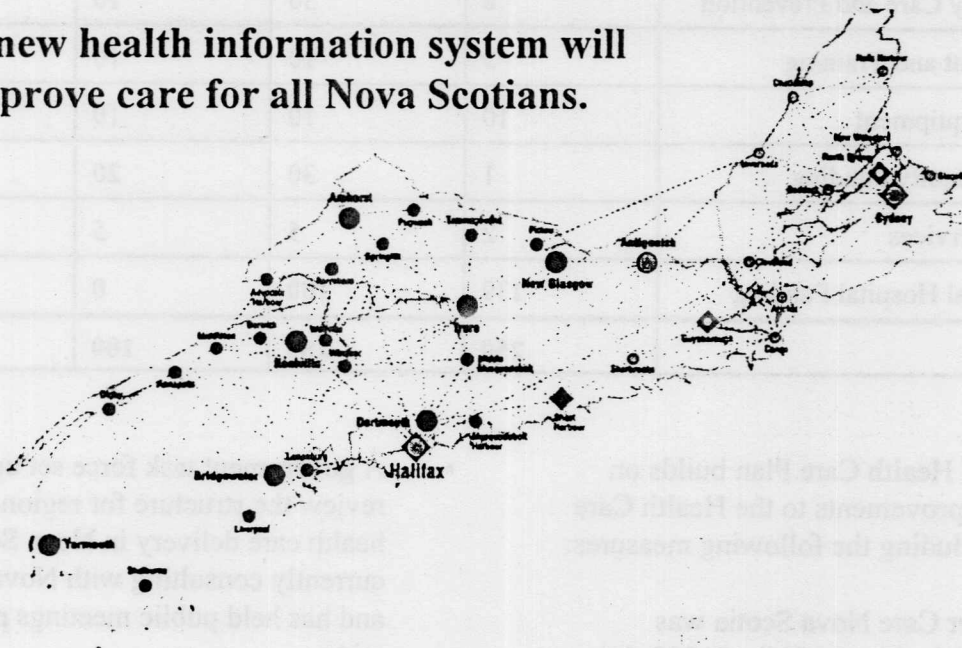
Health Information System

Instant access to patient information saves lives. It also eliminates when you need care. Today, most records are stored in a variety of locations, such as doctors' offices, hospitals, laboratories and X-ray departments. Accessing them is inefficient and, in some cases, too late to be useful.

Liberal Health Care Plan Commitment:

- invest \$75 million dollars over three years to make patient information available at the right time where ever and when ever it is needed for the delivery of care to Nova Scotians.

A new health information system will improve care for all Nova Scotians.



Emergency Health Services

The Liberal Government has rapidly advanced Nova Scotia's ambulance and emergency health services. Nova Scotia leads the country with the only province-wide 911 dispatch. This system co-ordinates our fleet of modern ambulances, each staffed by trained attendants providing quick-response and emergency-scene services. Nova Scotia's Air Ambulance Service has flown more than 1,000 rescue missions.

Liberal Health Care Plan Commitment:

- continued investment in upgrading and renewing the fleet of ambulances;
- provide world-class training to paramedics.

Health Investment Fund by Category — in millions of dollars —

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	TOTAL
Health Information System	20	35	20	75
Y2K	50	0	0	50
Home Care, and Long-Term Care	15	30	25	70
Community Care and Prevention	8	30	10	48
Recruitment and Training	5	10	10	25
Medical Equipment	10	10	10	30
Regional Equity Funding	1	30	20	51
Support Services	2	5	5	12
Transitional Hospital Funding	139	100	0	239
TOTAL	250	250	100	600

The Liberal Health Care Plan builds on ongoing improvements to the Health Care System, including the following measures:

- ▶ Cancer Care Nova Scotia was established in the Fall of 1998. It is aimed at creating a more effective cancer care system, one that is truly patient focussed as well as comprehensive and integrated.
- ▶ In September 1998, the new Cape Breton Cancer Treatment Centre opened in Sydney. Now, approximately 50 patients no longer have to travel to Halifax for treatment and can receive the care they need closer to home.
- ▶ More cancer specialists are working in Nova Scotia today than ever before.
- ▶ A government task force set up to review the structure for regionalized health care delivery in Nova Scotia is currently consulting with Nova Scotians and has held public meetings province-wide.
- ▶ In February of this year, the Minister of Health announced the purchase of two mobile bone densitometry units to aid in the early identification of osteoporosis and other risk factors for fractures.
- ▶ The Western Region received its mobile breast screening van in 1997. More than 8500 women have been screened. The van is operating at full capacity screening 45 women a day.

- ▶ In June 1996 Nova Scotia's Air Ambulance Helicopter began flying missions, transporting children, critically ill and injured adults, and expectant mothers at risk from across the Maritimes to hospitals in Halifax. By March 30, 1999 the helicopter completed mission 1001.
- ▶ A new trauma program at the QEII Health Sciences Centre was announced in January 1998 to help save lives and reduce injuries, making the QEII the adult tertiary trauma centre in Nova Scotia. A team of specialists - including physicians and other health professionals - now is on call 24-hours a day to respond to trauma emergencies.
- ▶ The Nova Scotia TeleHealth Network is a series of telecommunications links that connects 41 health care facilities across the province. Joining the facilities through advanced technology will improve Nova Scotia's access to health care services regardless of where they live. In addition, it has a continuing education component and will assist greatly with initiatives to recruit and retain physicians.
- ▶ Plans are underway for a new emergency department at the Dartmouth General Hospital. Construction will take two years and is expected to be completed for the summer of 2001.
- ▶ Planning for the replacement facility of the Highland View Regional Hospital in Cumberland County continues. An architectural contract has been awarded, and process redesign and function are near completion.
- ▶ New community health centres in Cheticamp and Neil's Harbour. With a capacity for 10 inpatient beds each, they are ready for occupancy.
- ▶ Construction at the Yarmouth Hospital is on time and on budget. The anticipated date of completion is Spring 2000. The hospital will have over 100 beds.

Now is the Time. . .

to seize opportunity

The knowledge economy, open borders and new wealth from the offshore gas and oil are creating unprecedented opportunities for Nova Scotians. More than ever, our young people have the chance to earn their living, and raise their families, here in Nova Scotia.

The Liberal government believes that the role of government is to encourage economic growth, prosperity, self-reliance and innovation throughout the province, and to help prepare all Nova Scotians to take the best advantage of these opportunities through a first-rate system of education and skills training.

The Liberal government's spring budget, defeated by the New Democrats and Conservatives on June 17, made a number of important commitments to build on Nova Scotia's economic success by expanding its skills training and tailoring it more closely to the needs of the new economy.

These budget measures were modest in terms of absolute dollar spending over the next year. This reflects the province's continued tight financial position, and the Liberal government's clear choice to invest significantly in our health care system over the next three years. Nevertheless, the budget measures strategically addressed some important issues facing Nova Scotians.

A re-elected Liberal government will re-introduce these budget measures within 45 days of being sworn in to office.

It was a good budget, and it needs to be reintroduced for the sake of all Nova Scotians.

This section explains why, by outlining the budget's initiatives and a number of other priorities that a re-elected Liberal government will pursue to help Nova Scotians seize opportunity.

A Stronger Economy

Nova Scotia's economy is undergoing its strongest period of growth in generations. Since 1993, Nova Scotia's unemployment rate has fallen from 14.2 per cent to 9.6 percent, as growth led by the private sector created 51,000 new jobs.

Last year the province led the country in the creation of full-time jobs, and employment reached record levels. This trend is continuing. By May of this year, 8,700 more Nova Scotians were working than during 1998, and independent economists are predicting a sustained period of economic growth.

Offshore energy is a major reason for this success. The Liberal government's successful negotiations with partners in the Sable Gas Project kick-started offshore natural-gas development. Now, a pipeline is being build to connect to lucrative energy markets in the United States, while also allowing Nova Scotians to hook in.

The pipeline sets the stage for the next phase in offshore exploration and development. This spring, the petroleum industry showed its confidence in Nova Scotia's energy future by committing to \$600 million in new exploration work here over the next five years. Nova Scotia has become one of the world's energy hot spots.

But the gas industry is only part of our economic success. Nova Scotians are competing more successfully internationally, renewing their entrepreneurial and trading culture. Our merchandise exports jumped by 8.2 percent last year, well above the national average of 5.1 percent, reflecting expansions by major companies such as Michelin, Stora and Trenton Works, as well as greater confidence by smaller Nova Scotia companies in finding new markets abroad.

Our information technology sector is also growing with more than 80 IT companies either established or relocated in communities across Nova Scotia including firms such as Fastlane Technologies, CISCO and Keane.

Our film production is experiencing phenomenal growth, from an-under \$15 million in 1993 to well over \$100 million last year. Nova Scotia firms specializing in environmental technologies are breaking new ground.

Our tourism industry has set back-to-back records, and now is worth more than \$1.1 billion annually, due in part to the Tourism Partnership Council creating closer co-operation between the industry and government.

There is much more work to be done, but the government has had significant success in creating a better economic environment, and helping Nova Scotians acquire the skills and knowledge to take advantage of a stronger economy.

The first requirement was restoring order to public finances that were out of control under the previous Conservative administration.

The Liberal government first achieved a balance in the operating budget, then in the operating and capital budget. Finally this spring's budget set out a course for a three-year transition to a

budget that balances operating, capital, and the consolidated operations of hospitals and health boards, thereby setting a new standard for fiscal responsibility.

The Liberal government has also made a concerted effort to work closely with business, labour, and the voluntary sector and other levels of governments to identify and implement forward-looking strategies for economic growth.

The Liberal record includes:

- ▶ holding down taxes, and targeting tax incentives to grow strategic industries.

Example: The success of the film industry tax credit in fuelling the growth of our film and television production.

- ▶ streamlining government regulation, and delivery of government services to business.

Example: The Liberal government has used the innovative Business Efficiency Act to cut red tape across government, and make it easier to do business in Nova Scotia.

- ▶ supporting investments in technological infrastructure, and conventional types of infrastructure.

Example: In co-operation with Ottawa, the Liberal government introduced the Information Economy Initiative. This \$62.1 million project, is the single largest information technology investment in Nova Scotia history which will fund IT research and development in universities starting with Acadia, Dalhousie and the University College

of Cape Breton; place 6000 computers and local area networks in schools across the province; and fund professional development for teachers and technical support for schools.

- ▶ better training and skills development

Example: to maximize opportunities in the offshore, the Liberal government is investing \$13 million in strategic training through the Nova Scotia Community College, Dalhousie University and the University College of Cape Breton.

- ▶ aggressively encouraging trade and entrepreneurship

Example: The Liberal government has launched an aggressive trade mission program, focussed strategically on the New England market. In the past year, the province led or participated in 55 major trade events. The taxpayer investment of \$660,000 generated sales of \$154 million for Nova Scotia companies and created 2,200 jobs.

Example: Through the ground-breaking work of the province's Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development, hundreds of young Nova Scotians are learning more about how to succeed as entrepreneurs.

- ▶ seeking new investment and encouraging expansion of existing industry

Example: In 1994 the Liberal government started a partnership with MTT to form Connections Nova Scotia, committed to establishing a call centre industry across the province. This sector now employs around 4000 people in Halifax, Bridgewater and Sydney, and is still growing. Government intervention at

Trenton Works prevented the closure of a major employer in Pictou County.

Example: The Liberal government worked closely with business to prevent the closure of Stora in Port Hawkesbury, which resulted in a massive expansion of the company.

Spreading the Wealth

Although our economy is getting stronger, not all areas of the province are benefiting from new growth. A Liberal government is committed to spreading economic growth and job opportunities to all regions of Nova Scotia.

Industrial Cape Breton is the most vivid example of economic disparity within Nova Scotia. The island's traditional industries are in the midst of a difficult transition, and the Liberal government has taken a leadership role in easing the impacts of this uncertainty, and working closely with the community to map out the Island's economic future by attracting new jobs, and investing in the skills and training of Cape Bretoners.

Cape Breton Development Corporation

The federal government's decision to wind down the operations of the Cape Breton Development Corporation (Devco) has left Cape Breton miners, their families, and their communities in a grave situation. The provincial government continues to work with union representatives and the community to ensure the federal government treats Devco miners and their families with the dignity they deserve. The federal pension and severance

packages are not acceptable, and have left many workers with many years of service out in the cold. A Liberal government will continue to press the federal government for an improved severance and pension package for Devco employees.

Sydney Steel Corporation

The Sydney Steel Corporation (Sysco) has been the subject a great deal of political debate in recent months. Ironically, Sysco is in a better position to be transferred to the private sector than ever before. Hoogovens Technical Services took over management of the plant in August 1998. Since then, sales have increased, previously dissatisfied customers have returned and the credibility of the operation in the world steel market has improved. A new business plan has been approved that places a heavy emphasis on sales and marketing, and projects that the plant will break-even next year and turn a profit in the year 2001.

Sysco conducts more than \$15 million worth of business annually with Nova Scotia companies. The Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Railway relies on the plant for a significant portion of its operating revenue, and the operation is one of Nova Scotia Power's largest customers. The plant also pays millions of dollars out each year in municipal and provincial taxes.

The economy of industrial Cape Breton would suffer greatly if Sysco were to be closed at this time. A Liberal government will continue to work with ABN Amro Bank Canada, a division of ABN Amro of Amsterdam, to secure a private sector buyer for the Sydney Steel Corporation.

Enterprise Zones

A Liberal Government would create Enterprise Zones offering tax and investment incentives to attract and support business in all communities outside of the urban Halifax Metro Region. For those regions, includes:

- an increase from 30 per cent to 35 per cent in the Equity Tax Credit rate (a personal tax credit on investments in Nova Scotian small businesses, co-operatives and community economic development funds);
- a guarantee up to 20% of investments made in community economic development funds located in Enterprise Zones;
- a two-year extension of the general three-year New Small Business Tax Reduction;
- an increase in the Film Industry Tax Credit from 32.5% to 37.5% for eligible labour expenditures;
- currently labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations must reinvest 80% of equity capital raised in the province within four years, those reinvesting in the Enterprise Zone will receive three times the credit for those investments.

Port of Halifax

The creation of Enterprise Zones does nothing to diminish the Liberal government's recognition that Greater Halifax is an engine of economic growth in Nova Scotia.

One of the best examples of the Liberal government's commitment to strengthening the economy of Greater Halifax was the

important role played by the province over the past year in pursuing the Maersk/Sea-Land post-Panamax shipping business.

The Maersk/Sea-Land campaign marked an unprecedented degree of cooperation among the Port's stakeholders--the federal government, the Halifax Port Authority, Halifax Regional Municipality, CN, existing terminal operators, labour and the Port Development Commission

A Liberal government will build on this co-operation and continue to vigorously advance the interests of the Port of Halifax in the following ways:

- Continuing to work and support the efforts of the Halifax Port Working Group to attract post-Panamax shipping business.
- Finalizing negotiations with the federal government for the transfer of surplus lands at CFB Shearwater to the province for use in future port development
- Supporting initiatives to improve rail connections into the Northeastern U.S.
- Supporting efforts to expand the number of cruise lines calling on the Port of Halifax with a strategic goal of having one or more lines designate Halifax as their home port during the summer and fall foliage season .
- Examining in close co-operation with all stakeholders, an array of bold initiatives for our port infrastructure. Possibilities might include consolidation of container traffic at an expanded Rockingham terminal, which would ease rail and truck freight traffic on peninsular Halifax, enable the redevelopment of more waterfront and recreational land around the south-end port lands; and allow the

municipality to examine existing rail routes as a way to address traffic congestion in a growing HRM.

- Committing \$250,000 to keep these initiatives on track

Transportation infrastructure

With a limited number of dollars available, a responsible government is required to make choices. We have made ours. The top priorities of a Liberal government are health and education.

A Liberal government will remain committed to improving our highways and secondary roads across the province. Our new budget demonstrated this commitment by increasing the total allocation for the Department of Transportation and Public Works by \$5 million.

A Liberal government will continue to press the federal government for a new cost-sharing agreement for our 100-series highways. Our priority will be to secure federal funding for the twinning of Highway 101.

Oil & Gas - The Offshore

The Liberal government's successful negotiations with partners in the Sable Gas Project kick-started Nova Scotia's offshore natural gas development, and set in motion the construction of pipeline infrastructure that will permanently connect our province with North America's energy markets.

Sable is a massive construction project that employs 3500 people, and involves \$2 million of spending each day in Nova Scotia to some 500 Nova Scotia companies that are supplying the project. More importantly, it sets the stage for the next phase in offshore exploration and development.

This spring, the petroleum industry committed \$600 million in new exploration work here over the next five years, making Nova Scotia one of the world's energy hot spots. The industry's vote of confidence shows that the generic royalty structure created by the government has struck a balance that will benefit the province directly, and spur more exploration along the Scotian Shelf.

The Liberal government has said very clearly that Nova Scotians must benefit from the offshore development and oil and gas royalties. This commitment is borne out by the guidelines for widespread, uniformly priced gas distribution throughout the province. Earmarking Sable Gas royalties for the repayment of the \$600 million Health Investment Fund is another example. The government has also passed legislation that ensures that any petrochemical spin-offs from ethane feedstocks will take place in the province.

The Liberal government's primary focus in ensuring these benefits stay here is an aggressive strategy to develop the skills and capacity of Nova Scotians to do offshore-related work.

The Liberal government has strategically invested in specialized offshore training to ensure Nova Scotians are always at the front of the hiring lines. More than \$13 million is being invested in offshore education through the Nova Scotia Community College, Dalhousie University and the University College of Cape Breton, among others. We have also worked directly with trade unions to ensure their members had the specialized skills needed to fill the jobs created by the development of oil and natural gas.

New Media Tax Credit

Nova Scotians have demonstrated a wealth of talent and creativity in art and design, music, film production and writing. We have a strong base of computer literacy and rank among the top rung of Canadian provinces in Internet use and access. By 1998, our information and communications technology sector employed nearly 10,000 Nova Scotians. To build on this strength, a Liberal government will:

- Allow firms combining traditional media and digital output, a 15 per cent tax credit on their pay to employees.

Attracting New Jobs

The Liberal government has a strong record in attracting new companies, bringing new jobs and opportunities for Nova Scotians. The opposition has attacked these efforts, accusing the Liberal government of giving "handouts" to business.

In reality, the incentives Nova Scotia offers to companies wishing to locate or expand here are the lowest in Canada. Much more important in attracting new jobs to Nova Scotia is our highly-skilled and well-educated work force, our strategic location and transportation links, our telecommunications and technology infrastructure, and our quality of life.

A Liberal government is committed to competing vigorously to attract new jobs to all parts of Nova Scotia, through an array of measures. The preferred incentives, however, will continue to be those that focus on our greatest asset—the talents of Nova Scotians.

A Liberal government is committed to working closely with new businesses in identifying and investing in the necessary skills and training to make new companies succeed here.

In addition, a Liberal government will:

- rely more frequently on a Growth Dividend Fund as a primary incentive for companies that create new jobs in strategic industries. The fund will rebate a percentage of the audited payroll of companies that create new jobs and have a proven track record in export-oriented or value-added businesses, including manufacturing, tele-service, exportable services or technology industries. Only companies that add at least 25 full-time jobs over 12 months, or \$5 million investment over 12 months will qualify.

Colleges and Universities

Nova Scotia boasts many post-secondary educational institutions, which reflect our unique history and our respect for learning. In the knowledge economy, we also understand their vital importance to our future success.

The Liberal government is committed to high quality university programs and the stabilization of tuition fees:

- an increase of some \$24 million is being made to university funding over three years to support these important goals;
- an additional \$3 million to help students manage debt;
- a policy will be developed to provide for shared leadership with the universities to link the province's strategic economic development to key areas of research, development and innovation.

A Community College for the New Century

Prior to 1993, Nova Scotia's development of Community College programs lagged far behind other provinces. The Liberal government has restructured and modernized programming at the college under an independent board of governors.

The college is quickly becoming a leader in education for the new economy. Forty per cent of its programs were started in the last four years.

Examples of innovative new courses are aquaculture, digital animation, computer information systems networking, and a variety of programs related to the offshore oil and gas industry.

Now is the time to take the College to a new level.

A Liberal government is committed to:

- assisting the widest possible number of Nova Scotians, particularly young people, to take advantage of the burgeoning job opportunities, and the training necessary to obtain them;
- an increase of \$500,000 to Collège de l'Acadie;
- A \$250,000 expansion to the College's Virtual Campus, which enable Nova Scotians in traditional trades to receive training over the Internet from the workplace or from home;
- an increase of \$5.3 million to enhance current College programs, and add seats in high-demand programs related to Information Technology and the natural gas industry;
- growing the Community College to ensure that our young people have the skills and training required to meet new demands of the new economy. The government has asked the board of governors to bring forward a plan to increase the capacity of the College by 50 per cent by the year 2003, creating seats for more than 10,000 students.

Our Schools

Preparing for the opportunities of tomorrow begins with our schools, and our children.

For three years the Liberal government has increased investment in education and made more efficient use of our resources at every level. We are beginning to reap the dividends.

- ▶ Graduation rates continue to rise, reaching 79.2% for the school year 1997-98, the highest ever.
- ▶ For the first time in eight years class sizes are smaller - the number of classes with more than 30 students has fallen by 14 per cent.
- ▶ More teachers and teachers' aides are in our classrooms.
- ▶ More textbooks, technology and other classroom resources are now available.

This is a good start. We are going in the right direction.

A Liberal government is committed to providing every Nova Scotian with the opportunity to receive an education that is the best in Canada.

A Liberal government is committed to:

- a graduation rate of 85% by the year 2005-6;
- continuing to decrease the number of students per class to bring all classes closer to the goal of having no more than 25 students.

Last year, we increased public-education funding by \$82 million, or 12 per cent. A re-elected Liberal government will increase it by approximately \$60 million this year. Priority areas include:

- \$13 million for 12 new schools to open in 1999
- \$20 million in badly needed renovations
- \$4.5 million to begin delivering 6000 computers to 181 junior high and high schools by June 2000;
- \$2 million for textbooks, learning resources and professional development for teachers to support new mathematics, language arts, science and entrepreneurship courses across the curriculum;
- \$2.6 million (cost shared with school boards) to reduce class sizes;
- \$2 million to enhance programs and services for students with special needs;
- \$1.5 million to support student success and a safe, positive learning environment in junior high.

To build equity for small rural schools and ensure a fair share of teachers, textbooks and learning resources, a portion of school board funding will, for the first time, be tied to actual program costs, not solely on student enrollments. More funding will be tied to program costs in future years. Funding for school boards with severely declining enrolments is also protected, preserving classroom programs for students where there are sharp enrolment declines.

A Liberal government is committed to providing our children with modern, healthy technologically-sophisticated schools.

- A Liberal government will press forward with its plan to build 55 new schools over the next five years. Nine schools are under construction this year and construction on 26 more will soon begin. Also, some 50 schools are being renovated to bring them up to standard. No other political party has put forward a plan for providing these badly-needed new schools for our children.

A Liberal government is also committed to:

- providing one computer for every five students in school by year 2005;
- continuing the development of high school programs linked to new and growing job opportunities such as film and video production, multi-media, tourism, oceans, agri-foods, Gaelic cultural studies and electro-technologies;
- ensuring that within three years Anglophone and Francophone students will meet or exceed the national average in reading skills as measured by the School Achievement Indicators Program;
- the enhancement and growth of the highly successful Reading Recovery Program presently benefiting over 1000 children;

- providing support for students with social problems beyond the scope of the classroom teacher. We will form an active working group, in co-operation with the Teachers' Union and other agencies, which will submit practical recommendations within six months.
- in consultation with teachers, introduce new measures to gauge the progress of our students.

A Liberal government is committed to providing a safe learning environment for our children and will:

- continue to support school boards in their efforts to promote safe schools through programs such as: peer counselling, conflict resolution programs, and participation in the Lions Quest Safe Schools Program, a program aimed at peaceful school development and province-wide support for the League of Peaceful Schools.

Now is the time . . .

to build strong communities

Nova Scotia's cities, towns and villages are home to people with shared values, a strong sense of community, and a deep respect for the land and sea around them. Liberals believe the special character of this province should be reflected in the actions and policies of government.

Quality health care, education and a strong economy are key elements for a good society that enables people to make the best of economic opportunities. But they do not by themselves speak to the character and quality of life that make Nova Scotia a special place.

Nova Scotians place a high value on sharing with one another. It is a province of profound family ties and tight-knit communities with safe streets and local pride.

Government cannot create strong communities. Nor can it ensure a high quality of life across the province. Only Nova Scotians can do that. A Liberal government recognizes however, that there are things government can do to help. A Liberal government will make the right strategic investments to help Nova Scotians preserve the special character of this province .

A Good Start

My First Words — A Nova Scotia Millennium Project

The first five years of a child's life are crucial in shaping his or her ability to learn and develop. Children who are exposed to caring and supportive environments will develop the important foundations required for success in school and throughout their lifetimes.

In January, the province entered into a partnership with the Halifax Youth

Foundation and the National Literacy Secretariat to form the Family Literacy Endowment Fund - a Canadian first. The fund will use the interest generated from the \$2.4 million investment to fund family literacy projects and resources across the province.

Growing out of the Endowment Fund effort, a Liberal government will:

- invest \$500,000 to establish the My First Words Initiative. Beginning on January 1, the mother and father of every child born in Nova Scotia in the Year 2000 will be given a tote bag containing children's books and a rich variety of resources for the parents, such as vouchers for health and education videos, an application form for the baby's first library card and a listing of local community programs and organizations available to support the parents as their child's first and most important teachers.

The overarching goal of the program will be to improve the literacy levels of Nova Scotians and to encourage parents to create positive learning environments prior to the child reaching the public school system.

The ultimate goal is to make this a long-term program. This will require a total one-time investment of \$3 million. A Liberal government will work with other partners, including the Halifax Youth Foundation, to secure the funding needed to make this project permanent.

Children's Futures Foundation

The provincial government recently released a report entitled *A New Step Forward*. Prepared by regional and provincial working groups who conducted an intensive study of children and youth mental health services, the report emphasizes the importance of equal access to services across the province and the need for a co-ordinated approach to service delivery by government departments.

In response to this report, a Liberal government will formally mandate the departments of Health, Community Services, Justice, Education, the Youth Secretariat, and the Sport and Recreation Commission to increase efforts through the Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC) to promote healthy child development.

To that end, a Liberal government will:

- establish a \$1 million Children's Future Foundation to fund a broad range of mental health services for children, such as parent education, infant screening, early identification and intervention services, youth health centres and programs serving families with children with special needs.
- develop an action plan to enhance mental health services province-wide, support regional action plans and provide annual reports.
- identify opportunities and costs for the departments of Health, Community Services and Justice to share programming for youth with severely disruptive behaviour; and
- jointly fund regional co-ordination of mental health services over the next two years.

Nova Scotia Child Benefit

The National Child Benefit is a joint federal-provincial program that helps low-income families provide a better start in life for their children. The federal government of Canada will increase income benefits under the National Child Benefit beginning this month (July 1999). These additional funds will be reinvested in programs and support for children.

Nova Scotia's programs include the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, which is paid to all low-income families regardless of their income source. This includes families receiving social assistance. A Liberal government will:

- increase the income threshold for this program from the current \$16,000 to \$20,921. This will increase the number of families receiving benefits from 30,000 to 39,000. Families with income below \$16,000 will continue to receive maximum benefits.

Annual payments of \$324, \$242, and \$210 for the first, second, and third-plus child respectively will be provided. This represents an increase of \$74 annually for every child. Families above the \$16,000 level will receive reduced benefits according to their income.

A Liberal government will also:

- Invest an additional \$1 million for child care support. Three-quarters of this amount will come from the National Child Benefit Healthy Child Development Initiatives and will fund subsidized child care spaces, including 30 new spaces for children with special needs and operating grants for non-profit child care facilities. The remainder will

come from an increase in the Community Services child care budget.

Child Welfare and Foster Care

Protecting our most vulnerable children is our moral duty. It is the hallmark of a caring, nourishing society. A Liberal government accepts this responsibility and will:

- increase the child welfare services budget by \$1 million. At least 20 new staff will be added across the province in the areas of foster care, adoption, and child protection. This follows the addition of 49 new staff over the last three years.

Support to Families with disabled children

The provincial government's in-home support program helps families care for children with disabilities. A Liberal government will demonstrate its support for families of disabled children by:

- increasing funding to the province's in-home support program by \$345,000.

Residential Placement Centres

A Liberal government will continue to support residential placement centres to ensure a full range of care for children who may have behavioural or emotional problems. Children are now being placed at the Ralph Allen Centre in Dartmouth and the Dayspring Adolescent Treatment Centre near Bridgewater. Construction is expected to begin soon on a facility in Plymouth, near New Glasgow, and a parent counselor program will be funded this year in Sydney. A Liberal government will:

- invest another \$3 million for residential services.

- proceed with plans for a secure treatment facility in Truro.

Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is a program designed to help solve two of the most vexing problems in our justice system: the tendency for offenders to repeat their crimes, and the plight of victims who often feel like unwanted outsiders in our justice system.

The program is aimed at youth between the ages of 12 and 17, and will begin as early as this Fall in some areas around the province. Restorative Justice actively involves the victim, offender and members of the community in examining the crime and its impact on the individual and the community. The meeting helps those involved understand the nature of crime, the real consequences to other parties and the steps needed to make amends. A Liberal government will:

- Implement Restorative Justice programs across the entire province by the end of its mandate.

Youth Navigators

The province has discovered that many young Nova Scotians are unaware of the help available to them from their government, whether it is tracking down information about an internship program or a scholarship, or about finding help when there are problems in the home.

We need to be smarter about how we reach them.

In March, Premier MacLellan made a commitment to place eight Youth Navigators across the province. This commitment is being met. Eight young people are being

trained to help their peers and their parents better understand what help is available to them from their government. They will be provided with a phone and an Internet connection, and will be placed in youth accessible, high-visibility settings so they can best reach out to other young Nova Scotians in their regions.

Enriching our Communities

Respect for the Land and Sea

Nova Scotians have a deep appreciation of the land and sea around them not only because of this province's natural beauty, but also because the livelihood of many Nova Scotians, and vitality of many of our communities is linked to our fishing, farming and forestry industries.

Forestry

A Liberal government understands the importance of good stewardship, and is committed to the responsible and sustainable development of our province's resources, while protecting the diversity of our natural environment.

Forestry provides jobs for about 20,000 people, and contributes \$1 billion to the economy each year. Recreational use of our woodlands generates \$250 million each year.

The Liberal government has:

- ▶ with Nova Scotians, developed a Forest Strategy and introduced amendments to the *Forest Act*;
- ▶ passed the *Protected Places Act*, designating 31 protected areas;
- ▶ acquired 564 kilometres of abandoned rail corridor from CN at no cost for recreation and community development;
- ▶ passed legislation to protect endangered species;
- ▶ funded private land forest management jointly with the private sector for the first time, and supported silviculture activities;
- ▶ revised the forest inventory program to allow for more effective monitoring of changes to our forest resources, including elements needed to monitor biodiversity;
- ▶ established a Wood Buyers Registry to track wood production, including wood shipped out of the province.

A Liberal government will build on these achievements and will:

- Continue working with the Coalition of Nova Scotia Forest Interests to develop a sustainable forest management strategy following public consultation;
- Increase funding for silviculture programs by \$1 million;

Fishing

The fortunes and character of Nova Scotia's many coastal communities are closely linked to the fishery, which employs 13,500 Nova Scotians who catch and process fish with a market value of approximately \$1 billion.

A Liberal government recognizes the importance of this industry to the well-being of our coastal communities and to out-of-

province. In the last year alone, the Liberal government has:

- ▶ been instrumental in the development of a federal-provincial agreement enabling provinces to have greater input into federal decisions affecting our fishery;
- ▶ established a bi-annual meeting of fisher associations with the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture;
- ▶ established a Provincial Fisheries Minister's Council consisting of representatives of fisher associations from various sectors and regions of the province;
- ▶ amended the *Fisheries Act*, to provide for increased fines for illegal fishing, with maximum fines of \$100,000 for a first offence. Fines for subsequent offences increase to a maximum of \$500,000. Those involved in fishing-related activities, including buyers and sellers, are now covered by the law;

A Liberal government will continue its commitment to the fishing industry by:

- committing \$5 million to the Fisheries Early Retirement Program;
- implementing an environmental monitoring model for Aquaculture;
- seeking proper management of our coastal zone, through the promotion of integrated coastal resource management, and the identification of aquaculture species and locations that offer the best potential for future development, thus ensuring our fair share of marine resources;

Agriculture

Farming is important to the province's character, and our economy. In 1995, the value of our agricultural exports was \$82.4 million. By the year 2000, our agricultural exports are projected to reach a value of \$108.5 million, an increase of 30% over 1995. In 1997, 7,800 Nova Scotians were employed in agriculture related fields and in 1997-98, 1,825 people participated in continuing education programs offered by Nova Scotia Agricultural College.

The Liberal government has demonstrated its commitment to Nova Scotia farmers by entering into an agreement with the Government of Canada to provide a minimum of \$7.5 million in drought relief for Nova Scotia farmers.

Now is the time to take the next step. A Liberal government will:

- in conjunction with the agricultural community, begin a study to identify a water supply as the first step towards a possible irrigation system for Nova Scotia farmers.

Protecting our Environment

A Liberal government will continue to recognize the critical importance of a clean environment. A healthy environment means a better quality of life for Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotia has made significant strides in environmental protection over the past six years. Some highlights include:

- ▶ the waste diversion rate is at 35% and climbing - well on its way to the initial target of a 50 percent reduction in garbage by the end of the year 2000;

- ▶ 237,000 tons of garbage each year is now being recycled and re-used instead of going to landfills;
- ▶ twenty open-burning sites have been closed;
- ▶ 380 million beverage containers and 1.2 million tires have been recycled;
- ▶ 85% of Nova Scotians now have curbside recycling service.

The Spring budget included a number of initiatives which will be re-introduced under a re-elected Liberal government.

The Five Island Lake clean-up is a community-driven effort led by a community liaison committee (CLC). This committee has identified dredging as its priority in the clean-up process. Once dredging is complete, all contaminated materials will be removed from the area. A Liberal government will:

- commit \$2 million to the clean-up of PCB contamination in Five Island Lake to allow dredging of the North Bay to begin.

A unique community approach is at the heart of another environmental clean-up project, the Sydney Tar Ponds. The Joint Action Group (JAG) for the clean-up of the Sydney Tar Ponds involves participation from three levels of government and the community. It entrenches the commitment to clean up the tar ponds and coke ovens site through a process that is transparent, consultative, and socially and fiscally responsible. Over the next three years a Liberal government will:

- spend \$21.4 million on the Sydney Tar Ponds as part of a \$62 million federal/provincial commitment to the clean-up effort.

A Liberal government will also:

- commit \$300,000 to remediation at Boat Harbour. This will fund continuing studies and monitoring on the site and support increased community involvement in the project.
- Target \$500,000 to prevent contamination by improving sand and salt storage at Department of Transportation and Public Works bases throughout the province.

Beyond these budget items, a priority of the Liberal government will be to:

- implement the Provincial Water Resources Strategy, which has been developed over the past year: Building on our success in waste management, the Water Resources Strategy is a comprehensive plan for the proper management and protection of our watersheds, rivers, lakes and streams. The key to the strategy will be a close working relationship and support for local stewardship committees around the province who best understand factors affecting their watershed. In many areas these committees already exist, in others, a Liberal government will encourage their formation.

Volunteer Firefighters

Volunteer fire departments are often regarded as the backbone of our rural communities. As announced in the budget, a Liberal government will recognize their contribution by:

- providing volunteer firefighters with free vehicle registration. It will be available to any volunteer firefighter who has served in a volunteer fire department for six months and intends to continue active involvement.

Women's Centres

Women's Centres offer a wide range of community-based services to women, including crisis intervention and problem-solving support, referrals to other agencies and services, advocacy and accompaniment to legal, medical, and social service appointments, self-help and support groups, and development programs such as literacy, skills upgrading, and women's health. Nova Scotia has six women's centres, located in Antigonish, Sheet Harbour, Sydney, New Glasgow, Bridgewater, and Lawrencetown.

A Liberal government will:

- raise the provincial grant for each centre from \$54,000 to \$100,000. This represents a total funding increase of \$276,000.

Ensuring Access to our Coast

A Liberal government will ensure that the beautiful beaches and coast line of Nova Scotia are preserved for the use and enjoyment of its people.

Accordingly, a Liberal government will continue with the multi-stage process already underway to identify the proper role of the provincial government in regulating non-residential land ownership, including:

- a review of the Land Holdings Disclosure Act with an eye to strengthening its provisions;
- compiling a comprehensive inventory of non-residential land holdings; and
- reviewing the regulatory framework of other provinces to determine a response that will balance between protecting Nova Scotians access to our seacoast and encouraging foreign investment.

Protecting our Heritage

Our rich history is a source of pride for Nova Scotians. Much of that history is still readily accessible to us through heritage properties around the province. That history must be protected.

A Liberal government will ensure the unique character of our neighborhoods is protected from unnecessary demolition and the intrusion of incompatible development. A Liberal government will:

- work with heritage groups to amend the Heritage Property Act, to protect heritage buildings from unnecessary demolition, substantial alteration and incompatible development.

