

Strong Leadership



..... a clear course

John Hamm's Plan for Nova Scotia

"Strong Leadership... a clear course"

Fellow Nova Scotians:

I believe leadership is about setting a clear course. It is about offering hope and optimism. Leadership is having faith in Nova Scotians and a plan to lead our province into the next century.

Leadership is about building on the history, the people and the strengths of our province, about providing a better tomorrow for young Nova Scotians, security and respect for our seniors. It's about all Nova Scotians having opportunities, if they are prepared to take advantage of them.

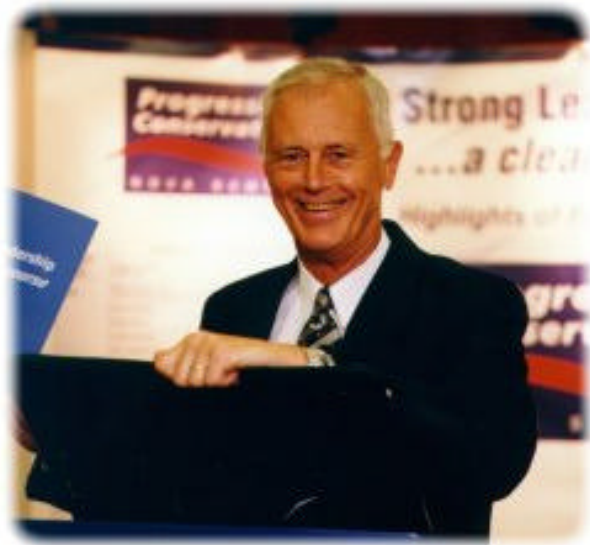
I believe that political leaders must be honest with people about what they can and cannot do. They must see government as a responsibility and an opportunity to serve their province.

The current government has shown, time and time again, that it is not competent to govern. Clearly, it has lost the confidence of Nova Scotians. The Liberals have shown they do not trust Nova Scotians with truth.

Last year the Liberals said the budget was balanced, and that health care was in good shape. Now, they want to mortgage our children's future to fix what last year they said wasn't broken. And, the Health Minister says they have no plan.

As your premier, my first priority will be to fix the health care system. We will make sure that when individual Nova Scotians need health care, it will be there for them. We will eliminate waste, and invest our health care dollars wisely, and we will do it by involving care givers, volunteers and communities every step of the way.

I am absolutely committed to the principle that the Government of Nova Scotia must live within its means. Borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars and mortgaging our children's future without so much as a plan is simply wrong. We will accomplish our goal of deficit financing by setting clear priorities that are in lock-step with those of



Nova Scotians.

There are no quick fixes or easy solutions. Only by having a sound plan for economic growth and job creation are we going to be able to provide the services that Nova Scotians expect and deserve. I believe that the best way to achieve this is to put tax dollars back into the hands of Nova Scotian consumers by reducing personal income taxes. My government will do this by reducing income taxes by 10% in our first mandate.

I believe that only the Progressive Conservative Party can provide a reasonable, sensible alternative to the present Liberal government. The NDP are prepared to promise anything to achieve power. I simply will not do that. And this is not the time to experiment.

Governing is about making choices. The Liberals had choices to make. They chose to pour another \$44 million down the Sysco drain, and make well over \$200 million of promises in the month leading up to the election. They have cynically attempted to buy your vote while at the same time proposing to borrow against our children's future. There is a better way to govern Nova Scotia.

It means telling Nova Scotians about the choices. It means letting Nova Scotians make a difference.

In this platform document, we have outlined a clear course for Nova Scotia. Thank you for taking the time to read it, in order to assess our priorities for Nova Scotia. Together, we will build a better future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Hamm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

John Hamm



John Hamm's Plan for Nova Scotia

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John Hamm's Plan for Nova Scotia

Summary

Health Care

The commitment:

Guaranteed access to quality health care services for all Nova Scotians, regardless of where they live.

A John Hamm government will:

- Make sure that Nova Scotia has the nurses it needs by committing additional funds for full-time positions and by working with the nursing profession to develop a comprehensive retention, recruitment and training strategy;
- Commit to basing health care resource decisions on outcome-based measurements;
- In partnership with health care providers, immediately undertake a comprehensive assessment of all health care facilities in order to ensure that Nova Scotians are receiving the right type of care in the appropriate facility. This review will be completed within 90 days of forming government. Implementation of recommended changes will begin immediately so that patient needs are properly met while providing more cost-effective service delivery;
- In consultation with the Nova Scotia Medical Society, immediately take steps to address the chronic shortage of family physicians in communities across Nova Scotia by reviewing and amending the criteria for determining an under-serviced area;
- Eliminate Regional Health Boards which have disenfranchised communities and contribute to inefficiencies across the health system;
- Legislate the mandate of Community Health Boards;
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the Homes for Special Care Act with a commitment to introduce amendments in year one;

- Aggressively pursue fair treatment from Ottawa by demanding that the federal government assume its responsibilities to be the first in line to pay the cost of prescription drugs for retired federal government employees.

Managing Your Money

The commitment:

A premier and a government committed to living within its means; achieving balanced budgets and being open and accountable to Nova Scotians for the management of their finances.

A John Hamm Government will:

- Balance budget by year three;
- Immediately reduce the size of government, starting with the Cabinet;
- No more tax dollars for Sysco;
- Economic Development will focus on infrastructure development, community control, training and marketing;
- Undertake a complete a review of services that can be more efficiently and cost-effectively provided by the private sector, while still ensuring that appropriate standards are maintained, and honouring the commitment we made to the NSGEU;
- Cut non-essential travel/spending.

Jobs and the Economy

The commitment:

Stimulate job creation and the economy throughout Nova Scotia by making Nova Scotia the most attractive place to do business in Atlantic Canada.

A John Hamm Government will:

- Make Nova Scotia the most attractive place to do business in Atlantic Canada by guaranteeing that costs imposed by government are the lowest in the region;

- Stimulate the economy by reducing provincial personal income taxes by at least 10%, once government finances and our health care system have been put in order. Tax cuts create jobs by putting money back into the pockets of hard-working people;
- Help small business by eliminating unnecessary regulations and bureaucratic red tape that needlessly get in the way of doing business.(PC legislation already introduced);
- Establish a proper, non-partisan process for ensuring that rural roads and highways meet the needs of Nova Scotians and support economic development;
- Establish a Buy Nova Scotia First program, an aggressive and sustained campaign, to increase consumer awareness and consumption of Nova Scotian products and services;
- Transfer resources and decision-making authority from the provincial level to broadly representative Regional Development Agencies;
- Prohibit any government department or agency from using taxpayers' dollars to fund any new business which will compete directly with an existing taxpaying, Nova Scotian based business.

Education

The commitment:

To provide an education system that is focused on students rather than on structures.

A John Hamm Government will:

- Introduce reliable and fair evaluation and reporting systems to provide parents with accurate, regular information about their children's progress;
- Establish, for students and teachers, a standard code of conduct which will emphasize mutual respect, responsibility and discipline;
- Ensure that our schools are safe places to learn by establishing a zero tolerance policy for violent behaviour and drugs;
- Establish a long-term funding base for our schools;

- Review funding formulas to protect schools and areas of declining enrollments from detrimental and untimely reductions in the teaching staff;
- Establish by law or regulation a uniform, province-wide standard for primary classes on the basis of five days a week;
- Restore public input into education by reviewing existing school board boundaries and by ensuring school boards are a reasonable size;
- Undertake a complete review and cost-benefit analysis of the P3 process and contracts to ensure that only the best possible approach is used in school construction, renovation and operation. Where commitments have been made to new schools, they will be honoured;
- Establish a P-12 Provincial Education Council, modeled after the Provincial Health Council, with representation from teachers, parents and students;
- Provide special income tax relief for graduating students who remain in Nova Scotia, allowing a portion of their provincial income tax payments to be used to retire up to 30% of their provincial student debt.

Making Government Accountable

The commitment:

A common sense government that will be open and straightforward.

A John Hamm Government will:

- Establish and enforce a written code of conduct for politicians and senior public servants;
- Give MLAs greater freedom to represent the views of their constituents;
- Base a significant portion of compensation for senior bureaucrats on performance;
- Stop spending taxpayers money on politically-motivated advertising;
- Amend the Freedom of Information Act to allow for much greater disclosure of government information and appoint a full-time Review Officer.



John Hamm's Plan for Nova Scotia

Platform and Policies

Health Care

During the six years the Liberals were in office, Nova Scotians watched health services steadily decline as costs increased sharply. Doctors left, nurses were let go, the number of hospital beds cut by 30 per cent, the number of ambulances cut, insured services cut and a freeze was put on new long-term care beds. Nova Scotians paid \$300 million more for a lot less service as a result of Liberal waste and incompetence. Some examples: Less than four years ago, the Liberals offered a \$20 million incentive package for nurses and other health care providers to leave. Today, we need a significant investment to get them back. At the same time as hospital beds were being slashed and the population aging, the government slapped a freeze on new long-term care beds. Patient care suffered and tens of millions of dollars were wasted by providing the wrong kind of care in the wrong kind of facility.

The Liberals have mismanaged and neglected our health care system. They have repeatedly insisted it was working as it should, that is until they felt an election was a possibility. Today, they are asking for a \$600 million 15-year mortgage to fix a mess that they created -- And they don't even have a plan.

Building a responsive, outcome-based and efficient health care system is the Progressive Conservative Party's most urgent priority. We will do it by aggressively measuring outcomes, by reporting them broadly and by making adjustments in service delivery whenever and wherever the evidence points to improved levels of care or increased efficiencies. And we will do it by including care givers, volunteers and communities -- every step of the way. In everything we do we will put the health care needs of Nova Scotians first.

A John Hamm government will restore stability in our health care system, and provide stable financing for it by:

- Within one year of forming government and in consultation with care providers, completing a comprehensive, system-wide review for measuring health outcomes. Outcome based measurements allow the system to identify weaknesses in the delivery of care and inefficiencies that cost the health system more than they should;

- All evidence-based requirements for change will be made public and changes initiated as soon as possible. A PC Government is committed to ensuring health care resources are directed by real, measurable evidence.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will address the critical shortage of nurses by:

- Providing, as our first priority, the core funding required to establish additional, full-time nursing positions;
- In addition to our initial investment in nursing we will undertake a comprehensive review of all Nova Scotia hospitals and Homes for Special Care to identify the need for additional nursing staff and provide the necessary resources to fill that need. This will be done in consultation with Nova Scotia nursing unions, the Registered Nurses' Association of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Medical Society, the Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, hospital administrators and the continuing care sector. The results of this review will be made public and all shortages immediately addressed;
- Reversing the trend to casualize the nursing profession by properly funding full-time nursing positions based on the results of the process noted above;
- Immediately committing to increase the number of nurse training seats;
- Establishing within the Department of Health the position of Nurse Policy Advisor, reporting directly to the Deputy Minister. The Nurse Policy Advisor will be responsible for working with the profession in developing effective strategies to retain, recruit and retrain nurses;
- Providing nursing students who agree to work in Nova Scotia with bursaries covering up to 50 % of their tuition costs;
- Supporting professional development opportunities that recognize the increasing complexity and specialization of nursing care, including developing nurse practitioner legislation;
- Working with the nursing profession to make sure the work-environment offers a rewarding and positive experience where nurses know they can properly care for their patients, where they know they are valued and where they are empowered to have input into influencing clinical practice outcomes.

“Increasing the number of nurses training seats or recruiting new nurses to Nova Scotia will not necessarily reverse the nursing shortage. They will not stay unless they have a rewarding professional environment.”

John Hamm

During its first mandate, a PC Government will address the critical shortage of doctors by:

- Providing bursaries covering 50 % of the cost of tuition for medical students who agree to practice in under-serviced areas of Nova Scotia;
- Medical students will also qualify for the income tax relief program available to graduates with a high debt load (see education);
- Ensuring that doctors, along with other health care providers, have a real voice in shaping the future direction of health care;
- In consultation with the QE II Health Sciences Centre, Dalhousie Medical School and the Nova Scotia Medical Society review the existing policy that identifies all beds as teaching beds under the University's control;
- Ensuring that the needs of physicians who move to under-serviced areas continue to receive follow-up guidance and support from the Department of Health after they move to a new area. Doctors have expressed frustration that, as soon as they move to a community, they are left without any kind of professional support or guidance;
- In consultation with the Nova Scotia Medical Society, reviewing, and where necessary, amending the criteria used by government in defining under-serviced areas to ensure appropriate incentives are provided to attract doctors to all communities in need of family physicians;
- Lifting the gag order imposed on doctors who wish to speak out about physician-related issues.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will address the critical shortage of hospital and nursing home beds by:

- Establishing appropriate criteria for determining the number of beds necessary to provide an adequate level of hospital and nursing home care in each community. This will be done in consultation and working with, the Registered Nurses' Association of Nova Scotia, unions representing nurses, the Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, the Nova Scotia Medical Society, hospital administrators and continuing care providers;
- Using criteria generated by this process, identify the areas where additional beds are most urgently needed and providing the nursing and staff resources necessary to ensure safe and appropriate levels of care are provided;
- In partnership with health care providers, immediately undertake a comprehensive assessment of all health care facilities in order to ensure that Nova Scotians are receiving the right type of care in the appropriate facility. This review will be completed within 90 days of forming government. Implementation of recommended changes will begin immediately so that patient needs are properly met while providing more cost-effective service delivery;
- In consultation with the continuing care sector, undertaking a comprehensive review of the long-outdated Homes for Special Care Act to ensure it establishes clear guidelines and standards that address the need to protect the health and welfare of residents, promote efficiencies and ensure accountability;
- Providing generous tax incentives to family care givers who stay at home to care for a family member who would otherwise be classified as a candidate for a long-term care facility;
- Supporting the development of Adult Day Programs for seniors, in many cases a cost-effective alternative to home care and an important opportunity to support the social and emotional needs of seniors.
- In addition to these commitments, during its first mandate, a PC Government will also:
- Assume the existing debt of the Non-Designated Hospitals and the Regional Hospital Boards;

- Eliminate Regional Health Boards. The existing structure has created chaos and confusion across the system, disenfranchised communities, blurred the lines of accountability and contributed to costly inefficiencies. PCs recognize and support the need for regional planning both in terms of improving patient care and realizing efficiencies. However, the existing structure has focused almost exclusively on the day-to-day administration of hospitals at the expense of long-term, value-added planning. RHBs will be replaced with volunteer/community-driven (as opposed to bureaucratically driven) boards. The new structure will include the catchment areas of the nine regional hospitals. It will support, rather than impede, devolution of responsibility to communities over health care decision-making;
- In consultation with the Nova Scotia Medical Society, the nursing profession and hospital administrators, examine opportunities for reducing surgical wait times by more fully utilizing hospital facilities (weekend OR time);
- Immediately request the Auditor General to provide a detailed analysis of health care spending;
- Within the Provincial Health Council, establish a Health Care Advocate to ensure that cost-effective interventions are identified and provided to Nova Scotians with exceptional medical needs;
- Mandate the Provincial Health Council to hold province-wide public consultations to develop a list of core clinical services that must be provided at the community, regional and provincial levels and to develop a Patients' Bill of Rights, for approval by the government;
- Mandate the Provincial Health Council to review and make recommendations on standards for the delivery of services and to report its findings publicly;
- Legislate the authority of Community Health Boards to identify and plan programs to meet local priorities;
- Work towards the full integration of Health and Community Services Programs, particularly as they relate to the delivery of primary care and continuing care, so that appropriate and early interventions can be taken to prevent unnecessary costs to the system;
- Introduce legislation governing Medical Laboratory Technologists;

- De-centralize the Department of Health to minimize the administrative costs of conferring primary health care authority to Community Health Boards;
- Establish a core committee of government and non-government representatives to review and oversee all aspects of the health care system (e.g. acute care, home care, continuing care, mental health, addiction services) and to regularly comment on the potential impact of proposed policy and program changes. This committee will be responsible for submitting an annual report to the Legislature;
- Require that home care be co-ordinated through hospitals, with staff dedicated to ensuring that an authorized home recovery plan is in place for all Nova Scotian patients who need care following hospital discharge. No Nova Scotian should be forced to leave hospital without a Home Recovery Plan which has been authorized by their doctor;
- Dedicate a portion of the tobacco tax to fund new health promotion and disease prevention initiatives, including programs designed to discourage tobacco and other substance abuse among youth;
- Conduct a thorough audit of the cost and clinical outcomes of providing ground ambulance service in the province and seek advice to determine the government's legal obligations with respect to its contract with Emergency Medical Care. This is the first step in improving wages and benefits for Nova Scotia paramedics;
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the delivery of mental health services, particularly as they relate to child and adolescent mental health;
- Ensure the successful and cost-effective Self-managed Attendant Care Program (providing at-home, self-directed support to Nova Scotians with disabilities) is introduced on a province-wide basis;
- Support family care givers by committing \$1 million to the expansion of respite services;
- Commit \$2 million towards efforts to reduce assessment wait-times and to provide early treatment for children believed to have Autism or Pervasive Developmental Delay;

- Aggressively pursue fair treatment from Ottawa by demanding it assume its responsibilities to be first in line to pay the cost of prescription drugs for retired federal government employees;
- Consult medical experts in approving medications under the provincial formulary;
- Establish an Information and Medical Technology Advisory Committee with broad geographic representation to ensure technology dollars are spent fairly across the province and to promote the use of new cost-effective technologies and information systems;
- Ensure adequate funding for addiction recovery programs and introduce funding to provide in-patient support for gaming addicts;
- Conduct an independent review of the Environmental Health Clinic to ensure the programs and services are meeting the health needs of Nova Scotians who have environmental illness;
- Increase the funding for health and wellness promotion and disease prevention education/remediation initiatives by at least \$1 million in each year of the mandate. The focus of the initiatives will be on preventing environmental or life-style inducements to poor health that cost untold millions in costly medical intervention;
- Support greater consumer choice, including greater access to regulated non-traditional forms of health care;
- Appoint a task force with representation from Nova Scotian's research centres, universities and medical institutions to identify strategies to develop new medical and health related opportunities that will both enhance the delivery of health care to Nova Scotians and create new employment opportunities (see Jobs and the Economy).

Jobs and the Economy

Progressive Conservatives believe that it is government's role to establish an economic and regulatory environment that encourages the private sector and facilitates economic growth and job creation. We believe that Nova Scotians are looking for long-term employment opportunities that will enable them to enjoy Nova Scotian's quality of life. We believe that these can and should best be provided by the private sector. We believe that it is the role of government to put in place programs and an environment that encourages and supports Nova Scotian entrepreneurs.

One way that has proved an excellent stimulant to economic activity and job creation in other jurisdictions, such as Ontario, has been a reduction in personal income taxes. The Ontario experience has demonstrated that tax cuts create jobs. Putting money back into the pockets of consumers has led to increased spending which, in turn, has led to greater economic growth, the creation of new jobs and increased government revenues. The people of New Brunswick have recently elected a Progressive Conservative Government that is also committed to cutting personal income taxes. Ultimately, if Nova Scotia is to be competitive, our tax environment must also be competitive. Once the John Hamm government has had an opportunity to fix our health care system and bring spending under control in Nova Scotia, it will introduce reductions in personal income taxes in Nova Scotia to ensure that Nova Scotians enjoy the same benefits as are happening elsewhere.

It is unacceptable that 9.7 % of Nova Scotians -- fully 44,500 people -- cannot find a job. Continuing levels of youth unemployment, of crisis proportion, are even more unacceptable. 20.2% of Nova Scotians aged 15-29 are out of work. In many areas of Nova Scotia, the real unemployment rate is far above these "official" figures. Too many people have given up hope of finding work and are not counted among the government's unemployment statistics. We are committed to a comprehensive plan to provide Nova Scotians with both the opportunity and the ability to be part of a growing economy.

Quite simply, neither the Liberal government, nor the NDP, have any workable plan to stimulate economic development and create jobs in Nova Scotia. For their part, the Liberals have wantonly doled out taxpayers' money to businesses that are not viable, like Sysco and MacTimber, or provided excessive and unnecessary loans and guarantees to companies.

An additional \$44 million commitment to provide a short term operating loan to Sysco does nothing to meet the long-term needs of industrial Cape Breton, while adding even more to the provincial debt, which now exceeds \$10,000 for every man, woman and child in Nova Scotia. "It's no longer makes sense to try to prop up money losing industries that supported our grandparents' generation. We must build our economy by supporting jobs of the future -- not the jobs of the past like Sysco. My government will sell Sysco, once and for all, or close it down. But we will not abandon the workers or their families."

John Hamm

Instead of building infrastructure to enhance our ability to get our goods to market, the Liberals have imposed tolls on our only highway out of the province. They have severed commercial ferry links to our traditional New England markets and have failed to secure adequate funding to upgrade and maintain our airports and seaports. Even the Sable Gas deal fails to ensure that the Nova Scotia economy will be the principal beneficiary of natural gas development even though the Liberals have already committed substantial revenues expected, but not guaranteed from the offshore, at least twice!

During its first mandate, a PC government will ensure that Nova Scotia regains its position as the most business friendly environment in Atlantic Canada -- the best place to do business. We will do this by:

- Making Nova Scotia the most attractive place to do business in Atlantic Canada by guaranteeing that costs imposed by government are the lowest in the region;
- Guaranteeing we have the most attractive tax structure in the region. Nova Scotia will have the lowest overall business and personal taxes in Atlantic Canada. No other province in Atlantic Canada will more aggressively pursue new opportunities for growing our economy than Nova Scotia through tax structure, ease of start-up or through aggressive marketing;
- Stimulating the economy by reducing provincial personal income taxes by at least 10%, once government finances and our health care system have been put in order. Tax cuts create jobs by putting money back into the pockets of hard-working people;

"We must free business from unnecessary regulatory burdens and ensure that Nova Scotians get first call on government and offshore tenders."

John Hamm

- Implementing legislation already introduced by the PC Caucus to reduce job-killing red tape by appointing a full-time Regulatory Review Officer with a mandate to report annually to the Legislature with recommendations for reducing bureaucratic obstacles to job creation;

"My government will continually challenge the regulatory burden faced by business with a view to making Nova Scotia a more business friendly environment."

John Hamm

- Working with the business community to establish clear and binding principles and policies when offering incentives to attract new businesses and jobs, or to support the expansion of existing successful businesses. No government incentives of any kind will be provided for new start-ups when they are competitively harmful to existing businesses;
- Streamlining the Department of Economic Development so it focuses on infrastructure/training and marketing, rather than on simply passing out grants, loans and loan guarantees;
- Establishing a proper, non-partisan process for ensuring that rural roads and highways meet the needs of Nova Scotians and support economic development.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will encourage community economic development by:

- Focusing on infrastructure development as a first priority;
- Transferring resources and decision-making authority from the provincial level to broadly representative Regional Development Agencies;

"I believe we must give authority back to individual communities -- politicians and bureaucrats cannot make decisions for communities, as effectively as the people who live in them."

John Hamm

- Establishing clear criteria for the Nova Scotia Community Economic Development fund, including funding levels from the economic development budget and initiating Community Development Bonds, with special emphasis on areas of high unemployment such as industrial Cape Breton, Lockeport, Springhill, etc;

- Implement policies/measures such as tax incentives that recognize and respond to the need for stimulating the economies of rural Nova Scotia;
- Allowing Regional Development Authorities the option of owning provincial industrial parks, malls and associated infrastructure and giving them the authority to sell land to potential businesses.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will promote consumption of Nova Scotian products and services by:

- Establishing a Buy Nova Scotia First program, an aggressive and sustained multi-media marketing campaign to increase consumer awareness of Nova Scotian products and services;
- As part of the Buy Nova Scotia First Campaign, actively promote Nova Scotian's Arts/Craft Industry as an integral and important sector of our economy;
- Demonstrating leadership in the Buy Nova Scotia First program by ensuring government tendering policies allow Nova Scotian companies to compete fairly for government business, by moving away from current tendering policies which favour large tenders covering a multitude of products and which effectively preclude smaller local businesses from submitting competitive bids;
- Amend Nova Scotian's tendering policies to ensure they offer Nova Scotia companies the same competitive advantage as other Atlantic provinces offer companies in their respective areas;
- Aggressively marketing Nova Scotian's products abroad;

"It's time we told people that Nova Scotia is a great place to do business and that it can be even better with some planning, some expertise and by being prepared to try some things differently."

John Hamm

- Expanding and promoting co-operative education and school-to-work opportunities;
- Convening public Economic Round Table sessions with cabinet, business, labour, municipal, community and educational leaders to identify priority issues and develop co-operative strategies to achieve sustained economic growth;

- Aggressively pursue fair treatment from Ottawa for upgrades to the Port of Halifax, including establishing rail links that will transport goods from the Port to markets in New England;
- Demand that the federal government live up to its commitment to complete the upgrades to the Halifax International Airport;
- Working with communities to ensure highways and secondary roads are planned and designed to optimize economic growth, ensuring that planning is done on a non-partisan basis;
- Vigorously promoting Nova Scotia as a film, video and multi-media production location with tax credits and policies that are comparable to other jurisdictions and removing the asset cap presently placed on the tax credit;
- Appointing a task force with representation from Nova Scotian's research centres, universities and medical institutions to identify strategies to develop new medical and health related opportunities that will both enhance the delivery of health care to Nova Scotians and create new employment opportunities.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will improve employment opportunities for young Nova Scotians by:

- Creating a Jobs Opportunity Bureau with membership from government, business, labour, universities, community colleges and the public school system with a mandate to measure the effectiveness of youth strategies, forecast future labour market requirements and maintain an interactive web site to keep young Nova Scotians apprised of the latest training and employment opportunities;
- Establish a Premier's Council on Technology, Productivity and Quality with membership from business, labour and post-secondary institutions to promote technological change, improve the productivity of Nova Scotia business and ensure world-class quality standards;
- Initiating change in the public school system to encourage young people to complete grade 12, including better career, personal and family counselling;
- Working with the community college system to improve opportunities for students who wish to bridge from the public school system into trades and skills training;

- Adapting community college timetables to attract students who work during the day or whose jobs involve shift work;
- Working with business and labour to modernize apprenticeship programs, ensuring young Nova Scotians who take trades training have the opportunity to complete apprenticeships and move into the workforce;
- Encouraging companies doing business with government to participate in co-operative education and school-to-work programs;
- Ensuring that any business receiving training assistance gives priority to hiring Nova Scotians.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will maximize the economic benefit of Offshore Development:

- Actively working to ensure all parts of Nova Scotia benefit from offshore gas and oil exploration and development by establishing an Energy Council of experts to advise Cabinet on the development of Nova Scotian's offshore;
- Requiring that all developers working offshore Nova Scotia advertise all offshore and onshore job and contract opportunities throughout Nova Scotia; wherever possible, qualified Nova Scotians should always have the first opportunity for employment;
- Actively seeking private investors to develop a petrochemical industry based on natural gas by-products;
- Aggressively claiming Nova Scotian's jurisdictional control over the Laurentian Sub-basin as noted in 1984 Canada/Nova Scotia Offshore Accord;

During its first mandate, a PC Government will pursue strategies to reduce the high cost of the Workers' Compensation System by:

- Restructuring the Occupational Health and Safety Division and the Workers' Compensation Board to operate under one board that is equally representative of business and labour;
- Pro-actively targeting Occupational Health and Safety training and compliance audits at industries and businesses with high accident rates to reduce injuries,

leading to lower business costs and lower WCB premiums;

"We must be aggressive in our efforts to reduce extensive payroll taxes that are hurting our efforts to attract new business and jobs."

John Hamm

- Re-instating the Accident Prevention training section of the Department of Labour which assists employers to meet their health and safety obligations to their employees;
- Ensuring that the review of the Workers' Compensation Legislation is carried out and respond to the recommendations within three months;
- Enacting PC legislation already introduced requiring an independent committee be appointed to review the OHS Act to ensure that its provisions are sensible and workable;
- Enacting PC legislation already introduced which provides for a sunset clause for the regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to ensure that the regulations in place are necessary.

In addition, recognizing the chronic economic situation facing the people of industrial Cape Breton and the need to support an economy based on realistic opportunities for the future, a John Hamm Government will:

- Aggressively pursue Ottawa's support in developing a long-term remediation plan for abandoned coal mining and steel sites. The plan will be developed with the active participation of the community, the University College of Cape Breton, research centres and unemployed or laid off coal miners and steel workers. Such a proposal not only holds out the hope of creating new job, business and academic opportunities, it will have the added benefit of making the industrial area of Cape Breton a more environmentally-friendly place to work and live;
- Work with the community to actively and aggressively seek a more just and fair compensation package from Ottawa as a result of the announced phase-out of Devco;
- Aggressively market new initiatives that demonstrate that industrial Cape Breton is much more economically diverse than many believe and has much more to offer i.e., promoting the high-tech, state-of-the art work being carried out at Silicon Island to developing industries such as the film/video and

multi-media industry;

- Provide a more focused and sustained effort in marketing Cape Breton as a first-class, year-round tourism destination;
- Ensure that any future development of the Laurentian Sub-basin benefits the Cape Breton economy by supporting offshore infrastructure development on the Island.

Tourism

Nova Scotian's beautiful landscape, diverse cultures, rich history and heritage position us as a world-class destination for Canadian and international travelers. Our parks, museums, historic homes and community events offer a broad range of choices for visitors to our province. We believe that an intensive, sustained effort to promote tourism in Nova Scotia will benefit our economy many times over. We believe Nova Scotian's beauty should no longer be a well-kept secret. It must be enthusiastically promoted.

The Liberal Government has put tourism on the back burner and has completely failed to recognize the vital contribution that this industry, building on our rich natural and historical resources, can make to jobs and economic development in Nova Scotia.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Re-establish the Department of Tourism as a separate department of government whose mandate includes promotion of museums, parks and historic homes;
- Strengthen the Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council to ensure it includes the key participants in our tourism sector;
- Develop -- in partnership with the tourism sector -- themes and programs for marketing Nova Scotia as a year-round tourist destination;
- Work with the tourism sector to establish realistic criteria for determining the true value of tourism in Nova Scotia.

Education

A strong education system is the foundation of an economy of sustained growth. A PC Government will dedicate itself to an education system which is adequately funded, fully focused on the student and the classroom and which will prepare young Nova Scotians to compete in the job markets of today and tomorrow. We are committed to rewarding effort and excellence in our schools. We believe the pursuit of post-secondary education should not leave Nova Scotians mired in debt. We also believe that government and business have a responsibility to work together to ensure a smooth, workable transition from the classroom to the workplace.

"It's time government started looking at education as an investment in our future rather than simply as a cost to government."

John Hamm

The Liberal Government has failed to give education the priority it deserves. Too many young Nova Scotians are learning from outdated photocopies instead of current textbooks. Too many teachers are faced with overcrowded classrooms and scarce resources. Our schools must be functional, environmentally-safe and must reflect the needs of the community. Instead P3 schools have become expensive monuments to the builders. At the same time as government is talking about building 100 new P3 schools, Nova Scotians are hearing about cuts to primary class time and teachers.

We must refocus our education system on its most important priority -- what it delivers in learning for students in the classroom at all levels.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will improve secondary education by:

- Establishing a visible, consistent and functional education system based on the most appropriate international standards; using these standards to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workplace;
- Establishing a P-12 Provincial Education Council, including representatives named by organizations such as the Nova Scotia Home and School Association and the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union. This council will be modeled after the Provincial Health Council and will be mandated to report directly to the Legislature as the public's education watchdog, recommending changes to Nova Scotian's education system;

"I want our children to learn in a healthy, positive environment, to be confident in their abilities and to have an appreciation for new learning throughout their lives."

John Hamm

- Establishing by law or regulation a uniform, province-wide standard for primary classes on the basis of five days a week;
- Establishing and enforcing a standard code of conduct for students and teachers which will emphasize mutual respect, responsibility and discipline;
- Ensuring our schools are safe places to learn by establishing a zero tolerance policy for violent behaviour and drugs and by working closely with all Nova Scotians who have contact with our education system;
- Ensuring allocation of resources is done fairly so that students across Nova Scotia have equitable access to comparable equipment, supplies and learning aids;
- Ensuring all teachers are given the professional development opportunities they need to effectively implement curriculum changes and new teaching methodology and technology;
- Ensuring our education system reflects the diverse nature of Nova Scotian's communities;
- Ensuring adequate access to youth support services, such as social workers, public and mental health professionals;
- Developing a multi-year plan for addressing the need for additional resources for students with special needs;
- Tracking employment opportunities and providing information to guidance and career counsellors in a timely way (see also Jobs and the Economy);
- Immediately establishing a task force with broad geographic representation that will hold public hearings on existing school board boundaries and make recommendations for amending existing school board boundaries so that they properly reflect reasonable community input;
- Establishing a long-term funding basis for our schools;
- Reviewing funding formulas to protect schools and areas of declining enrollments from detrimental and untimely reductions in the teaching staff;

- Undertaking a comprehensive review and cost-benefit analysis of the P3 process and contracts to ensure that only the best possible approach is used in school construction, renovation and operation. Where leases have been signed, schools will be built. Where commitments to communities have already been made and negotiations are still on-going, we will protect the taxpayers' interests by ensuring new schools are built on a standard, but flexible design, and that the process is open to full public scrutiny;
- Establishing a special Capital Improvement Fund, administered by the School Capital Construction Committee, to respond to emergency health problems in our schools.

"The Liberals have abandoned higher education students, while delivering the most under-funded higher education system in the country."

John Hamm

During its first mandate, a PC Government will improve post-secondary education by:

- Establishing a provincial Income Tax Relief Program for graduating students with high debt loads, allowing students to re-direct a portion of their provincial tax payment to retire a maximum of 30 percent of the value of their original debt load;
- Aggressively pursuing the Government of Canada to adopt tax relief similar to the above;
- Establishing a University Student Employment Program, similar to that offered by Memorial University of Newfoundland, which provides university students with part-time campus work in such areas as research and accounting, providing practical on-the-job skills and helps students pay for their education;
- Doubling the existing Civil Service Career Start Program to provide graduating University students with opportunities for work experience with the Provincial Government;

"The time has long past for government to step up to its responsibilities to ensure that our young people have full access to higher education, without having to mortgage their futures to do it."

John Hamm

- Creating a comprehensive job search and support program for students who have successfully completed university, are nearing the end of their interest-free loan repayment period and have not yet found work. The program will provide practical job search skills and interview assistance, together with information on employment opportunities; the interest-free period will be extended for all students actively participating in the program;
- Urging the federal government to change the regulations that discourage students from part-time work by forcing them to remit 80% of every dollar earned after the first \$800;
- Negotiating with the federal government to adopt the fair and equitable policy of having federal funding follow the student to the province in which the student chooses to study;
- Working with universities, community colleges and the private sector to develop co-operative work experience programs;
- Working to expand opportunities that enable transition for pre-graduation high school students who wish to pursue vocational trades;
- Establishing, in consultation with business and labour, a comprehensive and modern apprenticeship program.

Finance

"I am absolutely committed to leading a government that lives within its means and produces a truly balanced budget."

John Hamm

A PC Government will live within its means. By spending responsibly, we will protect our ability to guarantee priorities like health care and education for the future. We are committed to a long-term plan for reducing the provincial debt to a manageable percentage of GPP, enabling us to reduce taxation and promote a healthy, job-producing economy.

The Liberal Government has relied on smoke and mirrors to pretend to have balanced Nova Scotian's budget. In truth, they have failed to eliminate the deficit and the provincial debt has grown by \$3.6 billion.

The Liberals have used the public purse as a re-election fund. During the period from May 15 and June 15, 1999, Liberal ministers made commitments totaling over \$200 million in cynical election spending. The Liberals spent \$100,000 of your tax dollars on a publicly-funded propaganda campaign to sell their budget.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Reduce the excessive tax burden on Nova Scotians. Nova Scotia can no longer afford such high rates of taxation. A Progressive Conservative Government will ensure Nova Scotia has the most attractive tax structure and the most business friendly-environment in Atlantic Canada;
- Eliminate deficit financing and restore fiscal openness and accountability by keeping one set of books;
- Cut the costs of running government by reducing out-of-province travel and non-essential spending. The Liberals claimed they could reduce general government spending by \$27 million in less than one half a year (December 22, 1998 Quarterly Report). They didn't implement the initiative. We will and we will significantly reduce costs;
- Commit to allocating a minimum of one-third of all annual surpluses to debt reduction;
- Establish practical targets for reducing the provincial debt which has increased by almost \$3.6 billion during six years of Liberal Government;

- Implement legislation requiring all new program costs be approved from identified departmental budgets;
- Work to repatriate the debts we owe to foreign lenders;
- Ensure that financial quarterly reports allow for a full and detailed comparative analysis from one quarter to the next, by ensuring revenue and expenditure projections are up-to-date;
- Together with volunteer fire departments and other non-profit community organizations, review the impact of Gaming regulations on community groups and make any necessary amendments that support the contributions these organizations make to community-life throughout Nova Scotia;
- Conduct a thorough, open, cost-benefit analysis on the decision to withdraw from Atlantic Lotto to ensure that it is in the best interests of Nova Scotians.

To demonstrate that John Hamm and his Cabinet will take the lead in restraining government expenditures, a PC government will:

- Reduce the size of government, starting with Cabinet;
- Immediately initiate a review of all government programs with a view to eliminating those that cannot be justified on the basis of necessity, cost and efficiency. Every single dollar spent by government must benefit Nova Scotians;
- Initiate a review of all government buildings, with a view to reducing costs by eliminating surplus office space and conduct a comprehensive energy audit;
- Undertake a review of services that can be more efficiently and cost-effectively provided by the private sector, while ensuring appropriate standards are maintained and, our commitment to the NSGEU on private sector partnering is maintained.

Making Government Accountable

Nova Scotians expect their government to conduct the people's business in the open and to provide the public with effective opportunities for input. We expect our elected officials to be accountable to their constituents, ensuring that decisions are always made in the best public interest.

The Liberal budget represents only the most recent example that the Liberal government has no respect for the electorate. Their Health Investment Fund -- an off-book accounting gimmick -- goes beyond deception. It illustrates contempt for Nova Scotians. Such an approach to government not only displays a lack of integrity and competence, it undermines public respect for our political system and the integrity of elected representatives. The Liberals have, quite simply, abandoned their responsibility to the electorate and forfeited their right to govern.

We believe Nova Scotians are right to demand greater openness, accountability and participation. A John Hamm Government will be a government that listens to Nova Scotians and acts in accordance with their priorities and expectations.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Establish and enforce a Code of Conduct for cabinet ministers and senior public servants;
- Give Members of the Legislature greater freedom to represent the views of the people they represent;
- Base a significant portion of the compensation for senior bureaucrats on performance;
- Amend the Freedom of Information Act to appoint the FOIPOP Review Officer on a full-time basis and to require full disclosure of public-private partnering agreements, including school construction;
- Stop spending taxpayers' money on politically-motivated government advertising.

(See Also -- Finance)

Energy

Nova Scotians are fortunate to have a variety of domestic energy sources: coal, natural gas, wood and even the emerging technology of tidal power. We must capitalize on these opportunities to ensure energy self-sufficiency now and for the future. Equally, we must ensure that Nova Scotians are the primary beneficiaries of our energy resources.

The Liberal Government has no energy policy. The Liberals have squandered our offshore gas opportunity and have left the future of the coal industry in question. Simply put, their Sable Gas agreement is a bad deal. For example, the Liberal Sable Gas deal provides for only 34% of economic benefits to Nova Scotians. By contrast, the Hibernia project guarantees that Newfoundland will receive 48% of the benefits.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Establish a comprehensive energy policy that includes all domestic energy sources and reduces our dependence on imported oil; our energy policy's central priority will be to ensure province-wide economic development, the lowest possible cost to consumers and businesses;
- Aggressively pursue jurisdictional control and ownership of the Laurentian Sub-basin for Nova Scotia as stated in the 1984 Canada/Nova Scotia Offshore Accord
- Aggressively pursue private sector opportunities to create opportunities for a new petrochemical industry in Nova Scotia;
- A PC Government will not subsidize the natural gas companies;
- Ensure any future appointments to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board is subject to an open, accountable selection process similar to that which governs judicial appointments.

Environment

"We do not own our environment, but we are its trustees for future generations"
John Hamm

Nova Scotians have inherited a rich land with an abundance of fresh air and clean water. It is our responsibility to preserve and protect our environment for future generations. Part of this responsibility involves ensuring that all Nova Scotians have a clean, safe environment in which to live.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Immediately pursue a commitment from Ottawa to undertake a thorough assessment of the re-mediation needs resulting from coal mining and steel production in industrial Cape Breton. Following this assessment -- identify a long-term strategy for clean-up with a view to positioning Nova Scotia as a leader in environmental technology and remediation and maximize employment opportunities for laid off Devco or Sysco employees;
- Establish, after thorough consultation with Nova Scotians, an environmental "green" plan for Nova Scotia,
- Re-focus resources within the Department of the Environment to ensure it meets its primary responsibilities, especially inspection services;
- Promote use of the most modern environmental technologies to meet our goal of sustainable, responsible resource use;
- Work with municipal governments to find cost-effective, environmentally-responsible ways of handling solid waste;
- Require public consultation before any municipality imports waste for incineration;

Hunting and fishing are traditional outdoor activities in many parts of Nova Scotia. The license fees paid by outdoor enthusiasts help make it possible for us to preserve wildlife and their habitat. A John Hamm Government will support the well-established Nova Scotian tradition of ethical and safe hunting and fishing. It will legally recognize heritage hunting and fishing practices in Nova Scotia and acknowledge the role anglers and hunters have played in environmental conservation. A John Hamm Government will:

- Legislate the right to hunt and fish in Nova Scotia with a Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act;
- A PC Government will join the effort by other provinces, including Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, North West Territories, Yukon, Nunavut, New Brunswick and Ontario in legally challenging Ottawa's gun control legislation.

Local Government

We believe municipal government is the cornerstone of democracy, because it is the level of government that is closest to the people. Our economic and social well being depends on strong local governments with a true sense of community among the people they serve. A Progressive Conservative Government will be committed to communities, working in true partnership with municipal government.

Through forced and ill-conceived amalgamations, the Liberal Government has robbed communities of their unique identities. They have not achieved the promised savings and efficiencies. Indeed, the experience of many has been an increase in property taxes with no increased compensating benefits or services.

By downloading responsibilities on municipalities, the Liberals have burdened this critical level of government with expenses it cannot possibly support. We must find new ways to rekindle community identity and spirit.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Stop the unilateral downloading which has characterised municipal/provincial relations in Nova Scotia;
- In areas where there has already been forced amalgamation, work with communities to find imaginative ways to rekindle their sense of identity;
- In the case of rural areas that have been forced into urban units, through public consultation, determine whether further boundary changes should be made to provide rural areas with rural government;
- Introduce legislation to permit municipalities to tax non-residential property owners at a higher rate than residential landowners. This will allow those areas of the province where large segments of land are being bought up by non-residents to take steps to protect Nova Scotia taxpayers;
- Work with municipalities and the federal government to fund essential infrastructure projects such as water and sewer services.

Justice

We believe that all people should understand and respect the justice system. The rule of law must be relevant to all and applied equally to all people. We believe our justice system is there to protect all Nova Scotians. We believe justice must be administered in a fair and timely way.

A Progressive Conservative Government will restore public trust and confidence in Nova Scotian's justice system.

In order to achieve this standard, a PC Government will:

- Establish a Registry of Sex Offenders that will include the names and locations of all convicted sex offenders, as well as those who have been found criminally insane. This information will be shared with police authorities to be made public;
- Immediately establish an independent process for setting Public Prosecutor's salaries and work to implement initiatives that will lead to a more positive work environment as outlined in the Kaufman Report. The prosecution service must be provided with the independence and all of the necessary resources required to carry out their duties to protect the public's safety;
- Stop construction of the Correctional Forensic Facility in residential Bedford and find a suitable non-residential site following consultation;
- Begin discussions with the judiciary, Director of Public Prosecutions and Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and interested citizens' groups to develop performance objectives and standards to ensure all Nova Scotians have equal and fair access to our justice system;
- Respond to the concerns of many Nova Scotians, particularly seniors, who are growing increasingly concerned about living safely at home, by pursuing stiffer sentences for home invasion as outlined in PC legislation already introduced;
- Introduce legislation that will allow landlords to speedily evict tenants whose premises are being used for criminal activity such as drug dealing or child prostitution;
- Undertake a review of the Compensation Program for victims of institutional abuse to ensure the process is fair and upholds the rights of both the victim and the accused;

- Establish a program of public education to ensure that Nova Scotians understand how our legal system works and to promote the use of plain language;
- Where it is shown that lack of proper parental supervision has caused a young person to commit a crime, require parents to make restitution to the victim;
- Work with the legal community to create a process whereby an offender under the age of 12 can be remanded for assessment and treatment;
- Provide established core funding for organizations which deliver preventative and rehabilitative programs in areas such as prevention of family violence and substance abuse;
- In keeping with our belief that "justice delayed is justice denied" work to streamline our justice system;
- In consultation with the legal profession, victims' groups and appropriate social agencies, develop a program and plan of action to place greater emphasis on the rights of victims of crime;
- Stop wasting tax dollars on incarceration of non-violent criminals and work with the judiciary, Public Prosecution Service, the legal profession and interested groups to institute an appropriate system of house arrest for non-violent offenders;
- Enact PC legislation already introduced which provides forfeiture of "johns" vehicles in prostitution-related offences;
- Enact PC legislation already introduced which provides that, when a child involved in prostitution needs protection, a police officer may take the child to his or her guardian or to a safe house. It also increases the penalties for prostitution-related offences by adults (i.e. johns and pimps).

Social Concerns

Nova Scotians are a compassionate people who firmly believe their government must work to enhance the quality of life for all people including our seniors, our children and those Nova Scotians who are physically or mentally challenged. The generosity of Nova Scotians' compassion is seen in the efforts of thousands of volunteer and committed advocates who work in non-profit agencies to support government efforts in dealing with urgent social issues. It was particularly evident in the response of Nova Scotians to the Swissair tragedy and the crisis in Kosovo.

We recognize the particular knowledge and understanding of people who work, both as volunteers and as employees, with community-based agencies and non-profit organizations that are on the front lines of service delivery. Because they are close to the action, they see, first hand, the needs and have a unique appreciation of the requirement to make every dollar count, as an investment in "quality of life". They must be properly supported.

During its first mandate, A PC Government will:

- Work with the Disabled Person's Commissions and groups who represent Nova Scotians with disabilities to expand accessible transportation services throughout the province;
- Introduce legislation that recognizes the right to identifying information for adult adoptees and birth parents;
- Ensure that day-care subsidies are portable and that they are attached to the child, not the facility;
- Commit to ensuring that the long wait periods for people seeking Family Benefits/Income Assistance are reduced;
- Work towards the full integration of Health and Community Services Programs, particularly as they relate to the delivery of primary care and continuing care, so that appropriate and early interventions can be taken to prevent unnecessary costs to the system;
- Ensure that front-line Community Service workers are fully briefed on all relevant changes to government policies and procedures and encourage their full participation in identifying ways to improve efficiencies and response times in dealing with clients;

- Support the continuation of Community Action Programs for Children;
- Immediately commit to the development of a secure treatment centre for young Nova Scotians with severe emotional and behavioural problems;
- Review the existing criteria for determining the per diem rates of residential care facilities and establish clear guidelines for determining those rates;
- Work towards the elimination of the clawback provision of the National Child Tax Benefit;
- Meet with representatives of the volunteer community to identify ways government can encourage and support volunteers throughout the province;
- Introduce a Volunteer Benefits Act which will provide liability, accident and death insurance benefits for volunteer firefighters injured on the job, a \$500 tax credit for volunteer firefighters; and will provide a waiver for Motor Vehicle registration fees for volunteer fire fighters and members of volunteer search and rescue organizations;
- Instruct the Department of Community Services to work with the Nova Scotia Community College System and School Boards to co-ordinate meaningful skills training for unemployed single parents;
- Enhance training allowances and income forgiveness to provide greater incentives for Nova Scotians on Family Benefits to seek employment;
- Instruct an All-Party Committee on Taxation to examine and make recommendations on changes required to make the tax system fairer for families where one parent stays home to care for their children. As required, the committee's recommendations will be vigorously pursued at the national level;
- Work with the Taxing Child Care Committee and the UNSM to review and, where necessary, amend existing tax laws as they relate to day care centers which negatively impact on the number of child care spaces available and the quality of programs offered;
- Continue PC legislation from 1998 providing a moratorium on VLTs and expand treatment for gambling addicts.

Seniors

Our seniors are those members of our community who have contributed to making our Nova Scotian society the wonderful place it is and who now have a right to live their remaining years in comfort, security and with the best possible health and quality of life. Seniors continue to make a tremendous contribution to our province by constantly making themselves available to government in setting its priorities and policies.

A PC government will:

- Ensure the Senior Citizens' Secretariat is given the necessary resources to carry out its mandate, with a commitment to meet regularly with representative seniors' groups to ensure the concerns of seniors are addressed;
- Remove the grandfather clause imposed on the Property Tax Rebate Program which unfairly provides some seniors with municipal property tax relief, while denying it to others. All seniors who apply and who meet program guidelines will receive property tax assistance;
- Provide funding for Adult Day Programs, a cost-effective alternative to home care and an important opportunity for socialization;
- In consultation with the Retired Government Employees Association of Nova Scotia, begin discussions on the introduction of a voluntary cost-shared dental plan;
- Ensure that input from seniors and the interests of seniors are at the forefront of all government decision-making affecting the future of our province;
- Respond to the concerns of many Nova Scotia seniors who are growing increasingly concerned about living safely at home by pursuing stiffer sentences for Home Invasion as outlined in PC legislation already introduced;
- Ensure victims of home invasions in Nova Scotia are eligible for funds under the Criminal Injuries Program;
- Through local police forces and RCMP across the province, initiate and implement a program to educate seniors on how to effectively deal with situations where they consider their safety is at risk;
- Ensure that government services are user friendly and readily accessible to seniors;

- Aggressively pursue a positive resolution to the dispute between Ottawa and the province over the issue of Pharmacare coverage for retired federal civil servants;
- Provide seniors 65 years of age and older, who voluntarily participate in safe driving programs, with a 50 percent discount on Registry of Motor Vehicle fees.

Consumers

Progressive Conservatives believe in the free operation of the marketplace. However, PCs also believe that it is the responsibility of government to protect the interests of consumers.

In this context, a PC government will:

- Amend the Consumer Protection Act to require that, on the taking out of a mortgage, or on its renewal, the mortgage company, bank or trust company provides the borrower with an amortization table, setting out clearly the amount of principal and the amount of interest in each and every payment and the amount of principal outstanding at any time, assuming payments have been made on time during the course of the mortgage;
- Amend the Residential Tenancies Act to allow landlords to speedily evict tenants who have been convicted of using a rented premise for criminal activity, such as drug dealing or child prostitution;
- Amend the Consumer Creditors' Conduct Act to make it clear that it applies to internet sales and fax transmissions;
- Amend the Direct Sellers' Licensing Act to make it clear that it applies to both TV sales and internet sales and, more specifically, that section 20 relating to the existence of a cooling off period of ten days shall apply during which the consumer may cancel the contract;
- Protect retail gasoline dealers from downloading of national advertising campaign costs by major multi-national oil companies.

Transportation

We believe a first-class transportation system is an essential key to economic growth. All modes of transportation are inextricably linked: if one is weak, all are less effective. We believe taxes raised through transportation should be earmarked solely for maintenance and improvement of our transportation system. We believe good roads are essential to the well being of people who live in our communities.

A Progressive Conservative Government will end the neglect of our secondary roads and discontinue the Liberal practice of spending a disproportionate amount of the highways budget in government ridings. This neglect has placed thousands of rural Nova Scotians in the position of second-class citizens.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Commit to no more toll Highways;
- Develop a ten-year plan for completion of 100 series highways, upgrading and twinning;
- Work with communities to ensure highways and secondary roads are planned and designed to optimize economic growth as a priority;
- Establish a comprehensive, non-partisan, multi-year plan for maintenance and upgrading of secondary roads, based on need, rather than on partisan politics. It will be based on criteria that is publicly available;
- Dedicate all taxes raised through motor vehicle licensing and fuel sales to highway construction and maintenance to provide a solid base for highway spending which may be increased depending on public need and available revenues;
- Demand that the Liberal Government in Ottawa return a significant portion of the roughly \$125 million in fuel taxes it collects annually in Nova Scotia as a contribution to our highway strategy;

“The Federal government has taken hundreds of millions of dollars from Nova Scotians in fuel taxes over the last six years and given little or nothing back for highway infrastructure. It is time we receive our full and fair share.”

John Hamm

- Work with railway companies to upgrade rail links to North American markets through New England and extend private short lines in Nova Scotia;

- Insist that the federal government complete long-promised upgrades to the Halifax International Airport;
- Work with local authorities including Sydney and Yarmouth to develop an integrated airport marketing plan using an upgraded, world-class Halifax International Airport as the hub;
- Work with business and community leaders to renew and enhance commercial ferry link opportunities to key markets in the northeastern United States;
- Act as facilitator with business and community regarding joint transportation initiatives;
- In cooperation with the Trucking Association of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic Provinces' Trucking Association, work to enhance highway safety and education.

Agriculture

Agriculture has always been a way of life for thousands of Nova Scotia families. Today, that way of life is threatened by pressure to use farmland for other purposes, such as industrial and urban development. We believe it is better to protect agricultural land today, than to try and reclaim it in the future. Agriculture directly contributes over \$400 million to the Nova Scotian economy and employs 14,000 people. It also represents a way of life that enhances the cultural fabric of our province.

The Liberal Government has failed to provide the support necessary for young Nova Scotians to continue their family tradition of farming and have failed to make any real effort to market Nova Scotian produce here and abroad.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Establish an aggressive "Buy Nova Scotia First" policy, with a key focus on supporting and promoting our agricultural products to Nova Scotian consumers;
- Establish a New Entrants Program to encourage young Nova Scotians to continue the tradition of family farming in Nova Scotia, through low interest loans;
- Maintain the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board as a separate entity;

"Nova Scotia farmers are in desperate need of relief from three consecutive years of drought. They deserve no less than what Ottawa provides Western farmers in their time of need."

John Hamm

- Insist that the Government of Canada provide drought assistance to Nova Scotia farmers in accordance with the needs of Nova Scotia farmers;
- Reinstatement of the veterinary fee subsidy for large farm animals to ensure the viability of veterinary farm services and a healthy animal farm industry;
- Strengthen the partnership between the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and Marketing and together develop programs to ensure the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Fisheries

Nova Scotians have always depended on the sea. It is a part of our culture, our heritage as well as of our economy. The sea offers a vital transportation link, spectacular scenery and -- most importantly -- sustains thousands of Nova Scotia families who work in the fishery. We are committed to maintaining the delicate balance between harvesting and conservation which ensures that the fishery will continue to be an integral part of Nova Scotian life. Effective enforcement is a key measure.

The Liberal Government has failed to provide an effective voice for Nova Scotian's fishing industry. They have ignored the voices of Nova Scotians who know the fishery best -- the people who make their living from it. The Liberals have failed to see that the fishery is Nova Scotian's resource and that we have a right to a voice in its management.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Tackle the growing problem of illegal fishing, buying and selling by strengthening Fisheries enforcement efforts;
- Ensure that the Federal Government clearly defines who is eligible to participate in the Native Food Fishery;
- Immediately meet with representatives of Nova Scotian's fishing sector to establish a more effective, joint process for advocating on behalf of the industry with the Government of Canada;
- Aggressively represent Nova Scotian fishing interests to Ottawa;
- Support policies which recognize that the traditional strength of the fishery in Nova Scotia has been diversification of plant, vessel and gear type;
- Promote research and development of new seafood products, especially "value added" products;
- Place real emphasis on marketing Nova Scotian seafood products as an integral part of our "BUY Nova Scotia First" program (See Jobs and the Economy);
- Allow licenses, ITQs and EAs to be considered as valued assets for the purpose of determining loan arrangements through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.

Forestry

Our forests support an economic and cultural way of life for many thousands of Nova Scotians. A healthy forest is essential to sustaining our rich wildlife, beautiful scenery, quality of life and economy. At present, the forestry sector contributes \$1.3 billion to our economy, employing 28,000 people. We must ensure that, through responsible use today, this resource remains available to us tomorrow.

Many feel our forests are being over-harvested and that the future of our forests is in jeopardy. The Liberals have allowed our federal/provincial Forestry Development Agreement to expire and have put the forestry sector at risk by failing to negotiate a new agreement with Ottawa.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Undertake a comprehensive review of the current state of our forests, to ensure we have a reliable understanding of the impact of recent harvesting practices on the future sustainability of our forests;
- Immediately Review the Nova Scotia Forestry and Wildlife Guidelines and establish them as law;
- Enact the provisions of the Forests Act;
- Negotiate a new federal/provincial Forestry Development Agreement with Ottawa;
- Develop a Forest Practice Code for buyers of wood fibre;
- Commit to publish buyer registration information annually;
- Urge the Government of Canada to amend federal tax law so those who pursue good forestry practices will be rewarded for their commitment to conservation;
- Work to ensure the natural ratio of softwood to hardwood in Nova Scotia is maintained;
- Support and promote Nova Scotian's Christmas tree industry;
- Work with, support and promote private woodlot owner associations.

Mining

For centuries, mining has been the mainstay of many Nova Scotian communities. We are determined to ensure that the mining sector is not abandoned in our pursuit of other energy and mineral resources. We are committed to ensuring that the safety of workers is the overriding concern in the approval of new mining projects and the management of existing mines. We believe a responsible and practical approach to mining will ensure that mining remains an integral part of our economy.

The Liberal Government placed the fate of Cape Breton's coal mining industry in the hands of Ottawa with the livelihoods of thousands of Nova Scotians left hanging in the balance, then stood helplessly by as Ottawa abandoned the Cape Breton coal industry.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- Immediately initiate formal discussions with the Government of Canada to obtain a fair severance and retirement package for Devco workers and pursue all reasonable options to identify a long-term, private sector operator for Cape Breton coal mines;
- Ensure all mining regulations are clear, efficient and effective regarding safety and environmental practices, monitoring, assessments, permitting, inspection and enforcement;
- Require mining companies to provide communities with timely, independent information on the environmental impact and economic potential of mining developments.
- Pursue the development of other mining opportunities that may lead to jobs and economic benefit to Nova Scotia, such as gold mining and peat extraction.

John Hamm's Plan for Nova Scotia

Highlights of Four Year Plan

	Commitment	Year	Cost
<i>Outcome measures</i>	Evidence-based health care	2	savings
<i>Nurses</i>	More full-time nurses/Convert casual positions to FT	1	\$6.2 million
	Nurse Training	1	\$1.8 million
	Policy Advisor	1	\$60,000
	Tuition Bursaries	1	\$100,000
	Prof. Development	1	\$100,000
	Positive work environment	1	no cost
<i>Family Physicians</i>	Medical Student bursaries	1	\$125,000
	Meaningful voice	1	no cost
<i>Health Care Facilities</i>	Health facilities review	1	no cost
	More Long-term Care Beds	1	cost neutral (reallocation)
	HSC act	1	no cost
	Adult Day Programs	1	savings
	Tax incentives - family caregivers	2	savings
	Eliminate RHBs	2	savings
<i>Family Physicians</i>	Medical Student bursaries	1	\$125,000
	Meaningful voice	1	no cost
<i>Other Initiatives to support care needs</i>	Health Care Advocate	2	\$60,000
	Core Clinical Services Review	1	existing budget
	Standards Review	1	existing budget
	Mandate CHBs	2	cost neutral
	Begin integration of primary health/continuing care programs	2	long-term savings
	Home Care - through hospitals with authorized Home Recovery Plan	2	existing budget
	Review of Mental Health Service	1	existing budget
	Self-Attendant Care	1	savings
	Family Care giver - respite	2	\$1 million
	Autism/PDD support	2	\$2 million long-term savings
	IT/Medical technology	1	\$30 million
	Recovery Programs-Gaming	1	gaming fund surplus
		Wellness Promotion/Disease Prevention	1
<i>Fiscal Responsibility</i>	Balanced Budget	3,4	
<i>Jobs and the Economy</i>	10% cut in income taxes	4	\$110 million
	Eliminating red tape	1	\$100,000
	Streamline Dept. focus on infrastructure/training/marketing	2	savings
	Non-partisan Road plan	2	no cost
	Community Economic Development Initiatives	2	existing budget
	Buy Nova Scotia First	2	\$750,000
	Promoting Halifax-as world class health centre	2	existing budget

	Commitment	Year	Cost
<i>Workers' Compensation</i>	Occupational Health & Safety/WCB - one board	2	savings
	Target - business with high accident rates	1	no cost
<i>The Cape Breton Economy</i>	Initiate long-term remediation plan for abandoned coal mining and steel sites	1	existing budget
	Promote new Cape Breton economy	2	\$500,000
<i>Tourism</i>	Separate Tourism Dept.	2	\$400,000
<i>Education P-12</i>	Establishing consistent/visible standards	1	existing budget
	Five-day week Primary	1	\$2 million
	School Board Boundaries Review	1	existing budget
	Funding Formula Review	1	existing budget
	Public Watchdog	2	\$500,000
	P3 School Review/Changes	1	cost savings
<i>Post-secondary</i>	Income tax relief tied to debt load	2	\$1.3 million
<i>Smaller Government</i>	Reduce Cabinet	1	savings
	Eliminate needless government	1	savings
<i>Energy</i>	Comprehensive Energy Policy	3	existing budget
<i>Environment</i>	Green Plan	3	existing budget
	Heritage Hunting and Fishing	1	no cost
<i>Local Government</i>	Rural areas - rural government - boundary review	1	existing budget
	Non-residential land ownership	1	no cost
<i>Justice</i>	Sex Offender Registry	2	\$200,000
	Public Prosecution Service	1	\$1.5 million
	Stopping "johns"	1	no cost
	Protecting children against child prostitution	1	no cost
<i>Social Concerns</i>	Adoption - Right to know legislation	1	\$300,000
	Secure treatment facility	1	\$1 million (net)
	Begin Restoring the clawback provision on the National Child Tax Benefit	2	\$3 million
	Increase incentives to work	2	cost savings
<i>Seniors</i>	Municipal Property Tax Rebate	1	\$650,000
	Senior Citizens Secretariat	1	\$250,000
	Safe-driving discount	2	\$120,000
	Evicting Criminals	1	no cost
<i>Transportation</i>	10 year highway plan	2	no cost
	Taxes dedicated to construction and maintenance	2	existing budget
	Non-Partisan Road Plan	1	no cost
<i>Agriculture</i>	Supporting young farmers	2	\$600,000
<i>Fisheries</i>	Increased Enforcement	1	savings
<i>Forestry</i>	State of our Forests Review	2	no cost
	Forestry Development	2	\$8 million



John Hamm's Plan for Nova Scotia **How It All Adds Up...**

Our plan is clear, realistic and affordable. It identifies the actions a John Hamm Government would take to get Nova Scotia on the right course. It details when we will take action on each commitment and the financial implication of each.

Many of our commitments require an investment. Many will save money. Many others have no cost implications or can be absorbed within existing budgets. Our total first year investments in health care and other priority areas is \$46.5 million. This represents approximately 1% of estimated total ordinary revenues of \$4.6 billion.

It is also just over half of the government's increased revenue projection of \$73 million (HST and Provincial Income Taxes only) projected for 1999-2000. To be prudent, we have not accounted for the millions of dollars in savings that we know will be the outcome of our many initiatives.

We believe that while health care requires new money - - there is a tremendous opportunity to improve patient care and improve efficiencies within the health care system by reallocating resources.

Again, to be prudent, we have set the target date of realizing a balanced budget for year three. We will introduce a 10% cut in income taxes in year four. We are confident that this will lead to increased revenues that will allow for further investments in essential services, such as health and education.

John Hamm's commitment to Nova Scotia is clear. His clear course will require the government to live within the resources hard-working Nova Scotians provide through taxes.

His clear course will restore the quality of our health care system without mortgaging our future. His clear course will ensure his government is accountable to all Nova Scotians for its actions.

Nova Scotians will be able to judge the performance of a John Hamm Government because it has shared with every Nova Scotian its plan.

Nova Scotians have a right to know what each party will do, when they will do it and what it will cost. This plan does that.