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Introduction

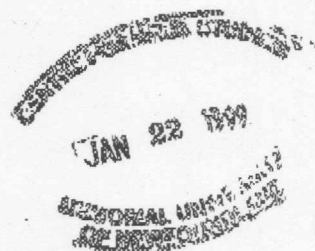


Newfoundland and Labrador has once again arrived at a crossroads. Behind us is a rich history of determination marred by disappointment. Before us is a future of opportunity clouded by uncertainty. As we begin our second 50 years in Confederation, why not start with a fresh approach to government — an approach that owns up to the errors of the past and takes common-sense steps to avoid reliving them. The time has come to choose a fresh approach that will nurture the growth this province needs so we can fulfil our primary responsibility as a government: to guarantee secure, high-quality health care, education, and support for families.

The Progressive Conservative Party believes it is time for a fundamental shift in the way government does things. For 50 years, governments have tried, without great success, to subsidize our way to economic prosperity. More often than not their efforts have failed, at great cost to the hopes and the tax-dollars of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. *Taxing people and businesses to buy jobs just doesn't work!* After having seen time and again how government intervention destroys opportunity, common sense tells us it is now time to redefine our role in the economy and give the private sector the opportunity to do what business does best: create prosperity for all.

Good government is all about balance. Yes, it is about reducing the tax burden and cutting away red tape; but it is at the same time about reinforcing the social programs which make a society strong. There are those who would have governments do everything and those who would have governments do nothing — but between those extremes is a new balanced approach: *the third way*.

Good government is also about accountability — and that means imposing high standards on all programs and making them transparent so you can judge for yourself what works, what fails, and what needs fixing. This document makes clear the strategies a Progressive Conservative government will choose in pursuing growth and social security in Newfoundland and Labrador. Take the time to read it as you consider your choice.



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1. Sound Economic Policy

Our Commitment

A PC Government within its mandate will implement a sound plan for economic revival in Newfoundland and Labrador based on achieving the right fiscal balance: we will spend better on the priorities, spend less on private subsidies, reduce taxes, and at all times live within our means. Leaving more money in the hands of individuals and investors will promote consumer spending, business investment, and job creation.

As the trustee of the people's tax dollars, the government must reconcile competing interests by determining where to spend, where not to spend, and how to reduce the tax burden. Government over-taxing and over-spending has placed a millstone of debt around our neck while leaving businesses and consumers too cash-strapped to make the investments our economy needs. Our jobs agenda involves removing the shackles of the past, strategically investing in our present, and planning realistically for the future. A PC Government is making a firm commitment to spend first on health care and education, to ensure what we do spend in all areas is spent effectively, and to live within our means. We will get out of the business of subsidizing private enterprise; and, to foster growth, we will reduce personal income tax and eliminate the payroll tax. Let us consider three specific aspects of economic development policy that desperately need a fresh approach: fiscal policy, business policy, and labour relations policy.

FISCAL POLICY

Every consumer knows sound fiscal policy means not spending beyond your ability to pay. When governments live beyond their means, we as taxpayers pay, as do future generations who bear the burden of our debts. Spending responsibly means spending accountably and effectively; it means spending on the priority areas first, and it means spending within our means. Living within our means gives us the opportunity to reduce the personal tax burden, leaving more money in your pocket to spend on the things that are important to you. It is time we started trusting people to spend their own money instead of taxing it to spend for them.

Isn't it time that working people received a break? Newfoundland and Labrador families are working harder and receiving less. The majority have not received a real after-tax pay-raise since the eighties. A PC Government will cut your taxes. By reducing the taxes that you pay, we create confidence that effectively puts more money back into the economy for productive use. Consumers cannot spend what they do not have, but added consumer spending will boost business growth. Everyone gets a pay raise when personal income taxes are cut. Our approach is to trust the judgment of people in determining what is best when spending their own money. Furthermore, we are making a firm commitment to tax reform over the course of our mandate.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will immediately reduce the personal income tax rate by 5 percentage points and will further reduce the rate, over the term of its mandate, to the Canadian average.
- A PC Government will open a dialogue with the Government of Canada to provide a mechanism for a rebate of the provincial portion of the HST that citizens pay on utility bills.

BUSINESS POLICY

Common sense tells us the practice of government hand-outs to business creates an uneven playing field where one enterprise qualifies for assistance while another does not. What is worse, the record clearly indicates that the direct intervention has failed more often than it has succeeded. The squandering of scarce tax dollars on enterprises that have more to do with 'grant-dependency' than entrepreneurship has contributed to a climate of corporate welfare that businesses themselves abhor. The wrong message is out there: that, in order to start a business in Newfoundland and Labrador, you need a pool of free taxpayer money and a will to spend it. Surely, this is not business. Common sense tells us we are paying companies to fail. Yet, this is the present government's approach. It creates no new sustainable jobs; it simply fosters a culture of failure. Government must adopt a new approach to business support.

It is time to get it right. It is time for government to give business a hand but not a hand-out, and to leave business investment to business. Government must work together with business in getting the message out that Newfoundland and Labrador is a good place to do business — a fair-dealing province with a firm grasp on the fundamentals of sound, globally-focused business growth.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC government will eliminate the payroll tax — a regressive tax on jobs that unfairly impacts local businesses.
- A PC government will end the practice of providing loans or grants to businesses.
- A PC government will eliminate the EDGE Program, which provides subsidies to some companies at the expense of other existing local companies.
- A PC government will aggressively invest in Research and Development to aid in the development of new business opportunities for the province.

HOW IT WILL WORK

Grants and subsidies consume far more of the public dollar than many people realize - and how are they paid for? Through taxes on you as consumers and businesses.

The recent grants and subsidies for just two provincial businesses - \$15.7 million for one and \$23 million for the other - amount to the equivalent of *more than half the total annual revenue* from the

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

payroll tax, paid for by businesses throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The subsidies for these two companies amounted to between \$75,000 and \$80,000 a job. But this is just the tip of the iceberg of subsidies. Others include a million dollars for a call centre, \$9.5 million for a fabrication plant, \$10 million for a mining operation, and on and on the list goes. Is this really a healthy way to promote business and job creation?

We propose a new approach - a new balance. Instead of taking that money in payroll taxes and huge personal income taxes in order to spend it on grants and subsidies for the select few businesses that cannot seem to make ends meet otherwise, we propose leaving that money in the hands of consumers and businesses so you can make sound investment choices of your own. Consumers and businesses do a far better job investing their own money than governments do on their behalf. During our mandate, we will take a sensible path to reach this new balance.

LABOUR RELATIONS POLICY

Public- and private-sector enterprises are cooperative efforts between managers and non-management employees. The provincial government, as the largest employer in the province, has an obligation to set a good example in dealing properly and progressively with its employees. It must recognize the importance of good-faith collective bargaining, and continue to work to address outstanding and emerging concerns of the workers it employs. The provincial government must also ensure its Workers' Compensation system and minimum wage legislation are fair and progressive.

Our stance on labour relations is straight forward. We will recognize and work towards the implementation of the comprehensive joint labour-management report New Century - New Realities: Creating a Framework Together. The current government has left this well-intentioned ground-breaking consensus document on the shelf. Implementing this report is critical to ensuring a positive labour-management climate for this province's future. It offers a sense of stability that the province needs if we are to attract new investment and ensure a well-functioning economy.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will recognize and fully implement the New Century - New Realities: Creating a Framework Together Report within six months of taking office. As recommended, we will establish a new Centre for Cooperation in Labour-Management Relations under legislation ensuring the Centre operates independent of government; is wholly owned and controlled by the labour and management stakeholders; and operates in a bipartite manner as a permanent forum for labour and management in the province.
- A PC Government will implement the recommendations of the Statutory Review Commission on the Workers' Compensation system.
- A PC Government will increase the minimum wage after commissioning a review to determine what the appropriate level should be.

2. Secure Social Policy

The key function of government is to provide essential services to the people who need them, and to ensure those services are secure and of the highest quality. Good government means ensuring we spend our social dollars carefully and effectively. It means cooperating with the Government of Canada, which funds and to a great extent determines the structure and breadth of social programs. It means putting in place the objective standards and transparent accountability mechanisms so people can see for themselves that programs and services are doing what they are supposed to do. Let us consider social policy under eight broad headings: health care, children and their families, social security, education, post-secondary education, justice, municipalities, and seniors.

HEALTH CARE POLICY

We are committed to stabilizing the delivery of all aspects of health care in this province: acute care, chronic care, home care, and other community-based care. We will take the necessary steps to ensure people get the high quality of health care they expect, deserve, and pay for through their taxes.

Our health care system today desperately needs emergency intervention. Patients are falling through the cracks of the system like never before, while our demoralized health care professionals are expressing frustration and burnout. The health care system, like our social sector in general, is under considerable stress and instability. People are asked to endure long waiting periods to see specialists. Rural doctors are hard to recruit and retain, yet we graduate each year a significant number of new doctors. Patients are delayed in receiving care because not enough hospital beds are open to meet the demand. They are asked to pay, out of pocket, for routine ambulance services. Although the need for chronic and home care is rapidly growing, the current system lacks effective mechanisms to assess patients' needs and provide the appropriate kind and quantity of care. The current government has been more a barrier than a promoter of change, and few health care advances have been achieved in recent years without a bitter fight.

There is a general consensus that our health care system is in need of a major overhaul. We cannot continue to cut the most universal and treasured of government services and expect the system to demonstrate enough flexibility to re-adjust. The system can take only so much strain before something gives.

It is time for a government that has its priorities straight on health care delivery. It is time to eliminate unnecessary duplication at the administrative level and commit money back to front-line services. When government is closing emergency wards for lack of money, cutting critical care services for lack of physicians, and forcing health care workers to do more with less, something has to give. Citizens and health care professionals, alike, deserve better. From an economic point of view, we should remember that a job saved in health care is a job in the community. The province must also do a better job of placing pressure on the Government of Canada to restore the money it has mercilessly cut from our health care transfer payments.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

We must consider establishing new arrangements between provinces for reciprocal services mutually beneficial to citizens in both jurisdictions. We must press forward with innovative measures designed to maximize the health care dollars we currently possess.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will eliminate all Community, Hospital, and Long Term Care Health Boards and have the Chief Executive Officer of each Health Care Corporation report directly to the government.
- A PC Government will recognize the generosity of the general public of the province to their health care system through health care foundations, and will affirm the critical role of the foundations in our health care system.
- A PC Government is committed to ensuring health care has the first call on the tax dollar.
- A PC Government will actively, persistently and publicly urge the Government of Canada to restore funding it has cut from health care transfers, and to maintain reasonable health care transfer levels.
- A PC Government will establish performance standards for provincial health care institutions and conduct regular evaluations of these institutions on the basis of these standards; and will publish the results for public scrutiny.
- A PC Government will ensure that citizens of this province who must travel to other provinces for essential medical services they cannot receive here will not have to pay the costs incurred.
- A PC Government will bring in the necessary incentives to recruit and retain the health care professionals we need.
- A PC Government will establish immediately an effective process to streamline assessments for the provision of chronic care and home-based care, and will allocate sufficient funding to ensure such care is provided where needed.

CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

A PC Government will make the protection of children in our province among its highest priorities. We will bring forward measures to protect children, to advocate for children's interests, to strengthen families, and to help individuals reach their full potential.

The family is the backbone of any society, and our children are its future. Society has an obligation to protect the interests of children. The view that it takes a strong community to help raise a child is as valid today as at any time in the past. Government must ensure families have access to public services that complement the community supports necessary to raise children.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

Children frequently find themselves at the mercy of the system, sometimes as wards of the state; but there is no office of government dedicated to looking out for their best interests. It is time to establish an Office of the Children's Advocate, as recommended by the House of Assembly Select Committee on Children's Interests, whose sole purpose is to advocate for the rights of children and to ensure children's best interests are served when they are at the mercy of one part of the system or another.

Government must also recognize its role in responding to the changing needs of families. While family life in the past was generally built on a model of one full-time employed parent and one full-time nurturing parent, today's families are often different from that. By failing to support working parents - especially those whose income is limited - the government has contributed to conditions that produce dysfunctional families. It is time for pro-active measures that will give struggling families the tools they need to successfully nurture their children.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will immediately establish an Office of the Children's Advocate.
- A PC Government will immediately establish a Child and Youth Secretariat, which will function within the government as a coordinating body to integrate all services that affect the lives of children and young people, to ensure consistency, sensitivity, and communication among the various agencies and departments working for children.
- A PC Government will put in place a Family Policy Grid through which all legislation, all regulations, and all government policies will have to pass and whose basic standards they will have to meet before becoming laws or regulations or policy of our government. The Family Policy Grid will ensure our decisions advance the interests of children and strengthen the integrity of the family in our society.
- A PC government will affirm its commitment to family support services through programs that support family resource centres, child care, home care, services for disabled persons, and other resources to help support the families of the working poor.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Government must do more to help those least capable of helping themselves. Government must remove the institutional barriers to individual growth, and work with the community to get people back into the workforce. Government must adopt an activist role in providing innovative measures to help people end their dependency on social assistance. The current government's social services policy is adrift. It's time to stop merely talking of planning and to start acting. Our proposal is to give people realistic information about what they can expect from the social services system, spelling out what we can and cannot do. Our proposal involves lending a helping hand, treating a person with respect, and rewarding those who do their part to help themselves. Our proposal will be realistic in offering people opportunities to learn and upgrade their skills. Our goal is to extend the availability of active employment measures to as many social assistance recipients as possible.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

We must recognize that a blanket solution applied to an individual problem does not work. We must be flexible enough to adapt strategies to fit unique circumstances. There are many people in the province facing barriers to employment. We must provide universal access to employment counseling services. A PC Government will exercise its responsibility by working harder with community groups, business, labour, municipalities, and its own crown agencies to find realistic employment solutions for social assistance recipients. We believe we must balance the interest of the client with that of the taxpayer.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will provide active employment measures that social assistance recipients can choose to access if they desire help to break the dependency cycle.
- A PC Government, in conjunction with the private sector and municipalities, will develop programs to make meaningful work opportunities available for people receiving social assistance.
- A PC Government will seek to deliver federal employment programs that are fully adapted to and integrated with the needs of the province.

EDUCATION

We are committed to providing a high-quality educational experience that is fundamentally child-centred. We believe that the principles of accountability and innovation must guide the decisions of school boards and educators. We will place our priority in primary, elementary, and secondary education at the front line. We will ensure even greater transparency to the public of the decision-making process of school boards.

Education, like health care, must always be at the top of the government's list of priorities. Despite the tremendous upheaval of recent years and the unique and difficult circumstances it has created, our teachers have done a remarkable job in educating our children and serving as role models. In recognizing the need to shift the focus to classroom-based reform, a PC Government will place the interests of children first as it works cooperatively with stakeholders to strengthen the delivery of education. All who hold positions of responsibility in the K-12 system — the classroom teacher, the school board official, the Education Department officials, and the Minister — have an obligation to take account of successes and failures in achieving a high-quality delivery-focused system. It is the government's role to work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the province's school boards to ensure we build on what is working and identify weaknesses that need addressing.

The government has not yet put in place a satisfactory means of assessing the value of the money we are spending on education, either at the classroom level or in terms of administration. We will bring greater accountability to our education system, to ensure people know how effectively their education dollar is being spent. We will further ensure that all school board members are aware of shortcomings and of their obligations to disburse public funds wisely. Since the audits will include auditing of board-

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

related expenditures, they will be subject to the principle that savings from administrative efficiencies must be recommitted to the classroom.

Accountability means applying reliable standards to measure instruction and learning. We will institute performance audits for schools and school boards in the province, and will publish the results so people can see for themselves how schools perform.

The administration of public education must be transparent. We believe school board meetings are public in nature and should be open in all their deliberations to the public. Such openness strengthens the role of parents in the decision-making process. Parents, and taxpayers generally, have a vested interest in ensuring our education system functions effectively. It is the government's obligation to ensure transparency, responsiveness, accountability, and excellence govern the system from the department level to the local level.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will amend legislation to ensure all school board meetings and all voting by school board members is truly public, by mandating that there be provisions made for public observation of all deliberation undertaken by these bodies.
- A PC Government, in consultation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the province's school boards, will establish a standard of learning objectives by grade level, conduct regular performance audits of schools in terms of student performance on basic skills tests in relation to the established standards, and publish the results for public scrutiny.
- A PC Government, drawing on local expertise, will work towards developing a common curriculum for students in the province's schools.
- PC Government will commit all savings from administrative reform to the classroom and teaching services.
- A PC Government will implement a small-schools policy that is sensitive to community needs.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

We are committed to an open and transparent post-secondary education system in the public and private spheres. We will judge both the accountability and the performance of public and private post-secondary institutions against that which is in the best interests of students, employers, and the public at large. We will design a Strategic Plan For Post-Secondary Education that will balance the interests of public policy with respect to post-secondary education with forces of the free market.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

In our province's post-secondary education system today, two approaches function side-by-side: the public system and the private system. Currently, all institutions operate at arms' length from government and separate from one another. The effective delivery of post-secondary education is in the public interest, not only for students and their families, but for the province generally. Government has a duty to foster cooperation among institutions, to ensure a degree of auditing of the institutions it funds, and to satisfy the public that institutions it licenses are secure and reputable. While the current government has been reacting to crises in the college system, citizens expect the government to be pro-active in ensuring the system works, that its elements complement one another, and that students can access the high-quality education they need to maximize the contribution they can make as graduates to their community. The government is responsible to ensure the college system meets the demands of the public, employers, and certainly the students. The challenges demand a broad coordinated approach, aimed at developing a strategic plan for post-secondary college education.

The College of the North Atlantic, recently restructured, has suffered from an erosion of funding and programs in recent years. The public does not know how the College spends the money the province grants it, or whether the administrative changes have produced savings, because the College is operated at arms' length from the Department of Education and is not subject to public scrutiny or adequate auditing. A reduction in course offerings in the public college system has left many to seek private college training. However the government has been even less diligent in monitoring the status and actions of the private colleges, with serious consequences.

A PC Government will be committed to providing stable funding to the University and the College of the North Atlantic, and to ensuring a greater degree of public accountability for the money it provides to these institutions. We will enforce measures to protect the students of private colleges, both financially and academically, in accordance with the specific proposals we announced in October 1998. In ongoing consultation with the educational institutions and the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students, we will ensure post-secondary education is recognized in this province for the opportunities it provides for promoting economic development, attracting investment, and advancing both individuals and our society generally.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will mandate the Department of Education to consult widely within the community at large and among stakeholders in the educational field, including the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students, in the design of a strategic plan for post-secondary college education.
- A PC Government will conduct regular performance audits of the College of the North Atlantic to determine how well we are doing in public post-secondary education; will publish the results for public scrutiny; and will act to ensure a greater degree of auditing of the College and public auditing of Memorial University.
- A PC Government will establish and enforce, in conjunction with the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Career Colleges, an effective mechanism for regularly evaluating the financial and academic integrity of private colleges, and will enforce procedures to secure students against college failures.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

- A PC Government will reform the student aid system in consultation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students, with a view to providing new tax credits for education and allowing students to declare their independent status earlier.
- A PC Government, in view of the importance of education to the economic future of our province and the employability of individuals, will initiate a public debate on the wisdom and means of waiving tuition fees for the first two years of post-secondary education.

JUSTICE

To ensure an effective and reliable justice system, we as a society must provide resources adequate to support our police, our judiciaries, and our corrections system. We must ensure our laws and procedures protect the rights and freedoms of our citizens in a fair and balanced way, protecting citizens from crime, responding to the needs of victims, and promoting the rehabilitation of offenders. The recent Inkpen report points to particular concerns in the area of youth corrections which we must address.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will invest in young offender services focused on early intervention, counselling, family mediation, rehabilitation, and re-integration.
- A PC Government will assess, consult on, and implement as appropriate, proven strategies for crime prevention, victim support, victim-offender mediation, and restorative justice.
- A PC Government is committed to two strong police forces in this province - the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary - and will provide the resources to our police forces to enable them to continue protecting persons and property.
- A PC Government will undertake a review of the legal aid system with a view to reforming the legislation and policies.
- A PC Government will not enter into "gag order" agreements that include prohibitions on the disclosure of the amounts of legal settlements.

MUNICIPALITIES

Municipalities are asking for, and need, a positive dialogue with the government. They need to hear the government commit to stabilize local government, and act on that commitment. The unrestrained downloading of services to the local level in recent years has left municipalities distrustful. Municipalities are looking for a government that will cooperate with them to deal constructively, not destructively, with a falling tax base and debt restructuring.

We must address the debt burden on municipalities in a fair and equitable manner. A PC Government will partner with communities in lending a helping hand. We must work together to re-establish stability and a measure of certainty in the delivery of local government services. A PC Government

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

will work to restore this trust by opening up a new and more honest dialogue.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government, recognizing the struggle municipalities are facing in meeting their obligations to people, will engage in a dialogue that builds a partnership grounded in trust and committed to meeting the local needs of communities.
- A PC Government will explore with municipalities the option of providing grants in lieu of taxes for the municipal services its facilities use, including fair grants for water services.
- A PC Government will not force amalgamation on any municipality against the wishes of its residents.
- A PC Government will explore with municipalities the opportunities for enhancing municipal autonomy.
- A PC Government, in recognition of the importance of the agricultural industry in our province, will maintain the freeze on agricultural land sales for non-agricultural purposes; but, in permitting such sales for agricultural purposes, will ensure provisions are instituted so that the owners receive fair market value for the land.

SENIORS

Many seniors face special challenges. Many, faced with special expenses, are struggling to live on fixed incomes. Many face abuse and neglect that often goes unnoticed. Many have special health care needs. Seniors must be reassured that their government will be there to help them in their time of need. Not only in *The Year of the Senior* but at all times, the senior members of our society deserve our respect and our support.

Our population is aging and government must give seniors' issues greater attention. A PC Government will shine a spotlight on the special concerns of seniors by establishing a Secretariat Responsible for Seniors' Issues. Our seniors need an identifiable agency within government to research, plan, and coordinate innovative programs and services.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will establish a Seniors' Secretariat to address the unique issues facing our older citizens.
- A PC Government will provide a reasonable increase in public service pensions.

3. Resource Management

The resources of Newfoundland and Labrador belong to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and their provincial government is the guardian of those resources. When they are developed, they must be developed in a sustainable manner in such a way that they generate maximum revenues, jobs, spinoff benefits, and investment opportunities here in this province.

FISHERIES

FOR THE RECORD:

- A national agreement to discuss renegotiating constitutional roles and responsibilities in the fisheries, achieved by our Party in the late eighties, was subsequently quashed by the Liberals at a time when it would have benefitted us most. A PC Government will aggressively pursue a Canada-Newfoundland Fisheries Agreement providing for a joint decision-making process to give the province a meaningful say in decisions on fisheries management, which have a major impact on our economy and social fabric.
- A PC Government will establish a permanent independent fisheries research institute to conduct basic research and to monitor federal activity by analyzing their data and methods.
- A PC Government will ensure that fish landed in Newfoundland and Labrador will be processed in Newfoundland and Labrador processing facilities to the maximum extent possible.
- A PC Government will support the shift in practice from issuing individual transferable quotas (ITQs) to issuing individual quotas (IQs).
- A PC Government will work to extend Canada's fisheries jurisdiction to include the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap.
- A PC Government will restore the Fisheries Loan Board to the Department of Fisheries.
- A PC Government, in recognition of the growing importance of the fledgling aquaculture industry to our economy, will support research and development for the aquaculture industry.

PETROLEUM

FOR THE RECORD:

- The Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board, established by PC governments in the mid-80s under the Atlantic Accord enacting legislation, is required by law to consult with and in many instances to allow itself to be directed or influenced by the province regarding offshore benefits decisions. A PC Government will maximize the benefits to this province of offshore petroleum development by taking full advantage of these powers and by holding the C-NOPB to its responsibilities by law to maximize local benefits.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

- A PC Government will explore opportunities to develop and maximize benefits from our natural gas resources.
- A PC Government will pressure the Government of Canada to entrench in the Constitution, as promised, the provisions of the Atlantic Accord guaranteeing this province a meaningful say in the development of our offshore petroleum resources.

CHURCHILL POWER

The Upper Churchill contract is an arrangement entered into by Newfoundland and Labrador because the Government of Canada would not provide a corridor to get Churchill power outside our province to markets elsewhere. Ottawa did not treat Newfoundland and Labrador as it treated other provinces: it denied us a power corridor even though it provided an electricity corridor for prairie electricity and an oil and natural gas corridor for Alberta. Ottawa's refusal to grant us this corridor allowed Québec to exercise a geographical imperative it would not otherwise have had. Ottawa's decision to deny Newfoundland and Labrador the rights it had extended to other provinces is what resulted in the deal we got.

The Upper Churchill deal is in our past, but it is also in our future: another 41 years remains in the contract before it expires. Because it is Ottawa's failure to extend common rights to Newfoundland and Labrador that caused this deal, therefore it is our position that Ottawa must come to the table prepared to look at ways to fix the deal; and the only meaningful way to make amends for the wrong is through compensation.

The pursuit of development of projects on the Churchill River involves three parties: the federal government, ourselves, and Québec. Therefore, it will be our position that all future discussions will proceed only with three parties at the table. Convoluted arrangements to mask the true impact of the Upper Churchill deal will not address the fundamental inequity of that contract or compensate us for the losses we have incurred because of Ottawa's decision to deny us rights other provinces enjoy in Confederation.

Our fight is not with the Government or people of Québec. It never was. It's an issue of fair and equitable treatment of the provinces of Canada. It's an issue of Newfoundland and Labrador's place in Confederation. Ottawa must come to the table to right the wrongs it foisted on our province, and it should take that step now to mark the fiftieth anniversary of our entry into Confederation.

MINING

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will support mineral exploration by amending the appropriate legislation to restore to exploration companies the right to appeal decisions on leases.
- A PC Government will bring forward a legislative amendment to end the 10-year holiday on royalties that now applies to Voisey's Bay development; and will negotiate a graduated royalty rate for this project with a basic floor royalty and an escalating-royalty schedule that is linked to the market prices of minerals.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

- A PC Government will require that all Voisey's Bay nickel be fully smelted and refined in this province.
- A PC Government will negotiate with the Government of Canada to minimize the negative impact on equalization payments of Voisey's Bay-related revenues.

ENVIRONMENT

Newfoundland and Labrador has learned hard lessons about the importance of protecting our environment and developing our natural resources sustainably. Pollution and improper waste disposal can threaten our health. Unsound harvesting practices for fish, wood, and fresh water resources can threaten our economy and way of life. As citizens of this province, we are trustees of its resources and it is our obligation to protect them. It is also important that we preserve our right to access and enjoy those resources on a recreational basis.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will enshrine in legislation, as an Outdoor Bill of Rights, the public right of access to our outdoor areas and resources where they can enjoy traditional activities such as hiking, hunting, angling, and boating.
- A PC Government will implement an outdoor education and protection program, modeled on the Junior Forest Warden and 4-H programs, to inform the public of the consequences of pollution and poor conservation practices, and to promote collective and individual voluntary action to protect our outdoors, especially its sensitive ecosystems.
- A PC Government will support hatcheries and fish re-stocking initiatives to nurture a healthy supply of fish for freshwater rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams which can be fished freely by the public.
- A PC Government will commit not to introduce a license for trout fishing.

FORESTRY

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will conduct a thorough regular wood supply analysis; produce a detailed comprehensive forest management plan based on thorough research of all forestry zones; and take action to enforce sustainable forestry practices and to ensure adequate reforestation.
- A PC Government, working with the forestry companies, will support silviculture and thinning programs at a level sufficient to ensure the sustainable development of the resource.
- A PC Government, in recognition of the need to ensure an orderly transition to new technologies only after they are deemed to be environmentally friendly, will place a moratorium

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

on the introduction of further mechanical tree harvesters pending a thorough environmental assessment of the impact of harvesting technologies on our forests.

TOURISM

The tourism industry is all about selling Newfoundland and Labrador - its beauty, its people, its history, its cultures, its lifestyle, its attractions, and its events - to visitors both inside and outside Newfoundland and Labrador. While tourism for the most part involves private sector ventures, there is a tremendous leadership role for the provincial government to play - especially in the industry's formative years - to coordinate events and promotional campaigns. The full potential of the tourism industry has not yet been realized in Newfoundland and Labrador, when we compare it to other tourist destinations. As we look to capture new markets and lure even more visitors, we must achieve a happy marriage between the public and private sectors at the coordination level so the climate is right for individual private tourism enterprises to grow, prosper, and create new jobs.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will take a coordinating role, in conjunction with Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador and other provincial organizations and municipalities, in identifying major tourism opportunities, promoting our province as an ideal, world-class tourist destination, and providing generic support as businesses work to capitalize on those opportunities.

WATER EXPORT

In most parts of the world, fresh water is becoming more precious than gold. The global market for bottled water is enormous and growing. Fresh water is yet another natural resource that Newfoundland and Labrador has in abundance, and yet another threatened resource that we must manage properly to maximize local benefits. We must not export fresh water from our province unless it is first bottled and labeled here, creating much-needed jobs and wealth in Newfoundland and Labrador. Because of new trade laws, it is critical that our province not set the precedent of exporting our fresh water in bulk form.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will introduce legislation to ensure all fresh water exported from Newfoundland and Labrador is first fully processed in Newfoundland and Labrador, and to forbid the export in bulk form of fresh water from this province.

4. Accountable Government

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians expect their government to manage their public affairs in a transparent manner. People demand to be consulted, but more importantly they expect to have their interests actually reflected in public policy. People demand accountability, responsibility, and openness — principles that will guide the action of a PC Government.

Good government means listening — but listening is meaningless if it fails to lead to action. A government that keeps asking your opinion but does nothing about it is irresponsible and arrogant. Real participation gets results, while half-hearted listening is just an exercise in public relations. Where the current government consults to avoid doing anything, a PC Government will act on what we are told.

A PC Government will act on the principle that responsible government begins with cabinet accountability and ends with legislative review. Government departments must be prepared to have their activities openly scrutinized by the public. We can achieve this through a series of reforms that will minimize the cost of accessing public information. People have a right to know concisely and directly how their money is being spent. People want the truth and we plan on giving people the truth.

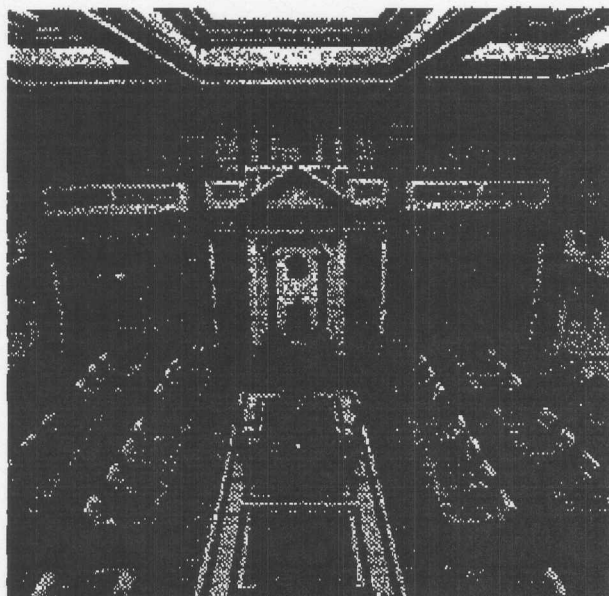
FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will release to the public, within 30 days of receiving it, every government-commissioned report by a panel, review committee, task force, consultation process, or commission; and we will indicate at that point our course of action on the recommendations.
- A PC Government will maintain funding of the Queen's Printer at a level that ensures the public has ready and inexpensive access to all government publications and performance audits; and we will ensure publications and audits are available, to the greatest extent possible, on the Internet.
- A PC Government will enact sunset clauses in all legislation establishing government programs, to require that each program pass a review and prove its value before being continued beyond a date specified in the clause.
- A PC Government will mandate that all Cabinet Ministers must prepare and submit to the House of Assembly an annual departmental report.
- A PC Government will establish a new *Freedom of Information Act* to reduce the cost of accessing information, to reduce the wait for information, and to ensure Ministers actually provide the information requested where that information belongs in the public domain; and we will strike a committee of the House of Assembly to solicit public input and make recommendations regarding its content.

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

- A PC Government will create a new *Privacy Act* that protects citizens and consumers against the unwarranted collection and use of information on citizens; and will strike a committee of the House of Assembly to solicit public input into this process.
- A PC Government will immediately reinstate an Office of the Ombudsman, eliminated by the previous administration in 1989, to ensure people have at their disposal a powerful, arms'-length officer of the legislature with the power to subpoena witnesses and demand documents in pursuing complaints about the treatment citizens receive from their government.
- A PC Government will guide its actions on matters that affect the legitimate interests of Aboriginal People by ensuring that full and open consultation and consensus-building form the basis of discussion in the development of joint interests.
- A PC Government will restore the integrity of the *Public Tender Act*, which the government recently weakened considerably.
- A PC Government will restore the integrity of the Public Service Commission as an independent body mandated to make impartial recommendations on hiring and promotion for the public service.

5. Parliamentary Reform



No institution is more important in preserving the power of the people to direct their own affairs than their parliament. In this province, that parliament is the House of Assembly - *The People's House*. Too often, the people for whom the House functions feel it is distant from their concerns and not open to their input and influence. Too often, Members of the House of Assembly are thwarted in their attempts to bring the influence of the people to bear on matters brought before the legislature. It is time to reform our parliament - to tear back the veil that hides its operations from the public, and to make it more accessible to the influence of the people the Members are elected, individually and collectively, to serve.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will have a Cabinet of not more than 12 Ministers.
- A PC Government will utilize the Legislation Review Committee process in the development of legislation, and release each final Bill to the Members of the House of Assembly for review at least 30 days prior to a legislative vote on its passage.
- A PC Government will limit the use of closure, which has been used excessively in recent years to restrict parliamentary debate.
- A PC Government will set mandatory opening dates for the fall and spring sessions of the House of Assembly.
- A PC Government will appoint an independent commissioner to review the remuneration of Members of the House of Assembly.
- A PC Government will be committed to televising the proceedings of the House of Assembly so the people of the province are better informed on the actions of their Members of the House of Assembly and of their government.

6. Rural Revitalization

Newfoundland and Labrador is hemorrhaging as tens of thousands of our people leave their home province to find jobs and build lives elsewhere, not by choice but of necessity. Our population, which once was growing by leaps and bounds, is now in sharp decline as the exodus of people escalates. With each passing year, the net loss of our people to other provinces and countries grows worse. The sustained resettlement of the past decade is not just one big tragedy written in cold statistics, but tens of thousands of individual family tragedies that have left an indelible mark on our psyche. Even today, parents watch their children move away to find work, seniors say last good-byes to their grandchildren, and neighbours watch their friends board up and walk away from homes that cannot be sold. This is not exaggerated; this is not isolated; *this is reality*.

The worsening outmigration is not just a personal tragedy, but an economic tragedy as well. As people leave, towns die. Businesses lose their consumer base; municipal governments lose their tax base; schools lose their children; and the province loses revenues, transfers, and equalization. Dying towns with eroding infrastructure find it difficult to attract new investment. Many of those leaving are the young skilled individuals whose talents we need to grow the local economy. As our young people of labour-force age leave, there are fewer working people to finance social programs on which many seniors are compelled to rely. As the hemorrhaging continues, the consequences of decline grow worse and the path to recovery becomes more steep.

For a decade, Newfoundland and Labrador has languished under governments either unwilling or unable to turn around the trend of population erosion and rural decline. Empty promises have not worked. Aimless talk has not worked. Hokey schemes have not worked. Some people have thrown up their arms and said nothing will work. But we do not agree that rural decline is the way it has to be.

A PC Government is committed to the revitalization of rural Newfoundland and Labrador. We are committed to taking a new approach that will replace the failed schemes of the past decade - an approach grounded in sound principles that work. Let's review those strategies from the previous pages of this document.

FOR THE RECORD:

- A PC Government will cut the taxes that kill business growth and jobs. We will eliminate the payroll tax that punishes companies according to how many people they hire. We will reduce the personal income tax rate so consumers have more money to spend. More money in the pockets of consumers and businesses is a direct stimulus to greater local economic activity. A progressive tax regime will encourage investors to bring their money and their families to Newfoundland and Labrador. Investor spending means real growth.
- A PC Government will end the practice of providing loans or grants to businesses and will eliminate the EDGE program, which have benefitted a few businesses at the expense of the majority of local businesses whose earnings go to pay for these unfair subsidies. It is time to support success through lower taxes instead of subsidizing failure with tens of millions of

GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS

public dollars in exclusive subsidies.

- A PC Government, in making health care our first priority and in spending effectively and accountably, will shore up the rural health care system which has been failing so badly. By offering fair remuneration to health care professionals and boosting emphasis on home care and community-based care, we will make the rural health care system acceptable to residents and attractive to investors.
- A PC Government will take action on classroom-education reform and make post-secondary education more accessible and affordable to our young people. Better-educated graduates with diminished debt loads will be in a better position to stay in and invest in their home communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- A PC Government will pursue new ways of helping people escape the 'welfare trap' through meaningful work activities.
- A PC Government will work cooperatively with municipalities to help them meet their obligations to their citizens. Addressing municipal challenges is an investment in the stability of our towns and their infrastructure, and will encourage residents to stay and others to invest.
- A PC Government will demand the local processing, to the greatest extent possible, of our resources - fisheries, petroleum, mineral, water, and so forth - thereby increasing local employment and economic growth opportunities.
- A PC Government will use its power under the Canada-Newfoundland Offshore Petroleum Board enacting legislation to encourage greater local benefits from offshore petroleum developments.
- A PC Government will revise legislation affecting mineral exploration companies, removing a deterrent to future prospecting activities and thereby supporting a traditional Newfoundland and Labrador growth industry.
- A PC Government will invest in silviculture activities to replenish our forest resources while also employing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

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