

a Danny Williams Led Government

# REAL

## Leadership

**The New Approach**

**Our Blueprint  
for the Future**

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## Danny Williams' Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador

Almost three years ago, my family and I decided that the time was right for me to give something back to the province that has given me so much. I want to address the real issues that are important to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Issues such as job creation, the economy, outmigration, health care, education, the fishery, and rural development.

I want to ensure that people have a good job and proper access to health care when they need it. I believe that having a proper education is a right, not a privilege. I believe our resources should be developed in a way that creates jobs for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians first, not only when it is economically feasible. These issues are important to you and are the focus of the Progressive Conservative Party's campaign and platform.



I want to be honest with people from the very beginning. The problems facing this province are numerous and complex. They didn't occur overnight but are the result of years of neglect and mismanagement. Similarly, they can't be fixed overnight. But make no mistake about it: they can be fixed, and under a Danny Williams led government, they will be fixed.

I've spent the last two years growing a team and formulating policies that I believe will help Newfoundland and Labrador so that we can begin to control our own destiny and achieve our true potential. These solutions are not pie in the sky proposals. They are solid fundamentals that I have acquired over my 30 years in the private sector. And just as they worked in the private sector, they will work in government.

This plan is my vision of where I want to lead the province over the next four to eight years. Our plan recognizes the fiscal challenges facing Newfoundland and Labrador, but also embraces the potential embodied in this wonderful place we all call home - our human resources, our natural resources and our wonderful culture and rural way of life. We will make significant achievements in our first mandate, and after eight years we will see a rejuvenated and re-energized province, poised to lead this country.

I was not surprised the Royal Commission on *Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada* acknowledged that we are facing serious problems in this province and that it is time for a change. In fact, in a news release issued by the Royal Commission, it states that the province is saying "No to the Status Quo," and that it is time to "put the province's fiscal house in order." This Liberal government has done an abysmal job of managing this province and this must stop - the time for change is now. The people are looking for new leadership, real leadership and a new approach to guide this province into the future.

That's what I have to offer and that's what my team has to offer. We are confident that given the opportunity, we will provide the leadership and change which the people desperately want and which this province desperately needs.

Danny Williams





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# The New Approach

## JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

Our goal is to grow our economy and provide new job opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our focus is to put more money in the pockets of those who need it most. We will also target growth in small and medium business, IT, tourism, and the fishery. Focus will also be placed on receiving more benefits from the development of our natural resources.

### Key Commitments – The Economy:

- Commit \$5 million annually to phase in a Low Income Tax Reduction program that will reduce personal income tax for low-income taxpayers, and eliminate it altogether for single-tax filers earning up to \$12,500, and families earning up to \$20,000.
- Equalization of child benefits for low-income families so that families will not lose income support for their children if they move from social assistance to the workforce.
- Index the tax-free Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit, the Low Income Seniors' Benefit, and the Low Income Tax Reduction Credit to the Consumer Price Index.
- Increase the small business tax credit from \$200,000 to \$300,000 over 4 years.
- Eliminate the total capital and current account deficit by 2008.

### Key Commitments – Small and Medium Business Development:

- Implement strong and effective policies to promote small and medium size business growth and development.
- Create a regulatory regime that is efficient, flexible and transparent while maintaining high regulatory standards.
- Use net economic benefit criteria rather than strict acquisition cost to evaluate bids for government procurement contracts.
- Start a supplier development program to help local firms supply quality goods and services at competitive costs to government departments and agencies.
- Make use of Research and Development (R&D) partnerships and tax incentives to encourage greater private and public investment in research and development.
- Improve tax incentives for those who make long-term venture capital investments in medium and small enterprises, and partner with Credit Unions to improve access to capital in smaller communities.
- Establish strong business advocacy units in government and give them the capacity to design business development policies and the mandate to co-ordinate business-related activities across government departments and agencies.
- Help new businesses during their start-up and early growth phase with information about management, financing, marketing, quality standards, and suitable technology, as well as assistance to guide them through national, provincial and local regulatory processes.
- Oversee, through the Premier's office, the growth and development of the internal business of government and the external business of the private sector, including the formulation of a detailed plan for development of all business related departments and activities of government in order to maximize efficient use of our limited resources.



### **Key Commitments - Tourism, IT:**

- Commit \$5 million to tourism marketing in the first year, with increases of \$1 million annually until provincial marketing expenditures match spending in other Atlantic provinces.
- In addition to the 20% annual increase to the tourism marketing budget, we will commit a further \$1 million specifically for the development of winter and adventure tourism marketing initiatives.
- Develop a 10-year strategy to grow the IT sector.
- Appoint a Chief Information/Innovation Officer who will be responsible for enhancing and streamlining service delivery, reforming management and operational IT practices throughout government, and bridging the role of government in public service delivery with the private sector.
- Convene a panel of rural IT experts and practitioners to develop a short-term, medium-term and long-term strategy for rural IT development, both as an enabler for other development and as an industry sector in its own right.
- Commission research to determine IT opportunities for rural communities and work with rural development and business agencies to ensure that the findings are disseminated to people in all regions.
- Make greater use of information technologies to make government more responsive and accountable, and improve services to people.
- Advance the use of computing and high-speed digital networks in every region of the province.

### **Key Commitments – Rural Development:**

- Establish a Rural Secretariat as the focal point for government to work with local and regional partners to build strong and dynamic communities.
- Encourage adding value to natural resources, and complement these core economic activities with related services.
- Support small and medium sized businesses to create and retain long-term jobs.
- Keep industrial benefits from resource developments in regions adjacent to the resource.
- Use strategic tax incentives to spearhead new economic development activities, and local ownership, that diversify rural economies and create long-term jobs.
- Maintain and expand infrastructure and other essential economic development tools, such as transportation, roads, bridges, airports and wharves.
- Coordinate a partnership approach with the federal government on rural issues.
- Work with local and federal partners to put in place an action plan for rural development that ensures our small towns and rural regions are viable, healthy and vibrant.
- Help communities and regions identify opportunities for business expansion and increase the competitiveness of local companies

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Newfoundland and Labrador is home to some of the richest natural resources in the world including oil and gas, minerals and fisheries. Our problem has consistently been that our resources have been either under-developed or worse still, developed for the benefit of those outside of the Province. The giveaways must stop and they must stop now! We cannot afford and will not tolerate our resources or their economic value primarily benefiting those outside of Newfoundland and Labrador.

## Key Commitments – Mines and Energy:

- Either restructure Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro as an energy company, or create a new energy corporation with a mandate to retain equity in the Province's oil and gas resources. This will be done on a go forward basis. As well, this corporation would be mandated to work with the major oil companies to develop natural gas as a competitively priced alternative energy source for the Province, and for transportation to Canadian and U.S. markets.
- Seek to acquire the federal government's shares in Hibernia.
- Make better use of the Atlantic Accord to maximize benefits to the Province from offshore oil and gas exploration and production. We will also pursue opportunities to expand refining capacity and to develop a petrochemical industry in the Province.
- Use the powers the Province has under the Atlantic Accord to ensure that businesses and residents on the West and South Coasts benefit from oil and natural gas development in the Laurentian Basin. We will promote port improvements and private sector joint ventures to make sure the West and South Coasts have the capability to service offshore oil and gas exploration and production activities in the Laurentian Basin.
- Encourage the development of smaller marginal offshore oil and gas fields to extend existing fields production profile beyond 2010.
- Facilitate the development of the Lower Churchill to encourage economic development within the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Require value-added processing of natural resources where economically feasible.

## Key Commitments – The Fishery:

- Aggressively pursue the establishment of a joint management regime with the federal government.
- Organize an extensive campaign aimed at pushing the federal government to secure custodial management of the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks.
- Increase opportunities in aquaculture by committing \$2 million in new funding for scientific research to identify potential new locations, develop technologies, and cultivate robust stocks of existing and new species, so that the industry can produce better quality products and receive higher prices.
- Establish a Fisheries Science and Management Institute at MUN that will provide scientific, technical and economic support for sustainable development of Newfoundland and Labrador marine fishery and aquaculture.
- Work with industry to develop and implement a comprehensive, long-term marketing strategy aimed at promoting the Province's seafood industry with a goal of increasing sales in world markets.
- Undertake research and establish links with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, other federal and provincial agencies, fish harvesters, and experts around the world to provide decision-makers with the research-based information they need to develop sound fishery management policy.
- Require value-added processing where it is economically feasible.
- A Progressive Conservative government will upgrade the *Quality Assurance Program* to include a mandatory quality control system for handling fish and seafood products intended for export that meets the highest international standards for food quality and safety.
- Promote the utilization of a variety of marine species in food processing, as well as new industrial uses of marine products in pharmaceuticals, biomedicines, and other chemical products.

- Form partnerships with industry to implement an international procurement program to secure primary seafood products for local seafood processing plants.

### **Key Commitments – Agriculture and Agrifoods:**

- Design and implement a comprehensive agrifoods strategy that addresses the future growth and sustainability of this important industry in the province.
- Invest \$1 million over four years in research and development to foster the diversification and commercialization of livestock and crops.
- Increase forage and grain production as an effective way to lower costs and encourage higher dairy and meat production.
- Invest \$1 million to increase and improve the number of cold storage facilities, to enable producers to store and sell fresh Newfoundland and Labrador produce year round.
- Develop financing products that provide assistance to farmers for improvement and expansion of farms, and to agrifood enterprises for processing, distribution and marketing of products.
- Provide training opportunities for farmers and workers through workshops, seminars and farm exchange programs.
- Create an economic climate that encourages private sector venture capital.
- Equip producers with the tools and market information they need to sell their products at home and abroad.
- Significant agricultural opportunities exist in Labrador, yet are undeveloped. We will work with industry in Labrador to identify real opportunities for growth in that region and commit to the growth and development of agriculture in Labrador.

## **HEALTH**

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians want access to quality health care when they need it.

A Progressive Conservative government is committed to a universally accessible publicly funded and accountable health care system.

### **Key commitments:**

- Employ more doctors and nurses in under-served areas of the province.
- Provide transitional financing, cost-shared with the federal government, to ensure access to a primary health care provider 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Establish primary health care clinics to provide accessible front-line care to people across the Province, so services are well coordinated and teams of health professionals work together to meet people's needs.
- Limit the waiting times for diagnostic and treatment procedures to meet standards deemed acceptable by physicians.
- Place diagnostic and treatment equipment in regions of the province where it is most needed.
- Reduce child poverty by eliminating or reducing provincial income taxes for low-income earners.
- Integrate personal wellness, physical education and physical activity into a broader health promotion and disease prevention program across all age groups.
- Create a client-centred case management program that focuses on teaching about and monitoring medications, and assists in accessing the psychiatric services, primary medical care, occupational therapy, counseling and other services they need.



- Set up a professionally staffed crisis support service for individuals experiencing acute psychological distress.
- Seek restoration of federal transfers for health and social programs to the 1994/95 level adjusted for inflation, and push the federal government to build indexes into the Canada Health and Social Transfer that reflect provincial differences in population density, population ageing, population growth, as well as differences in cost and ability to pay.
- Establish a *Health Quality Council* made up of recognized experts to provide objective and timely advice in providing the highest possible quality care for the people of the Province.
- Fund an Internet-based health and wellness information network to help people make better informed health decisions.
- Develop opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to participate in organized sport through recreational programs for athletes, coaches and officials.

## SENIORS

Ours seniors have given so much to this province and asked for so little in return. It's time for government to show that our seniors' contributions to society are valued, appreciated and respected. We support seniors' efforts to live full, active and independent lives. Our focus will be to help seniors enjoy the comfort of living in their own homes, and have access to quality, affordable health care.

### **Key commitments:**

- Develop a strategy to upgrade long-term care facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Redirect spending to increase supportive housing alternatives for seniors and expand home care services.
- Ensure seniors have adequate income to meet their basic needs by reducing taxes, and introducing a special needs assistance program of up to \$250 to assist with home heating cost for low-income earners.
- Spend an additional \$1 million to protect more seniors from high or catastrophic drug costs.
- Advocate for a national home care plan and a national pharmacare plan to help seniors cope with the escalating costs of home care and prescription drugs.
- Establish a *Division of Aging and Seniors* within the Department of Health and Community Services that coordinates programs and services for seniors across government.
- Appoint a Provincial Advisory Council on Aging.
- Increase the number of professionals working with seniors.

## EDUCATION

Our children represent our future. A quality education is the single most important tool we can provide to ensure their personal success and the success of the province. Our education system must help students achieve their full potential. It must acknowledge that students have different and sometimes conflicting needs while still providing everyone with the opportunity to learn.

### **Key Commitments:**

- Establish a Division of Early Childhood Learning within the Department of Education, which will be a centre of expertise and a focal point for information on early learning.
- Re-assign redundant teaching units to cap class sizes in the primary grades at 25 students, to be phased in by grade level over three years starting with kindergarten; the cap will be extended to elementary classes beginning with grade four in 2008.

- Develop a capital and maintenance financing plan for schools.
- Implement a Provincial Literacy and Numeracy Plan to help students who need support to achieve age-related levels of literacy and numeracy in the primary and elementary grades. The plan will also set specific standards and targets for school districts to achieve national norms in literacy and numeracy by 2010.
- Commit \$2 million over four years towards upgrading the school bus fleet with a goal of reducing the number of buses that are more than 10 years old.
- Introduce a mandatory Newfoundland and Labrador history and culture course in the school curriculum.
- Establish a code of conduct to ensure proper student behaviour at school. We will also provide support to teachers and principals to reduce disruptive behaviour.
- Develop a planned and sequential health and physical education program to develop a lifelong commitment to regular exercise, proper diet and control of stress.
- Implement a multi-year program to ensure all students are computer and Internet literate by the time they graduate from high school. We will also provide support for enhanced school Information Technology as well as distance education.
- Reinvest savings from population decline into programs and services to ensure that all children have access to a quality education.
- Identify students who have special needs and provide support for schools to reduce the need for bureaucratic assessment processes.
- Expand distance education offerings to broaden the curriculum and facilitate excellence in learning for high school students.

## **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

A student shouldn't be precluded from obtaining an education because of financial constraints. In order to keep our young people in the province, government also has an obligation to ensure for every post-secondary opportunity for our youth and help new graduates find employment. While our plan is to grow our economy to create jobs for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, we will target support for new graduates.

### **Key Commitments:**

- Implement a tuition freeze at Memorial University.
- Make the remission process more efficient and user friendly for students.
- Eliminate and reduce taxes for low-income students.
- Offset increased operating costs and lost revenue from previous tuition cuts to Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic, so they can maintain the current level and quality of programs.
- Introduce a loan remission program and needs-based grants that will make post-secondary education accessible and affordable for all qualified students.
- Create an incentive program through a business income tax credit for employers to recruit new graduates.
- Work with the federal government to improve student financial assistance to better support students in need and ensure effective implementation of the Canada Student Grants, for students with disabilities.
- Introduce more courses in information and communications technology.
- Encourage post-secondary educational institutions to offer courses through extension of services, distance education and the Internet.

- Double student representations on the Board of Regents at Memorial University to ensure students have a greater voice in university affairs.

## **CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES**

Creative artists and cultural industries contribute immensely to the quality of life for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Artistic expressions and cultural activities celebrate our history, our lives, and our accomplishments, and we will make it a priority to keep this skilled and creative talent in the Province. A Progressive Conservative government will recognize the social and economic benefits of creative artists and cultural industries, and acknowledge a public obligation to encourage and support their success and growth in all regions of the Province.

### **Key Commitments:**

- Provide start up funding of up to \$1 million to establish a film school at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook.
- Work with the industry to bring greater stability to the conditions under which creative people work, such as using the tax system to allow income averaging from one year to the next, helping to provide affordable housing and work spaces for artists, and leveraging private sector support for artists and cultural infrastructure.
- Partner with the federal and municipal governments and with the cultural community to secure adequate, predictable, and long-term public investment in creative and cultural enterprises.
- Increase the presence of cultural content in the school curriculum and foster links between artists and students in the school environment.

## **LABRADOR**

For far too long, the people, resources and potential of Labrador have been ignored and excluded from decision-making processes of the province. We can no longer tolerate this atmosphere of exclusion, and we must recognize that Labrador will play a pivotal role in the future success of this Province. We must create meaningful employment opportunities, optimize resource benefits and develop infrastructure that results in a stronger, more vibrant economy.

### **Key Commitments:**

- Complete construction of the Trans-Labrador Highway to facilitate economic development opportunities across Labrador.
- Facilitate the development of the Lower Churchill to encourage economic development within the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Aggressively market the base in Goose Bay to European countries in an effort to ensure future viability.
- Convene a team of provincial officials, National Defense department officials and the elected representatives of the area to develop a strategy to keep Goose Bay at the fore of NATO military training activity.
- Position a senior official from the Department of Mines and Energy in Labrador West, to oversee the development and growth opportunities in the region.
- Develop the agricultural opportunities existing in Labrador.



## **SELF-RELIANT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

A Progressive Conservative government will not accept or ignore the unequal socio-economic conditions in aboriginal communities. We will establish relationships that are built on equality and respect, and where aboriginal people can fulfill their desire to become more self-reliant and exercise greater responsibility for the well being of their communities.

### **Key Commitments:**

- A Progressive Conservative government will work in partnership with aboriginal communities and the federal government to:
  - Resolve aboriginal land claims.
  - Recognize the right of aboriginal communities to exercise genuine control over their own affairs.
  - Encourage and assist aboriginal economic and community development to secure a more prosperous and self-sufficient futures.
  - Encourage and support aboriginal culture.
  - Increase the participation and success of aboriginal people in post-secondary education and training.
  - Establish a plan, including public sector internships, to ensure that aboriginal people acquire the knowledge and skills required for effective government of their communities.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

In Newfoundland and Labrador, there remains a serious gap between the transportation system we have and the transportation system we require to facilitate business growth and competitiveness. Our geographic isolation from the national highway system and our reliance on inefficient and expensive modes of transportation is the single greatest impediment to economic development in all regions of the Province.

### **Key Commitments:**

- Seek federal participation in developing a long-term, comprehensive transportation strategy for the Province that provides for inter-provincial and international trade and travel by direct connection to destinations in Canada and throughout the North American Free Trade area.
- Develop a comprehensive multi-year plan for maintenance and upgrading of highways and secondary roads.
- Examine the feasibility of building a fixed link across the Strait of Belle Isle in order to merge the provincial highway system with the North American Highway system, and developing the full economic potential of Labrador.
- Pursue with the federal government the designation of Marine Atlantic as an essential service.

## **RESPONSIBLE AND RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT**

The time has come in this province to put our fiscal house in order. Though we will rely upon increasing revenues, it will take more than increased revenues to achieve this goal. It will also

require sound fiscal management of government's current expenses. Our fiscal policies will keep a tight rein on government spending and orient new spending to areas that enhance economic growth.

### **Key Commitments:**

- Strengthen the Public Tendering Act.
- Introduce a new *Transparency and Accountability Act*.
- Require departments and crown agencies to report financial information on a basis consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP).
- Implement new procurement of goods and services and capital works policies including: open and effective competition; value for money assessed on the basis of net economic benefit to the Province as well as acquisition cost; a simplified tendering process; participation of local business and industry; environmental protection; and, ethical conduct and fair dealing.
- Make the Government Purchasing Agency independent.
- Restore a significant, independent role to the House of Assembly by: electing an independent speaker; setting up legislative committees in key policy areas; appointing a special committee to ensure proper scrutiny and public discussion of federal proposals; amending the Elections Act to require a by-election to be called within 60 days of a vacancy and held within 90 days of a vacancy.
- Limitations will be set on political contributions by a person, corporation, or union.
- Legislation will be introduced regarding guidelines for spending in leadership campaigns.
- Provincial elections will be held on fixed dates.
- Set and publish content rules for government advertising that will stop the use of public funds for political advertising.
- Develop legislation for the registration of lobbyists operating in this Province.
- Proclaim new Freedom of Information legislation which will include amendments that will clearly identify information that should be in the public domain, including cabinet documents, and will require full and prompt disclosure of the information to the public.
- Release to the public every government-commissioned report within 30 days of receiving it, indicate the action government will take on a report's recommendations within 60 days, and ensure prompt public access to all government reports in hard copy and on the Internet.

## **FEDERAL – PROVINCIAL RELATIONS**

The federal government's policies and practices have seriously impeded this province's economic and social development. Through an unjust equalization program and clawback formula, we lose the lion's share of the royalties from our non-renewable resources. Funding for health care and education have been drastically cut. Many of our natural resources that are controlled by Ottawa have been grossly mismanaged, especially our fishery. The time has long since passed to forge a new partnership with the Government of Canada in which we have a greater role in controlling our own destiny. We need to work together in a cooperative manner with an emphasis on putting the people of Newfoundland and Labrador on an equal footing with the rest of Canada. That equal footing does not exist today, but we will work to change this.

### **Key Commitments:**

- We will establish the Newfoundland and Labrador Office of Federal – Provincial Relations in Ottawa. Some areas of focus will include:

- Health transfers, home care and pharmacare
- Post-secondary transfers
- Changes in offshore ownership and management
- Transferring Hibernia shares to the province
- Custodial management
- Joint fisheries management
- Equalization reform and removal of the clawback
- A highways agreement, including a fixed link across the Strait of Belle
- Development of the Lower Churchill
- International marketing of the military base in Goose Bay



# 1

## A Job Creating Economy

"When you think of real world issues, perhaps one of the greatest is a person's need for meaningful employment. My background is in job creation, economic development and negotiation, and that's probably the greatest skill I have to offer to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Our province has so much to offer through its people, bountiful natural resources, culture and rural way of life. It frustrates me that our potential has never been truly realized. We gave away our fish to foreign countries, we continue to give away our shrimp to other provinces, we give our hydroelectricity to Quebec, we're about to give away our nickel to Ontario and Manitoba, and we give away too many of our bright, talented young people to all four corners of the earth. The time has come for that to change, and we have the plan, the new approach to bring about that change. The policies outlined over the following pages are based on my 30-year career in the private sector. They are tried and proven and will make a real difference in growing our economy, with particular focus on job creation and small and medium size business development." - **Danny Williams**

Newfoundland and Labrador is home to some of the world's richest natural resources and most resourceful people. The Province's natural beauty, culture and lifestyle make it a great place to live, work, visit and do business. Yet, for much of our history as a province of Canada, successive federal and provincial governments have mismanaged our assets and squandered our opportunities. The consequences are under employment, low incomes, a high tax economy, substantial out-migration, below standard services, and a ballooning provincial debt.

We need a new approach to dealing with these problems, and we must apply rational and intelligent policies to our traditional resource industries so they remain competitive and provide solid economic benefits to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. We have to foster new and growing industries to create jobs for today and for our children and grandchildren in the future.

Every Newfoundlander and Labradorian has an important voice in building better opportunities for themselves and their children. A new Progressive Conservative government will work with municipal leaders, business, unions, development agencies, seniors, youth and others to make the most of our opportunities

and maximize economic and social benefits for the people of the Province.

Our goal is to preserve the Province's natural beauty and provide the best base for business, leisure and learning. We are determined to improve services for the people and to continue working to make Newfoundland and Labrador a province where people want to live, work and enjoy themselves.

Our policies are rooted in solid economic fundamentals. They focus on promoting medium and small business development, better economic infrastructure, innovation and product diversification, expanding trade, sustainable resource management, a healthy environment, a highly skilled workforce, a competitive tax system, and sound fiscal management.

### DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING BUSINESS

In this Province, medium and small businesses play the lead role in creating employment and income, and in diversifying both the products and services we sell and the markets into which we sell them.

Medium and small businesses are even more important to sustainable economic and social

development in rural communities, since they are labour-intensive and widely dispersed throughout the Province. They are often the only realistic prospect for creating jobs and reducing unemployment.

During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will formulate and implement policies and programs to promote medium and small business development. To do this we will:

- Consult with businesses about the services they need and determine how those services can be provided effectively and efficiently.
- Create a regulatory regime that is efficient, flexible and transparent while maintaining high regulatory standards.
- Start a supplier development program to help local firms supply quality goods and services at competitive costs to government departments and agencies.
- Use net economic benefit criteria rather than strict acquisition cost to evaluate bids for government procurement contracts.
- Introduce a multi-year tax reduction program aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of businesses in the Province.
- Improve incentives for those who make long-term venture capital investments in medium and small enterprises, and partner with Credit Unions to improve access to capital in smaller communities.
- Make use of Research and Development (R&D) partnerships and tax incentives to encourage greater private and public investment in research and development.
- Establish strong business advocacy units in government and give them the capacity to design business development policies, and the mandate to co-ordinate business-related activities across government departments and agencies.
- Help new businesses during their start-up and early growth phase with information

about management, financing, marketing, quality standards, and suitable technology, as well as assistance to guide them through national, provincial and local regulatory processes.

- Oversee through the Premier's Office, for the formative years at least, the growth and development of the internal business of government and the external business of the private sector. This would involve formulation of a detailed plan for development of all business related departments and activities of government in order to maximize efficient use of our limited resources.

### **Establishing Smart Business Networks**

Medium and small businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador face competitive problems associated with their size and relative isolation. It is difficult for small businesses to achieve economies of scale in purchasing supplies and sourcing large contracts. However, there is ample evidence that small businesses operating in the same or related activities can raise their competitiveness by grouping together into business networks to access sources of supply and to pursue large market opportunities in the Province and abroad.

To promote business networks in the Province, a Progressive Conservative government will:

- Undertake studies of successful business networks in other countries to help local businesses apply proven practices in forming networks to raise their collective competitiveness in provincial, national and international markets.
- Revise tendering and procurement policies in the public sector to enable business networks to bid on large public sector procurement contracts.
- Encourage large companies in the resource, manufacturing and retail sectors to use local business networks to source service and supply contracts that now go outside the Province.

- Work with the federal government and national and transnational corporations operating in the Province to link local business networks into national and international procurement chains.

## TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

There is a critical role for science and technology in our strategy to generate employment, and sustainable economic growth. A Progressive Conservative government will partner with business, academic institutions and the federal government to increase science and technology activity in this Province. Our investment in science and technology will:

- Fund scientific research to support the mandates of government departments and agencies.
- Support research at Memorial University, the College of the North Atlantic, hospitals and other non-governmental research institutions.
- Support private sector research and development.

Growth industries depend on the continuous generation of technological innovations and the rapid transformation of these innovations into commercial products. While the provincial technology sector is small, local companies have shown that they can compete with the best in the world – and win!

A key objective of a Progressive Conservative government is to make the Province a global magnet for innovative technology companies. We will encourage their growth through:

- Tax incentives to support the development, commercialization, and deployment of new technology.
- R&D partnerships with industry that benefit both governments' needs and the development of products that have commercial relevance.
- Regulatory policies that encourage innovation and achieve their purpose at the lowest possible cost.

- Government procurement policies that support the growth of technology companies, and spend a portion of the procurement budget on innovative technologies in order to facilitate their commercialization.

- Advancing the use of computing and high-speed digital networks in every region of the Province.

A priority for a Progressive Conservative government is to strengthen the capacity of local companies to produce and sell value-added products and services. This will sometimes involve assisting companies in researching and developing new technology and processes, but more often it will involve helping companies adopt current technologies and, where necessary, adapting them to suit their needs.

During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will make use of taxation and expenditure programs to give the Province's value-added companies access to leading-edge R&D capabilities that:

- Support the transfer of technologies and processes to local companies, and undertake research and development for new and upscale value-added products and services.
- Provide high quality market and economic analysis and forecasts in order to enhance the competitiveness of the Province's resource industries.
- Identify effective human resource, venture capital and tax policies that foster the production and marketing of value-added products and services.
- Provide the knowledge and technology needed for environmental conservation and protection of natural resources so that they will continue to supply raw materials for value-added manufacturing in all regions of the Province.



## Information Technology

A key growth area for Newfoundland and Labrador, and therefore a major opportunity to further diversify our economy and create new jobs, lies in the Information Technology sector.

A new Progressive Conservative government will work in partnership with IT firms, the Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance of Technical Industries, post-secondary educational institutions, federal agencies and others to promote the growth of the IT industry in the province through several initiatives including the following:

- Development of a 10-year strategy to grow the IT sector.
- Mobilizing capital for the IT sector through such mechanisms as a revived Newfoundland and Labrador Stock Savings Plan, the opening up of the Direct Equity Tax Credit program to business enterprises, and a labour-sponsored venture capital fund.
- Opening up the Provincial government's contracting arrangements for meeting the government's own IT needs to fair and competitive opportunities for all firms in the IT industry in the province.
- Enhancing post-secondary education and training in IT expertise and skills to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador graduates continue to be highly skilled and competitive with their contemporaries in other jurisdictions.
- Creating innovative employment programs to help fledgling firms hire young IT graduates from Newfoundland and Labrador post-secondary institutions.
- Enhancing connectivity through upgrading of broadband infrastructure and other means, such as innovative combinations of satellite and wireless communications.
- Integrating the development of the IT sector in the province with innovative approaches to social and economic development in such areas as e-business, telemedicine and distance education.
- Improving relations with federal agencies to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador firms maximize their access to federal funding and non-financial support programs for IT development.

A Progressive Conservative government will aggressively pursue the integration of information and communications technologies as an integral part of its approach to regional, rural and community development through initiatives that include the following:

- Build on the infrastructure already developed for Grenfell College and College of the North Atlantic to designate the Stephenville-Corner Brook region as a key growth area for researching and developing a second technical industry cluster in the province.
- Work with the City of St. John's, the Board of Trade, the Capital Coast Development Alliance, Memorial University, the College of the North Atlantic and the relevant federal agencies to help the Northeast Avalon area grow as a major centre for marine technology industries.
- Gear its commitment to increasing band width and the innovative use of other technologies specifically to the needs of rural Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to become full participants in the knowledge-based economy.
- Work with Memorial University, Grenfell College and the College of the North Atlantic to develop a human resource plan for educating and training citizens in all regions of the province in the latest technologies and skills needed for success in the IT sector.

- Convene a panel of rural IT experts and practitioners to develop a short-term, medium-term and long-term strategy for rural IT development, both as an enabler for other development and as an industry sector in its own right.
- Commission research to determine the best IT opportunities for rural communities, and work with rural development and business agencies to ensure that the findings are disseminated clearly to people in all regions.

### **IT and the Provincial Government**

A Progressive Conservative government will strengthen and modernize the IT functions of the provincial government itself, will place a new premium on innovation, and will use this strengthened capacity and new sense of direction to work with the private sector to grow the IT sector in the province. Measures to be taken include the following.

- The appointment of a Chief Information/Innovation Officer who will be responsible for enhancing and streamlining service delivery, reforming management and operational IT practices throughout government, and bridging the role of government in public service delivery with the private sector.
- The promotion of a competitive marketplace for government IT services and contracts. This will include a review of the current contractual arrangement with X-Wave to ensure that it lives up to its commitment to help develop the IT sector in the province.
- The development of an Innovation Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador that will take into account the needs of all the regions of the province. The strategy will be developed in cooperation with the Newfoundland Alliance of Technical Industries, major IT firms in the province, Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic, and regional

development agencies. The strategy will be used to attract outside investment and leverage increased federal funding into the IT industry.

### **E-Government**

Technology advances make it possible to reduce the time individuals and companies have to spend dealing with government. It is wasteful and frustrating when people have to leave their businesses or paid work to fit into the business hours of a government agency.

- A Progressive Conservative government will make greater use of information technologies to make government more responsive and accountable, and improve services to people.
- We will make the investments needed so that individuals and companies will be able to conduct all the most common transactions with government departments and agencies through the Internet.

### **EXPANDING OUR MARKETS**

Trade has been the economic engine of Newfoundland and Labrador for more than 500 years. Today, we are the most trade-dependent and globally integrated Province in Canada. Businesses, workers and consumers in every town and community depend on trade for their livelihood and quality of life. As a relatively large trader with a small population, the Province's economic growth and future prosperity depend on strengthening and expanding trade.

In a Progressive Conservative administration, the Premier will lead a team of business and union leaders, educators and economists to promote the Province, its workforce, and its economic and cultural assets nationally and internationally.

During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will create strong trade development and marketing units in government that will focus on:

- Reductions in trade barriers, especially in relation to the export of value-added products to Europe.
- Encouraging businesses to diversify into high-value-added resource exports, non-resource merchandise exports, and knowledge-based services and skills.
- Promoting export opportunities for provincial businesses through trade missions and product promotion programs, analysis and dissemination of market information, assistance in arranging export financing, and identifying distributors and potential joint venture partnerships in foreign countries and other parts of Canada.
- Procurement agreements with other provincial governments to improve access to Canada's \$100 billion public sector procurement marketplace.
- Product promotion programs with national and transnational corporations operating in the Province to link local businesses into their national and international procurement chains.

### **A COMPETITIVE TAX SYSTEM**

During its first mandate, Progressive Conservative government will focus on distributing the rewards of a stronger economy to benefit low-income families, seniors and small businesses. As part of a multi-year tax reduction plan, we will:

- Introduce a Low Income Tax Reduction program that will reduce personal income tax for low income tax payers, and eliminate it altogether for single-tax filers earning up to \$12,500 and families earning up to \$20,000.
- Equalize child benefits for low-income families so that families will not lose income support for their children if they move from social assistance to the workforce.
- Index the tax-free Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit, the Low Income Seniors' Benefit, and the Low Income Tax Reduction Credit to the Consumer Price Index.
- Match the federal government's 50% increase in the small business tax credit from \$200,000 to \$300,000.

As the Province's fiscal situation improves, we will do everything in our power to lighten the far too heavy tax burden on all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Our tax system must take into account the increasing mobility of workers, the impact of taxes on economic growth and employment, and the competition we face in North American and world markets.

A Progressive Conservative government will hold public consultations in 2004 aimed at bringing personal income and business taxes in line with the rest of Atlantic Canada, while ensuring we have the resources to finance health, education and other priority social programs.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Investment in infrastructure is one of the most effective ways governments can stimulate job creation in the short term and make the economy more productive and competitive over the long term. Infrastructure improvements make businesses more productive, boost trade and tourism, and contribute to a higher quality of life. In addition, attracting and retaining many of the more mobile members of the workforce requires investment in a wide range of infrastructure from parks and clean air to fibre optic networks.

We have a serious infrastructure gap in this Province, and the gap is growing as our competitors invest in rapid, low-cost distribution systems and digital networks. If we do not keep pace, we will lose markets and fail to attract new investment, particularly in the highly competitive value-added goods, service, and technology industries that are driving economic growth around the globe.

- A Progressive Conservative government will ensure the Province has the education and research capabilities, market knowledge, transportation systems, digital networks and municipal infrastructure it will need to succeed in an increasingly integrated and competitive global economy.

- All infrastructure investment will be smart investment, based on thorough planning and careful consideration of important issues like patterns of economic growth and opportunity, and innovative approaches to financing, building and operations.

Our resource-based economy was built on investment in capital equipment and physical labour. The value-added and knowledge economy relies on learning, technology and creativity. In the new economy, education is our best economic policy.

- A Progressive Conservative government will be committed to an education system that develops problem solving and communications skills, and fosters familiarity with information technologies.
- We will create a framework of opportunities for people to learn throughout their adult lives, so that they can adjust successfully to the demand for new and changing skills in a rapidly changing knowledge economy.

### **Transportation Networks**

There is a serious gap between the transportation systems we have and the transportation systems we need to enable business growth and competitiveness. Newfoundland and Labrador is the only Province without a continuous highway to the rest of North America, and the province's two major geographic and resource regions – Labrador and the Island of Newfoundland – are virtually inaccessible to each other. Our isolation from the national highway system, and our reliance on inefficient and expensive modes of transportation is the greatest single impediment to economic development in all regions of the Province, especially in Labrador.

- A primary objective of a Progressive Conservative government will be to seek federal participation in developing a long-term, comprehensive transportation strategy for the Province that provides for inter-provincial and international trade and travel by direct connection to destinations in

Canada and throughout the North American Free Trade Area.

### **Highways**

The Progressive Conservative Party understands the vital importance of highways and secondary roads to the economic and social development of the Province.

A Progressive Conservative government will complete the Trans-Labrador Highway, and devote a progressively larger portion of the provincial fuel tax to the maintenance and repair of provincial roads.

During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will move forward with two major studies to better prepare the Province's highway network to support economic growth. The studies will:

- Develop a comprehensive, multi-year plan for maintenance and upgrading of highways and secondary roads.
- Examine the feasibility of building a fixed link across the Strait of Belle Isle, and merging the provincial highway system with the North American highway network through Quebec to optimize economic growth in Labrador and on the Island.

### **Air Transportation**

Time spent reaching a market is more important than geographic proximity in determining where businesses locate, especially businesses in the services, technology, and knowledge-based industries. In this sense, the availability of air travel to a wide range of destinations is critical in attracting new businesses and giving them timely and efficient access to their markets and operations.

- During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will commission a study of air transportation, and what can be done to encourage more capacity, more direct services, more frequent services and a wider range of provincial, national and international destinations.



## Ferry Services

The marine ferry service operated by the Government of Canada is our key surface transportation corridor for the movement of goods, services and people to and from our major trading partners in the United States and the rest of Canada.

- A Progressive Conservative government will insist that Canada provide efficient, modern ferry services at costs comparable to travel on the Trans Canada Highway.
- Phase in adjustments over a 5-year period to bring rates on provincial ferry routes in line with the cost of highway travel.

The Province owns and operates 12 of the 20 vessels used on 16 ferry routes around the Island and coastal Labrador. Past policy has been to replace over-aged vessels with used, foreign-built vessels that require major repairs and will have to be replaced in 10-15 years. That does not make economic sense.

Our vessel replacement policy will be guided by net economic benefits to the Province rather than acquisition cost. Using this principle, we will be able to replace some or all of the Provincial ferry fleet with new vessels built in the Province. Vessels built in our own yards would be up-to-date, and operate safely without needing major repairs or replacement for 30 years. Skilled Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be employed in shipbuilding and work in supply, service and support industries; and the Province will benefit from higher tax revenues.

## Municipal Infrastructure

Modern, efficient municipal infrastructure is one of the essential ingredients of a strong economy. Regions that fail to invest in basic municipal infrastructure have substandard economic growth.

A Progressive Conservative government will ensure that the long-term economic prosperity of urban and rural municipalities is supported by:

- Working with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities to ensure proper and adequate funding of municipal services.
- Making sure infrastructure and public service facilities are available to accommodate projected growth.
- Providing for an efficient, cost-effective, reliable transportation system that is appropriate to address expected growth.
- Conserving natural and cultural heritage resources and landscapes.
- Optimizing the long-term availability and value-added use of marine, agricultural, forest and other resources.
- Working co-operatively with towns and cities to restore and maintain the well being of downtowns and main streets.

We will incorporate strategies to deal with key municipal infrastructure issues in a new *Strategic Environmental Management Plan*. These include:

- A comprehensive clean air and clean water strategy for the Province.
- Partnerships with municipalities and industries to use cost-effective and environmentally responsible ways of handling municipal and industrial waste.
- Eliminate the use of Teepee style incinerators by 2008.
- The clean up of major harbours in the Province in co-operation with the federal and municipal governments.

## CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Creative artists and cultural industries contribute immensely to the quality of life for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Artistic expressions and cultural activities celebrate our history, our lives, and our accomplishments. They are very important to our economy and to keeping our skilled and creative talent working in this Province.

Cultural and creative industries contribute significantly to the economy through the number of people they employ and the millions of dollars spent here and abroad on the ideas and products they generate. But they are also leaders in building the economy by using information and multimedia technologies to produce and distribute new products.

Progressive Conservatives recognize the social and economic benefits of creative artists and cultural industries, and acknowledge a public obligation to encourage and support their success and growth in all regions of the Province. During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will:

- Give priority to creative people, to their artistic endeavours, and to the full recognition of their unique value to our culture and our economy.
- Use the knowledge and expertise of creative individuals and companies to develop policies that foster and retain sustainable creative enterprises in the Province, and make the Province a natural location for creative enterprises in Canada.
- Work with the industry to bring greater stability to the conditions under which creative people work, such as using the tax system to allow income averaging from one year to the next, helping provide affordable housing and work spaces for artists, and leveraging private sector support for artists and cultural infrastructure.
- Work in partnership with the federal government and municipal governments and with the cultural community to secure adequate, predictable, and long-term public investment in creative and cultural enterprise.

Although Newfoundland and Labrador has an abundance of creative talent, we do not have the infrastructure to support them. Many creative individuals and companies are drawn away to production centres, agents, and distributors outside the Province. The lesson is clear. We cannot ignore cultural infrastructure

and expect a thriving cultural sector to be the outcome.

During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will:

- Commission a full assessment of professional and enterprise development needs in the creative and cultural industries and best practice strategies to address them.
- Instigate a comprehensive strategy to identify untapped or underdeveloped markets for creative and cultural products.
- Foster links to governments, corporations, academic institutions, media, and the community at large to raise awareness and support for artists and cultural professionals throughout the Province.
- Support information and multimedia technologies that provide new production and distribution opportunities in such areas as photography, publishing, music composition and recording, film, video, animation, and design.
- Establish a centre for training in film and video production at the Fine Arts School at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College and the Corner Brook campus of the College of the North Atlantic to ensure there is a solid core of local professionals in the various highly technical film production disciplines.
- Work with industry to promote the new sound stage in Corner Brook, in an effort to advance the film industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Increase the presence of cultural content in the school curriculum and foster links between artists and students in the school environment.

## TOURISM

Tourism provides jobs in many sectors of the economy and in every region of the Province. Newfoundland and Labrador is in an enviable position among world traveling destinations to deliver many exciting experiences. But great

products are not enough. The Province's tourism assets must be professionally marketed and supported in order to maintain and increase our share of visitor dollars.

- During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will commit \$5 million to tourism marketing, which will be increased by \$1 million annually until provincial marketing expenditures match spending in other Atlantic Provinces.
- In addition to the 20% annual increase to the tourism marketing budget, we will commit a further \$1 million specifically for the development of winter and adventure tourism marketing initiatives. We will design and implement a provincial tourism development strategy aimed at making Newfoundland and Labrador a leading year-round tourism destination in Canada, and increasing our profile as a winter tourism destination.
- We will support the French Heritage 2004 Celebrations to be held in the province next year, in recognition of the great contribution of the French to the Province's cultural heritage.
- We will work in partnership with the industry to improve the quality of the tourism product and enhance the experiences of tourists.

Cultural tourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry in North America and Europe. During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will:

- Work with the culture and tourism industries to develop strategies to encourage and promote cultural tourism, and attract cultural tourists to our Province.
- Capitalize on the Province's distinctive cultural heritage by investing in historic sites, heritage properties, and expanding cultural tourism attractions.

The success of the tourism industry in Newfoundland and Labrador depends on efficient, affordable transportation.

- During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will work with the federal government and other Atlantic Provinces to develop a full and effective transportation system that will enhance tourism and all sectors of the provincial economy.
- Due to the geographic isolation of the Province, we must depend on either air or water to transport our tourists to the island. Interruptions, or threats to disruption of service can negatively impact the traveling public's decision to come to the Province. We will pursue with the federal government the designation of Marine Atlantic as an essential service to alleviate this concern.

### **RURAL RENEWAL**

Many rural regions of the Province are in decline. They are experiencing rapid depopulation, unemployment is high, the workforce is aging, and young people are leaving because of a lack of economic opportunities.

Despite the demographics, the marine, forest, agriculture, and mineral resources of rural Newfoundland and Labrador remain vital to the Province's economy. People all over the globe will continue to need and use the natural resources of rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

However, primary resource harvesting alone can no longer sustain viable rural communities. The most competitive and successful communities today are those that add value to natural resources, and complement these core economic activities with related services and other economic activities that function well in rural settings.

Any approach to strengthen and support rural communities must address more than natural resources. The small communities scattered along our coasts and highways are also dependent on the continued strength of local small businesses and regional businesses that are within commuting distances. New business growth will occur in regions of the Province where there are real economic opportunities,

and where the tools needed to act on those opportunities are readily available.

Our blueprint for the Province highlights commitments that are key to revitalizing our rural communities:

- Support small and medium sized businesses to create and retain long-term jobs.
- Utilize our natural resources in a sustainable way and maintain low energy costs.
- Keep industrial benefits from resource developments in regions adjacent to the resource, such as value added processing and opportunities for local businesses to supply equipment, goods and services.
- Use strategic tax incentives to spearhead new economic development activities, and local ownership, that diversify rural economies and create long-term jobs.
- Expand infrastructure and other essential economic development tools, including roads and bridges, ferry services, ports, high-speed Internet access, and water and sewer capacity.
- Open new markets for locally produced products and services.
- Provide ready access to quality primary health care, and improve access to specialists and diagnostic services for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.
- Support and fund local schools.
- Maintain the quality of life and values of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In addition, a Progressive Conservative government will set up a Rural Secretariat as the focal point for government to work with local and regional partners to build strong and dynamic communities. The Secretariat will be dedicated to promoting the well being of rural Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive approach aimed at integrating economic, social and cultural aspects of rural and regional development.

As well as working with local and regional partners to make sure the Provincial government understands and acts in response to local and regional issues, the Rural Secretariat will:

- Coordinate a partnership approach with the federal government on rural issues.
- Ensure that rural concerns and needs are considered throughout government.
- Work with local and federal partners to put in place an action plan for rural development that ensures our small towns and rural regions are viable, healthy and vibrant places in which to live, work and invest.
- Support rural communities and regions to take charge of their own futures.
- Help communities and regions identify opportunities for business expansion and increase the competitiveness of local companies.
- Conduct and support research on economic and social issues affecting rural Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Provide one-stop access to information on programs and services in rural communities.

#### **SELF-RELIANT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

A Progressive Conservative government will not accept or ignore the unequal socio-economic conditions in aboriginal communities. We envision a society in which all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians enjoy the social and economic benefits of sustainable development, where relationships are built on equality and respect, and where aboriginal people can fulfill their desire to become more self-reliant and exercise greater responsibility for the well being of their communities.

A Progressive Conservative government will work in partnership with aboriginal communities and the federal government to:

- Resolve aboriginal land claims.



- Recognize the right of aboriginal communities to exercise genuine control over their own affairs, and participating with them in carrying out economic and social development policies that are best suited to their cultures and needs.
- Encourage and assist aboriginal economic and community development to secure a more prosperous and self-sufficient future for aboriginal communities.
- Encourage and support aboriginal culture and the growth of aboriginal cultural industries.
- Increase the participation and success of aboriginal people in post-secondary education and training.
- Establish a plan, including public sector internships, to ensure that aboriginal people acquire the knowledge and skills required for effective government of their communities.
- Regulate underwriting practices to prohibit discrimination based on age, sex and marital status, restrict arbitrary pricing and underwriting decisions, and require greater openness on the part of insurance companies.
- Require insurance companies to provide interim compensation to individuals whose claims are being processed.
- Authorize the Public Utilities Board to approve all insurance rates and audit insurance companies to ensure they consistently apply rates approved by the Board.
- Work with other Atlantic Provinces to harmonize legislation and regulation and assess the cost and benefits of a regional public insurance system.
- Strengthened regulations governing not just auto insurance by all types of insurance including home and commercial with an objective of flattening out peaks and valleys in the rates charged to consumers.
- In order to protect drivers and reduce the impact of moose-motor vehicle collisions, the number of hunting licenses issued for moose will be increased where warranted by scientific data.

#### **CONSUMER PROTECTION**

We will reduce automotive, home and commercial insurance with a multi-pronged plan:

- Cap minor soft-tissue injury claims at \$2500.00, and calculate loss of income claims on net income.

# 2

## Sustainable Resource Development

"Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are the most passionate people on earth. Last fall, close to 1,000 people came out on a cold and rainy night to protest a very bad deal to develop the Lower Churchill. 'Stop-the-giveaways' was the theme of the evening, and stop a major giveaway is what our collective efforts achieved. That night was a turning point in the history of Newfoundland and Labrador. For the first time, we stood up and said in a united voice "enough is enough." It was a major step towards controlling our own destiny, a right to which any group of people should be entitled. Stopping the giveaways will be the hallmark of a Danny Williams led government. From this time forward, our natural resources will be developed for the primary benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Perhaps the greatest giveaway has occurred within our fishery, which has been mismanaged by both the government of Canada. We need to act quickly to protect our existing fish stocks and to rebuild those that have been depleted. We also need to ensure that we, as a province, are getting the greatest value from our lucrative fisheries, such as crab and shrimp." – **Danny Williams**

The natural environment is still our most important economic asset. Clean water and clean air are priceless natural endowments. The fisheries, forests, soil, wildlife and minerals are worth billions of dollars annually. Spending on eco-tourism is extremely important in every region of the Province. Out-of-doors recreational activities contribute to the economy and enrich our lives in ways that cannot be quantified.

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACT

Responsible and sustainable development of the natural environment is the necessary foundation for long-term economic growth. During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will introduce a *Sustainable Development Act* that will:

- Establish sustainable management of the Province's natural environment as a central policy objective.
- Recognize the full range of uses and values of natural resources, including resource industries, habitat for wildlife, parks and wilderness, tourism and recreation.
- Safeguard the life supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems.
- Provide for the sustainable development of renewable resources in a way that enables people to provide for their economic, social and cultural needs, while preserving the integrity of ecosystems and meeting the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations.
- Ensure nonrenewable resource developments benefit future as well as present generations by controlling the pace of development, promoting value-added product manufacturing, and spending royalties in ways that have long-term benefits across generations.
- Direct resource departments and related agencies to harmonize resource policies, which will make them more consistent and efficient in their pursuit of a healthy economy, environment, and society for present and future generations.

- Ensure that resource decisions address the full range of environmental, social and economic values, and that workers, environmentalists, industry, communities, aboriginal peoples and others have a say in how our resources are managed.

### **Sustainable Development Round Table**

The Sustainable Development Act will provide for the establishment of a *Newfoundland and Labrador Round Table for Sustainable Development* to promote sustainable development in the Province and strengthen its capacity for wise and cooperative stewardship of natural resources. Members of the Round Table will represent a broad range of interests, including industry, labour, government, community, aboriginal groups and the general public, and will include scientists, economists, sociologists, management specialists, and other types of researchers and professionals.

### **A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**

The *Sustainable Development Act* will be the legislative framework for a *Strategic Environmental Management Plan*, which will have the long-term goal of achieving environmental and economic sustainability and a high quality of life for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The *Plan* will incorporate management systems that:

- Integrate environmental considerations into all government decision-making processes.
- Involve all sectors of the Province in identifying common values and working towards a shared vision of a sustainable and prosperous future.
- Utilize a variety of experts to ensure that management decisions are guided by reliable information.
- Provide a framework to coordinate activities across federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions, and cooperation among various government departments and agencies.
- Create a stable and predictable regulatory environment that will benefit all interests.

- Promote the use of environmental-friendly technology to meet the objective of sustainable, responsible resource development.
- Promote private sector investment in recycling, heritage conservation, eco-tourism and other business opportunities in the environment sector.
- Make use of environmental resources to create new wealth and generate employment in rural areas of the Province.

### **ENERGY**

Newfoundland and Labrador is an energy rich Province. Our energy resources provide a strong and secure base to meet our energy needs and to attract private sector investment to resource developments and manufacturing industries in the Province.

A Progressive Conservative government will:

- Implement an energy plan to ensure that all energy sources are used first to provide a reliable, affordable supply of power for domestic use and for Province-wide economic development, and then to take advantage of business opportunities in export markets to sell energy that is excess to our needs on terms that secure maximum benefits for the Province.
- Retain Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro as a Crown Corporation with a mandate to support the Province's economy by providing reliable, clean energy at competitive prices, and making sure that its customers receive the best possible service for their money, while retaining well-paying, quality jobs (seasonal or otherwise) in the province, as is their mandate.

### **Hydroelectricity**

Less than one-fifth of the electricity generated in the Province is consumed here. The excess is sold to Quebec under the Churchill Falls Power Contract at a barely break-even price. The Province has lost billions of dollars on this bad

deal, and will lose billions more over its remaining life.

One lesson from the Churchill deal is that we need fair treatment from Ottawa to get a fair deal with Quebec. Ottawa must exert its responsibility to end Quebec's stranglehold on the development of Labrador power by giving this Province the same right to transmit energy across Quebec, as Alberta has to transmit natural gas across Saskatchewan and Manitoba to markets in Ontario.

Another lesson is that a desperate deal is always a bad deal. We must be intelligent and patient negotiators who can make the right deal at the right time.

Hydroelectricity is the pre-eminent renewable energy technology with dependable supply at competitive prices. Its value is growing as consumers around the globe demand products made with clean energy. If we are patient and build wisely on this core economic asset, it is sure to contribute to long-term economic prosperity for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

- A main objective of a Progressive Conservative government is to secure maximum benefits for the Province from the development of our hydroelectricity resources.
- In particular, further development of the hydroelectricity potential on the Churchill River system must bring real and long-term benefits to the people of the Province and make a strong contribution to the Province's economy.

Consistent with our energy policy objectives, a Progressive Conservative government will make use of the hydroelectric potential of the Lower Churchill and any electricity that can be recalled or reclaimed from the Upper Churchill to accomplish the following priorities:

- Promote industrial development and meet domestic energy demand in Labrador and then on the Island of Newfoundland.

- Export surplus energy at market value, and on terms that will allow for recall to meet energy demand in the Province.

### **Other Clean Energy Sources**

A Progressive Conservative government will direct Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro to create partnerships with the private sector to make natural gas, wind energy, geothermal heat pump technology, and other clean energy alternatives part of the solution to energy supply in the Province.

### **OIL AND GAS**

Although the Province acquired special entitlements to offshore oil and gas benefits in the Canada-Newfoundland Atlantic Accord, it cannot manage the industry, as Alberta manages its oil and gas industry, to obtain maximum benefits for the Province. For Newfoundland and Labrador to get Alberta-like benefits, it would have to exercise Alberta-like jurisdiction over the resource.

- A Progressive Conservative government will seek jurisdictional control and ownership over petroleum and other economic resources in the offshore as a means to achieve greater prosperity for our Province and more opportunity for our people.

### **A Better Deal on Oil and Gas Revenues**

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador will collect billions of dollars in revenues over the next 20 to 30 years from oil, natural gas, and other minerals. Less than a quarter of the revenues will stay in the Province. Ottawa will simply deduct most of the increased revenues from equalization payments. This deduction is known as "the equalization claw-back".

The clawback denies us the opportunity to build a better future for our children and grandchildren. We should not have to consume our non-renewable resources for current expenses and leave none of the inheritance for our children and grandchildren.

- A Progressive Conservative government will press the federal government to remove all



non-renewable resource revenues from the calculation of equalization payments.

- In exchange, we will commit in a formal federal-provincial agreement, if necessary, to spend non-renewable revenues to modernize economic infrastructure in the Province and to bring down the provincial debt so that future generations of Canadians living in this Province will continue to benefit long after the resources are used up.

### **The Laurentian Basin**

The Laurentian Basin is a prime site for significant oil and gas discoveries. Settlement of the boundary between Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia opens the basin to exploration and production. Activities on our side of the boundary could spin off economic benefits for the West and South Coasts comparable, in relative terms, to the economic boost St. John's and the East Coast gets from oil and gas on the Grand Banks. Unlike St. John's, west coast ports will face stiff competition from Sydney and Halifax on the Nova Scotian side of the Basin.

- A Progressive Conservative government will use the powers the Province has under the Atlantic Accord to ensure that businesses and residents on the West and South Coasts benefit from oil and natural gas development in the Laurentian Basin.
- We will promote port improvements and private sector joint ventures to make sure the West and South Coasts have the capability to service offshore oil and gas exploration and production activities in the Laurentian Basin.

### **Growing our Oil and Gas Industry**

Newfoundland and Labrador, in common with other resource rich Canadian provinces, wants to maximize benefits from our geological inheritance in order to end our revenue dependence on Ottawa. We also want to develop oil and gas systematically to get long-term benefits for all citizens of the Province

through investment and employment opportunities and in tax reductions.

The power to control development of offshore oil and gas is of little value unless the Province has the know-how to deal with technical issues and field assessments equivalent to the expertise of the major oil companies, and sufficient ownership in production licenses to influence development decisions.

- A Progressive Conservative government will either restructure Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro as an energy company, or create a new Energy corporation, with a mandate to retain equity in the Province's oil and gas resources. This will be done on a go forward basis.
- A new Newfoundland and Labrador Energy Corporation's mission will be to absorb all the expertise it can from the major oil companies so that the Province will have the capacity and expertise to participate in and benefit from decisions regarding exploration, production, and processing of oil and gas in the Province.
- A major mandate of the Newfoundland and Labrador Energy would be to work with the major oil companies to develop natural gas as a competitively priced alternative energy source for the Province, and for transportation to Canadian and U. S. markets.

### **Federal Shares in Hibernia**

Hibernia has become an extremely valuable property since Ottawa acquired 8.5% ownership in 1993, which it now wants to sell.

- A Progressive Conservative government will seek to have the federal government's shares in Hibernia transferred to Newfoundland and Labrador as a way to increase benefits to the Province.

A federal-provincial agreement to transfer ownership of the shares could provide for the federal government to recover its equity investment in the project. That could be done in one of two ways: either Ottawa can wait until it

has recovered the value of the investment before transferring its shares to the Province, or it can transfer the shares earlier and be reimbursed by the Province, up to the value of its investment, from future earnings.

### **Industrial Benefits from Oil and Gas**

Exploration in the harsh offshore environment provides an opportunity for the Province to become a world leader in offshore technologies and exploration techniques.

As oil and gas companies go about the business of developing the oil and gas potential in the offshore, they will build some of the world's largest industrial projects. Offshore exploration and production platforms are physically huge and technically complex, with multi-million dollar price tags. Transportation of oil and gas products to market requires multi-billion dollar investments in tankers, pipelines and storage facilities. These activities open opportunities in marine fabrication and in supplying goods and services to a technically complex industry operating in a hostile environment.

Newfoundland and Labrador has world-class marine fabrication facilities at Bull Arm, Cow Head, Marystown and St. John's. Properly used, these assets could position the Province as a globally competitive centre of excellence in the shipbuilding and marine fabrication industries.

These facilities, however, and others like them in Canada, need a level playing field to compete internationally. Unless Canada is prepared to compete on the terms set by other countries, especially the United States, Canadian marine fabrication yards will remain at a competitive disadvantage and will wither away, along with their tremendous potential for high technology industrial transfers and high technology jobs.

For our marine fabrication industry to survive and grow, we need Ottawa to help the industry compete through:

- Federal laws and incentives that ensure all Canadian military and commercial vessels are built, refitted and repaired in Canada.

- Canadian content requirements for exploration, production and supply vessels used in the oil and gas industry.
- Extension of export funding to foreign buyers of Canadian built ships and offshore oil rigs similar to the support provided to foreign buyers of Canadian built nuclear plants and aircraft.
- Active promotion by the federal government of the capabilities and products of Canada's shipyards and marine fabrication industries internationally.

And then there is refining and petrochemicals. Refining technology can produce many products from every barrel of oil. These include gasoline, jet fuel, home heating oil, lubricating oils, greases, asphalt and roofing tar. Through petrochemical processing the polycarbonates in oil and gas can be used to make composite materials lighter and stronger than steel. They can increase a hundredfold the fertility of farmland. They provide insulation, clothing, pharmaceuticals and household cleaning products, and have literally thousands of other uses.

- A Progressive Conservative government will make better use of the Atlantic Accord to maximize benefits to the Province from offshore oil and gas exploration and production. We will also pursue opportunities to expand refining, and to develop a petrochemical industry in the Province using offshore oil and gas.

### **MINING**

Developing a healthy and competitive mineral sector is a solid strategy for ensuring the Province's future prosperity. From the mining and processing of ore through to product manufacturing and assembly, the mineral sector can make a vital contribution to economic growth and employment in both urban and rural regions of the Province.

- A Progressive Conservative government will work with the industry to remove barriers to value added activities, and to make the

industry the most high-tech, productive and socially responsible in Canada.

- Our goal is to increase the activities associated with processing of minerals in the Province and related business activities in the service and supply industries, such as construction, energy, engineering and environmental services, research and development, equipment parts and supplies, and financial and legal services.

A strong mineral industry for the Province will be built on progressive legislation that will:

- Require that ore concentrate be processed to a finished metal product in the Province where it is feasible to do so.
- Secure preferences for local companies in supplying goods and services to the industry, first choice of jobs for residents of the Province, and training when there are skill shortages.
- Link royalties and taxes to market prices and the extent of value-added activity undertaken in the Province.
- Provide for a detailed geological database compiled from geological surveys and mapping programs that identifies new mineral exploration targets, and makes geo-science information easily available to everyone.
- Support development of the Province's mining sector through tax incentives for prospectors and exploration companies.
- Ensure lands are returned to a natural state after completion of exploration and mining and quarry activities.

## **FISHERIES**

A healthy fishing industry must play a leading role in Newfoundland and Labrador's long-term economic well-being. It is the Province's largest private-sector employer. Entire regional economies are based on the sustainable harvesting and processing of fisheries resources, and transportation, fuel, technology

and service industries rely on the business the fishing industry generates.

## **Sound and Scientific Fisheries Management**

The industry must be restructured and managed to avoid the disasters of the past and adapt to the opportunities of the future. In particular, a shared fisheries management structure should be developed that will merge federal-provincial policy and management responsibilities into a complementary process for better conservation and management of the resource. It also requires fisheries policies based on the best available scientific evidence, enforcement of Canadian conservation measures, and monitoring by Canada of all fishing activity on the continental shelf.

A Progressive Conservative government will pursue a Canada-Newfoundland Fisheries Agreement for a decision-making process in which the federal and provincial governments work in partnership for the sustainable management of the fisheries.

## **Research and Development**

The fishery is undergoing dramatic changes. While cod and other groundfish stocks are at very low levels, stocks of snow crab and shrimp have expanded significantly. While the federal government has the jurisdictional responsibility to scientifically assess fish stocks, the fishery is of such significance to Newfoundland and Labrador that we must have the tools and the professional personnel to assess the scientific data as a province.

Scientists and economists also play a leading role in establishing new directions for fisheries management through research into underutilized species and new value-added marine products, innovative harvesting and processing technology, successful marketing strategies, aquaculture, and the use of marine genetic resources for pharmaceutical and commercial applications.

A Progressive Conservative government will establish a *Fisheries Science and Management Research Institute* at Memorial University that

will provide scientific, technical, and economic support for the sustainable development of Newfoundland and Labrador marine fisheries and aquaculture. The multi-disciplinary Institute will:

- Undertake research and establish links with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, other federal and provincial agencies, fish harvesters, and experts around the world to provide decision-makers with the research-based information they need to develop sound fishery management policy.
- Supply the industry with product, technology, market and economic research and information needed to diversify and improve value-added production.
- Find out how resource management decisions affect people and communities.

#### **Foreign Fishing on the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks**

For the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, the fish stocks on our continental shelf could be fished indefinitely with proper management, while foreigners see them as stocks to be harvested intensively until they are no longer economically profitable, or are fished to extinction. These conflicting values underscore the need for Canada to extend its management over the entire continental shelf and to regulate both the domestic and international fishery for sustainable development.

- A Progressive Conservative government will carry out nation-wide public information campaigns aimed at persuading Ottawa to take custodial management over the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks, and to undertake whatever regulatory and enforcement activities are necessary to manage sustainable fisheries on the entire continental shelf.

#### **A Sustainable Seafood Processing Sector**

Seafood processors have to deal with resource scarcity, different species, and markets that are more oriented to value-added products than ever before. Consumers clearly prefer a variety

of products that require a minimum of time and effort to prepare and retain as much of their original appearance and taste as possible.

For today's consumers, value-added not only means further processing of raw materials but also consistent quality standards in handling, packing and transporting seafood products. Added to these trends are new applications for marine products in the manufacture of pharmaceuticals and healthcare products, and many other new and useful biochemical commodities.

Workers in our processing plants are plagued with low incomes and inconsistent employment. Part of the solution to this chronic problem is in doing more with what we have and finding new uses for that which we have not utilized in the past. A Progressive Conservative government will implement a comprehensive strategy to improve the viability of our industry and increase employment levels in the Province by:

- Requiring value-added processing where it is economically feasible and putting greater emphasis on retail packs where possible.
- Promoting utilization of a variety of marine species in food processing, as well as new industrial uses of marine products in pharmaceuticals, biomedicines, and other chemical products.
- Forming partnerships with industry to implement an international procurement program to secure primary seafood products for local seafood processing plants.
- Encouraging local investment in fishing enterprises and related industries, and requiring fishing enterprises to register and maintain their head offices in the Province.
- Restructuring the harvesting and processing sectors of the industry around the principles of resources sustainability, adjacency, quality assurance and economic viability.

#### **Quality Assurance and Marketing**

Quality control is important for the fish processing industry, which is heavily export-



oriented. Maintaining high standards of food quality and food safety is necessary to retaining access to international markets, and adds millions of dollars to the value of our annual seafood production.

A Progressive Conservative government will upgrade the *Quality Assurance Program* to include a mandatory quality control system for handling fish and seafood products intended for export that meets the highest international standards for food quality and safety.

As international markets become increasingly competitive, we must ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador seafood is at the forefront of the global marketplace.

A Progressive Conservative government will work with industry to develop and implement a comprehensive, long-term marketing strategy aimed at promoting the Province's seafood industry with a goal of increasing sales in world markets. Promoting the quality of our seafood product is key to successful marketing, and must play a pivotal role in the strategic plan. The strategy would also include the following:

- Providing processors with the marketing expertise required to successfully promote and market products.
- Developing effective techniques for promoting the quality of seafood products in national and international markets through trade missions, product promotions and trade shows.
- Facilitating the sharing of ideas and experiences in the interest of enhancing the marketing of Newfoundland and Labrador seafood products.

The Province will also acquire the necessary expertise to participate in Canadian trade negotiations through NAFTA, the European Common Market, and Asian countries to ensure that Newfoundland and Labrador seafood products have fair access to markets in the United States, Europe and Asia.

## Aquaculture

Many of the Province's wild fisheries are either fully or over-exploited, and those remaining have to be harvested on an ecologically sustainable basis, which means the volume of wild fish landed around the world will be well below the market demand for seafood products.

Aquaculture offers the main prospect of filling this gap, and will be a significant contributor to the economy of coastal regions in the future. Farmed products are rapidly replacing declining wild species on the international seafood market. Since 1990, values have doubled to over \$75 billion.

Although this Province is an important player in the wild fisheries, it accounts for only a tiny fraction of world aquaculture production. Considerable development will be required over the coming years to establish Newfoundland and Labrador farmed fish and shellfish as a viable addition to wild fishery supplies in domestic and international markets.

Aquaculture can be a financially viable industry in this Province and operate within environmentally sound parameters. We have the site capacity to become the largest producer of aquaculture products in Canada, which would bring related economic activity and thousands of jobs to dozens of communities along our coasts.

A Progressive Conservative government will facilitate the expansion of profitable and sustainable aquaculture enterprises in the Province through:

- Support for scientific research to identify potential new locations, develop technologies, investigate potential environmental problems, and cultivate robust stocks of existing and new species, so that the industry can produce better quality products and receive better prices.
- Incentives to promote long-term venture capital investments in aquaculture enterprises.

- Development of high levels of skill and knowledge in the technical, business and marketing aspects of the industry.
- Working with the industry to raise standards and improve efficiency so as to secure a profitable and sustainable future for aquaculture enterprises.

### **AGRICULTURE AND AGRIFOODS**

The Agriculture and Agrifoods industry in the Province comprises 740 farms and over 100 food manufacturers, employs more than 4,000 people and has sales of approximately \$500 million a year.

This is an important renewable resource industry with huge growth potential through product diversification, land development, technology and marketing. There is growing emphasis among consumers on quality and food safety as opposed to volume, and this shift in consumer preference is opening new opportunities for small-scale agriculture and the preparation of specialty food products.

A Progressive Conservative government will work with all sectors of the Agriculture and Agrifoods industry to:

- Design and implement a comprehensive agrifoods strategy that addresses the future growth and sustainability of this important industry.
- Invest in research and development to foster the diversification and commercialization of livestock and crops.
- Protect and promote agricultural uses and normal farm practices in prime agricultural areas.
- Increase forage and grain production as an effective way to lower cost and encourage higher dairy and meat production.
- Invest \$1 million to increase the number of cold storage facilities in the Province. A fundamental impediment to the growth and expansion of our root crop industry is a lack of cold storage facilities available to producers. We will improve and increase numbers of these facilities to enable current and future producers to grow and sell fresh Newfoundland and Labrador crops year-round.
- Support the use of new technologies and processes that make farms more productive and efficient, and engage specialists to advise and assist farmers on all aspects of farming, farm management, disease control and marketing.
- Provide training opportunities for farmers, farm workers and farm families to improve farming skills and knowledge through workshops, seminars and farm exchange programs.
- Develop financing products that provide assistance to farmers for improvement and expansion of farms, and to agrifood enterprises for processing, distribution and marketing of farm products.
- Create economic conditions that encourage private sector venture capital investment in value-added agrifoods businesses in the Province.
- Develop agriculture opportunities in Labrador. A Progressive Conservative government will work with industry in Labrador to identify real opportunities for growth in the region and commit to the growth and development of agriculture in Labrador.
- Help farms and processors to expand production by displacing imports and increasing exports of existing products, and to take advantage of new opportunities in food production.
- Work with producers to meet the ever-increasing consumer expectations for food safety and high quality in food products.
- Encourage the preparation and marketing of made-in-Newfoundland and Labrador precooked or deep frozen meals using the highest quality seafood, aquaculture, and agrifood products harvested in the Province under sustainable conditions.

- Equip producers with the tools and market information they need to sell their products at home and abroad.

## **FORESTS AND WILDLIFE**

### **Forest Management**

Communities that depend on forest resources can only be maintained if they are based on permanent industries sustained by the yield of well-managed forests. The ability to certify that forests are harvested in a sustainable manner is emerging as a key aspect of access to world markets. Responsible forest management today will make sure our forests and their bounty are available to us tomorrow.

A Progressive Conservative government will undertake a comprehensive review of the state of the Province's forests, and use the information to develop a scientifically based plan for forest management that:

- Respects the time it takes for forest rejuvenation, and incorporates reforestation in every development plan.
- Ensures an adequate supply of fibre to maintain production at existing paper mills.
- Restricts any new allocation of wood to existing value-added manufacturers.
- Secures a bright future for forest industries and forest workers through scientific forest management, proper planning, and promotion of silviculture.

### **Wildlife and Biodiversity**

The forests are significant on many other levels. Healthy forests are essential to sustaining our rich wildlife, beautiful scenery, and quality of life, as well as our economy. They are critical to moderating our climate and providing clean air and water. They enrich our soil and prevent its erosion, and regulate water flow. They are home to a variety of landscapes, pristine lakes, and a wide range of living things.

Extraordinary numbers of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and thousands of visitors use wildlife and their habitats every year for hunting,

angling and recreation, and to enjoy the beauty of our forestlands and the plants and animals they support. These uses generate tangible goods and employment, and contribute to the economic and social well being of the Province.

A basic objective of a Progressive Conservative government is to manage the development of our forests and coastal areas in ways that sustain and enhance wildlife populations and ecosystems, and support viable communities and economic development. We will achieve that by:

- Requiring that wildlife and ecosystem management objectives are included in forest and coastal management plans, so that wildlife populations survive and prosper in a variety of ecosystems.
- Developing a Province-wide system of wildlife areas and ecosystem and marine reserves.
- Incorporating the needs of the growing tourism and outdoor recreational sectors in forest and coastal resource management.

### **CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.**

A Progressive Conservative government will support the proposal to ACOA for the establishment of the *Centre for Excellence for Environmental Research, Development, Science and Technology* in Corner Brook. This Centre will partner with Memorial University and Sir Wilfred Grenfell College to make the Corner Brook area a national leader in environmental sciences. One of the Centre's objectives will be to help reduce environmental emissions and help Canada to meet its' commitments under the Kyoto Accord.

### **WATER PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT**

We are fortunate to have large sources of good quality water, and privileged to be relatively free of water-related illnesses that plague hundreds of millions of people around the world. Yet many of our once pristine waters are losing their

unspoiled quality. Water boil orders, periodic closures of municipal and rural water supplies, and occasional outbreaks of water-related illnesses underscore the need to maintain strict control over water quality.

A key objective of a Progressive Conservative government is to prevent the contamination of the Province's freshwater resources, and work to restore the wholesomeness of water where quality conditions are poor or threatened.

We will be vigilant in the management of our water, as with any other valuable resource. We will manage it in a way that leaves it unimpaired for our children and grandchildren, and we will be as focused on the economic value of water as we are on the economic value of nickel from Voisey's Bay or oil from Hibernia.

The global market for water is already enormous and growing. Demand has already spawned a new generation of multi-billion dollar corporations. We have a brief window of opportunity to legislate a balanced development strategy for this Province that protects water resources, assures fair benefits for the Province, and provides a hospitable and competitive environment for investors.

A Progressive Conservative government will not allow fresh water to leave the Province unless it is first bottled and labelled here, creating much needed investment and jobs in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

We will legislate a water resource development strategy that adheres to the following principles:

- Sound management and sustainable development of fresh water resources.
- Development of a fully integrated water resource industry, which includes value-added processing in the Province.
- A fair regime for assessing royalties and taxes, procurement of goods and services in the Province, and first consideration for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in employment and related training.
- Promotion of local ownership and local investment in the development of the primary resource and related industries.

When these policies are enshrined in law and their intent expressed in every government-industry agreement to develop our water resources, this Province and businesses in this Province will have the opportunity to become global players in what may well become the most important resource industry in the world.



# 3

## Healthy People

"As with any family, my family has had its share of health challenges. My grandson was born prematurely and experienced significant medical problems during his first year on earth. Earlier this year, I underwent major back surgery, and my wife battled and won a courageous battle with cancer. Thankfully, it was my first major extended hospital stay, but it also reinforced my understanding of the incredible commitment made by our dedicated health care professionals, and the stresses that come with being a patient with an uncertain prognosis. In my travels throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, it has also become obvious that despite the enormous efforts of our professionals, our health care system would not work without the efforts of our tireless volunteers and the generous donations and contributions of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. But realistically, dedicated professionals and an incredible volunteer base can only do so much. My objective in presenting the following policies is to recognize this reality. We have to decide just how long patients should be expected to wait to see a doctor, undergo a diagnostic test, or receive a medical procedure. We then need to take corrective measures, such as ensuring that front line workers have the tools they need to do their jobs, even if that means transferring funds from administration to health care delivery." -**Danny Williams**

### PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The debate to date about health has focused on acute and chronic illness, but there is a much larger picture to maintaining a healthy population, bringing with it a much broader array of public services.

Population statistics prove that health status mirrors socio-economic status. We are reminded almost daily of health problems caused or aggravated by biological and chemical contaminants in the environment. Life experiences, such as the effects of unemployment, family breakup, bereavement, or other emotional stress can have pronounced effects on health at all ages, and life style choices, such as smoking, unhealthy diet and lack of exercise are the most preventable causes of disease.

The challenge for government is to coordinate policies and spending in ways that lead to a healthier population and less demand for treatment of acute and chronic illnesses.

A Progressive Conservative government will incorporate health and wellness considerations into all decision-making processes across the whole of government, with particular emphasis on the following:

- Day care, early childhood education, child nutrition, and support for families in order to yield lifelong health benefits for children.
- Incorporating health education, preventative health, mental health services and addiction counselling in the primary health care system.

- Funding an internet-based health and wellness information network to help people make better-informed health decisions.
- Integrating public health considerations into economic policies to enhance employment and reduce poverty.
- Making the health of people a priority in environmental decisions, and review existing environmental policies to ensure there are measures to adequately assess health risks.

### **SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Progressive Conservatives respect the positive role that sport and physical activity play in health, and in the social and economic aspects of community and individual life. We support equal opportunity and access to sport and physical activity for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and recognize that affirmative action programs must be instituted to ensure equal opportunities for rural and Aboriginal communities, women, persons with disabilities, persons with limited or low income, and at-risk youths.

Working with the federal and municipal governments, school boards, and other partners, a Progressive Conservative government will:

- Integrate physical education and physical activity into a broader health promotion and disease prevention program across all age groups.
- Support initiatives that increase physical activity levels for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in schools, the community, at home and in the workplace.
- Develop opportunities for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to participate in organized sport through regional programs for athletes, coaches and officials around the Province and the promotion of better connections between community and sport resources.
- Sponsor summer and winter games and other multi-sport games as a means to develop athletes, coaches, officials, sport administrators and skilled volunteers.

### **ERADICATING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION**

Poverty affects a significant portion of our population. It is especially important and persistent for single-parent families, seniors, persons with disabilities, and aboriginal people. Children in low-income families are most at risk. By national standards, more than one in five children in this Province live in poverty, and many others live in low-income families that teeter on the brink of poverty.

We know that poverty is associated with a host of other problems that undermine social and economic development. Progress in learning, health, and success in work often mirror the socio-economic experiences of families.

The problems of poverty are not solved by make-work projects or government handouts, but are significantly diminished by education, childcare, good nutrition, recreation, and employment. There is also evidence of substantial down-stream savings in public expenditures on health, social services, and the justice system from public investment in programs that have proven long-term value in reducing poverty.

The primary objective of a Progressive Conservative government will be to transform Newfoundland and Labrador over a ten-year period from a Province with the most poverty to a Province with the least poverty, comparing after tax income and cost of living. We will achieve this objective by:

- Access to education and skill development through lifelong learning opportunities.
- Access to jobs through quality employment opportunities in the private sector, and measures to improve labour market integration.
- Reforms in social assistance to encourage skill development and participation in the workforce.
- Removing low-income individuals and families from paying provincial income tax, and indexing the Newfoundland and

Labrador Child Benefit and the Low Income Seniors' Benefit.

- Keeping mandatory minimum wage rates on par with the rest of Atlantic Canada.
- Improving social housing and access to health, nutrition and family services.
- Fully participating in a national commitment to early childhood development policies that reduce child poverty and promote gender equity; seek to reconcile work and family life through parental leave, child tax credits, and school lunch programs; and generally improve the quality of life for children and families.

### **RESPECTING EQUAL RIGHTS**

A Progressive Conservative government is committed to work with groups and individuals that face significant barriers to full participation in the social and economic life of the Province. Progressive Conservatives in the House of Assembly and in government will lead by example towards achieving maximum inclusiveness and equal opportunity for all.

- A Progressive Conservative government will ensure that all laws, regulations, policies, and administrative decisions respect the equality rights guaranteed under the Constitution.
- In particular, we will ensure that government policies and practices reflect the concerns, perspectives and experiences of women, and fully respect women's rights.
- We will lead by example to increase the employment of persons with disabilities, and encourage their full participation and enjoyment of employment, social and leisure activities.
- An Equal Opportunities Committee of the House of Assembly will monitor and report on the Legislature's and government's performances on equality issues, and promote mainstreaming of equal opportunities in the Legislature and throughout government and government agencies.

- The Public Service Commission will be restored as an independent agency mandated to make impartial recommendations on hiring and promotion in the public service, and to promote mainstreaming of equal opportunity in the public service.

### **COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Most people with mental illness do not need hospitalization. Instead, they need adequate care so they can stay in their own homes in their own communities, and work effectively towards recovery. Under a Progressive Conservative government, individuals with mental illness will be able to access the following home care and community services:

- A client-centred case management program that focuses on teaching about and monitoring medications, and assists in accessing the psychiatric services, primary medical care, occupational therapy, counseling, and other services needed.
- A professionally staffed crisis support service for individuals experiencing acute psychological distress.
- Personal support and homemaker help that focuses on assistance with daily living activities and life skills teaching.
- Respite care for families who care for loved ones who are mentally ill.

### **SERVICES FOR SENIORS**

By 2025, more than one in four Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will be 65 years of age and older, which means that the seniors population will have more than doubled in size.

Governments at all levels will have to expand programs and services to meet the needs of an aging population, and make sure they are well planned and coordinated across departments and agencies.

- A PC government will develop a strategy to upgrade long-term care facilities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Facilities

will not be built through a public-private partnership but rather will occur through normal government procurement practices.

- A Progressive Conservative government will designate the Department of Health and Community Services as the lead Ministry to co-ordinate all of government programs and services for seniors.
- The Minister of Health and Community Services will chair a *Ministerial Council for Ageing and Seniors* to ensure there are strong links to other departments, services and professionals to foster comprehensive programs and services that support the independence and well being of seniors.

The Ministerial Council will guide the development and implementation of an action plan that will:

- Introduce an income-based special needs assistance program that provides a lump-sum cash payment of up to \$250 to eligible low-income seniors.
  - Shift the focus of seniors' care so that the first priority is for people to remain in their homes and other types of supportive living arrangements rather than requiring them to move into nursing homes or long-term care facilities.
  - Increase supportive housing alternatives for seniors and expand home care services substantially to take the pressure off continuing care facilities and acute care hospitals.
  - Establish healthy aging as a priority for government, including a greater emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles, preventing illness and injury, and involving seniors directly in planning and implementing programs and services that are important to them.
  - Establish and monitor provincial standards for long-term care, and adopt new funding arrangements that give seniors control over where they go.
- Adopt a coordinated access process to assess needs and ensure appropriate access to the full range of health and continuing care services, including personal care, food services, and housing arrangements.
  - Increase the number of qualified professionals working with older people, and set standards for skills and competencies for people working in continuing care services.
  - Amend the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program to protect more seniors from high or catastrophic drug costs, by capping costs based upon income and actual drug costs.
  - Involve physicians, nurses and pharmacists in developing strategies to assist seniors in managing and monitoring their drug therapies.
  - We will establish a *Division of Ageing and Seniors* in the Department of Health and Community Services that will be a centre of expertise and a focal point for information on ageing and seniors. The Division will also be the Secretariat to the *Ministerial Council for Ageing and Seniors* to facilitate co-ordination of programs and services across government.

We will also appoint a *Provincial Advisory Council on Ageing*, composed of seniors and experts on aging, to advise government on matters related to the quality of life for seniors, and facilitate public discussion on aging.

## HEALTH CARE

### A Shared Responsibility

Although health is a provincial responsibility, Medicare is a national commitment to make sure Canadians get quality care when they need it regardless of where they live or their ability to pay. If Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are to have health services that meet national standards, a substantial share of the financing must come from Ottawa.



A Progressive Conservative government will be accountable to the people of Canada for the way it spends federal money to uphold the principles of the *Canada Health Act*. Accountability, however, is a two-way street. Ottawa must also be accountable to provide financial transfers that enable the Province to deliver health services that measure up to the principles of the *Canada Health Act*, which is federal law.

- A Progressive Conservative government will seek restoration of federal transfers for health and social programs to the 1994/95 level adjusted for inflation, and push the federal government to build indexes into the Canada Health and Social Transfer that reflect provincial differences in population density, population ageing, population growth, as well as differences in cost and ability to pay.

#### **Predictable Long Term Funding**

A priority for a Progressive Conservative government will be to address needs in acute and chronic care services, which will require federal and provincial commitments to adequate, predictable and long term funding.

- A Progressive Conservative government will approve multi-year budgets for health care that will be adequate to support approved health services, maintain safe and acceptable levels of human resources, permit the cost-effective use of modern technology, and include escalators for increases in health care use, population aging and population growth.

#### **Expand Medicare to Include Home Care and PharmaCare**

Medicare was designed to pay for "medically necessary" hospital care and physician services. Until recently, people were discharged from hospital either fully recovered or able to care for themselves at home. Patients are now routinely discharged soon after treatment to recuperate at home.

As more of the responsibility for care is transferred to homes, more of the cost is shifting to patients and their families. Health care is once again a financial burden for thousands of families, and an obstacle to universal access to medically necessary health services.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians want Medicare updated to include the variety of ways medically necessary services are provided in the practice of modern medicine. As *The National Forum on Health*, chaired by Prime Minister Jean Chretien, reported in 1997, "Preserving Medicare also means adapting to new realities by expanding publicly funded services to include all medically necessary services; and, in the first instance, home care and drugs; and reforming primary care organizations and delivery." We agree.

A Progressive Conservative government will work with the federal government to promote important reforms that will bring Medicare in line with the practice of modern medicine, including:

- A *national prescription drug plan* to ensure that patients living at home are entitled to the same pharmaceutical benefits as they would be if they were in hospital or in a long-term care facility.
- A *national home care plan* to help pay the cost of medically necessary services and personal care for patients in their homes, in cases where providing these services reduces hospitalization or prevents or delays admission to acute care or long-term care facilities.

#### **Focus on Patient Care**

What Newfoundlanders and Labradorians want from the health system is really quite simple. They want quality medical care when they need it.

- The objective of a Progressive Conservative government is to improve timely access to quality health care while ensuring our health system is sustainable into the future.
- We will refocus the delivery of health care on the needs of patients. We will do this by

developing and applying a *Patient Charter*, which will clearly establish individual entitlement to publicly funded services, standards of care, access to treatments for which timeliness has a material impact on outcomes, the information needed to make treatment decisions, and any instances where adequate standards of care cannot be met.

### **Consistent and Affordable Health Services**

Medicare does not insure unlimited health services. It insures medically necessary services provided by doctors and hospitals. However, the *Canada Health Act* does not specify which services fit into that broad category, and Provinces are left to determine the scope of services they will cover in their separate provincial health plans.

Determining which services should be covered is difficult, but critically important to the sustainability of our health care system. The Liberal government in this Province, acting out of political expediency, passed the dilemma off to regional health boards. The inevitable result is a patchwork of health services around the Province.

- A Progressive Conservative government will provide meaningful operational guidance to health managers and medical practitioners by specifying the scope of services that will be publicly funded. The scope of services will be determined based on professional advice, applying transparent processes, and will be regularly reassessed on the basis of need and financial sustainability.

### **Timely Access to Health Services**

Waiting for appropriate health services exacts a heavy toll in personal, economic and social terms that, in some circumstances, may be greater than the cost of providing the needed service. These costs are too often overlooked when assessing the cost and value of health services.

- Following medical advice, a Progressive Conservative government will set the

maximum length of time a patient can be on a waiting list for diagnostic and treatment procedures based on health needs and quality of life considerations.

### **Access to Quality Care**

Timely access to health services must be tied to a resource strategy that makes sure there are sufficient professionals to provide quality care, as well as adequate facilities and technology.

A Progressive Conservative government will develop a provincial health services plan that will result in the most efficient access to health services. The plan will include as key components:

- Primary health care clinics to provide accessible front-line care to people across the Province, so services are well coordinated and teams of health professionals work together to meet people's needs.
- Encouragement and support for private practice family and general practitioners to provide a full range of primary care services, including collaborative primary care practices with funded nurses and other health professionals in physicians' offices.
- Access to essential services on a 24 hours a day, 7 days-a-week basis.
- Regional and provincial centres, where specialist physicians and advanced diagnostic facilities are available, so as to optimize efficient access to specialized treatment and diagnostic services.
- Improve the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program to protect more seniors and families from high or catastrophic drug costs, by capping costs based upon income and actual drug costs.
- Strategies to help individuals and their families cope with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, cancer, and HIV/AIDS, and ensure they get the best possible treatment.

- A travel assistance program to provide more equitable access to selected health services that are not available in the region.
- Investment in home and community health care services that keep patients at home and out of hospitals and long-term care facilities.
- Chronic and long-term care facilities and services that meet the needs of patients who cannot live at home, and free up more costly acute care beds.

### **Access to Technology**

Modern medicine uses an array of technology that was unavailable ten or twenty years ago, and which can play an important role in improving patients' lives and reducing costs.

A Progressive Conservative government will establish policies that allow the people of the Province and their health providers to reap the benefits of innovative medical and information technology. We will develop and implement a technology plan with the following components:

- Replacement of ageing medical equipment and investment in new technology to ensure timely access to the most up-to-date and needed medical technology.
- Access to appropriate diagnostic and treatment technology, including staffing and maintenance policies that make sure medical diagnostic and care equipment is adequately staffed, fully utilized and properly maintained.
- Access to telemedicine for health professionals, and public access to health information and medical advice through the Internet and by telephone.
- Electronic information systems for storing and managing patient records to create a seamless flow of patient care information across delivery systems.

### **Health Quality Council**

People have a right to expect that all health services decisions be guided by an objective

and transparent assessment and evaluation of the quality of health care provided in the Province.

A Progressive Conservative government will establish a *Health Quality Council* made up of recognized experts to provide objective and timely advice in providing the highest possible quality care for the people of the Province. The Quality Council will have the mandate to:

- Develop standards in health care delivery, including the provision of advice on the use of treatments and the identification of outdated or ineffective treatments.
- Monitor and assess the effectiveness of health services and the performance of the health system.
- Report regularly to the House of Assembly and the public on the health needs of the people of the Province and the performance of the health system in meeting those need.

### **Valuing Care Providers**

Our health system is staffed with skilled and dedicated professionals, who have a wealth of expertise that has largely been ignored over the past decade at both the policy and operational levels. Health professionals can and should play a positive and constructive role in shaping the future direction and delivery of health services in the Province.

- A Progressive Conservative government will create formal mechanisms to involve workers in the health care industry in policy, planning and operational decisions at the provincial and regional levels, and seek their advice and ideas on how to get maximum value for every health dollar spent.

We will ensure the Province has the health professionals it needs by:

- Creating full time positions where needed.
- Working with the health professions and regional health authorities to develop comprehensive provincial strategies to recruit and retain doctors, nurses and other health professionals in areas of demand and

where shortages are anticipated in the next ten years.

- Financial incentives and student debt assistance for health professionals who agree to practice in under-served areas of the Province for a specified period of time.

Many health professionals work long hours under stressful conditions and inadequate opportunities for professional development. Many feel their work is unappreciated and are pessimistic about their future in the Province.

A Progressive Conservative government will:

- Ensure that health professionals receive remuneration and benefits comparable to their peers in Atlantic Canada within a reasonable time frame.
- Increase support for rural health care professionals to reduce workload and enhance their quality of life.
- Make available advanced training opportunities for health professionals practicing in communities distant from regional centres.

### **Effectively Managing Health Care Services**

The Department of Health and Community Services spends too much time micro-managing the health system, and too little time articulating policy. As a result, health care suffers from vague direction and uncertain authority, and managers continue to apply patchwork solutions to a system that is becoming more unmanageable every day.

We can't improve the health system unless we know who is accountable to whom and for what. If we are clear on what is expected, who is responsible and who is accountable, we can assess performance and take the necessary steps to improve results.

- A Progressive Conservative government will make sure that all participants in the delivery of health services have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and the corresponding

authority to manage health services for the benefit of the people of the Province.

- We will assume the responsibility to provide direction and overall guidance to the health system, and ensure that health boards and health providers have the resources they need to deliver quality health services. Health providers and managers will be able to implement long-term plans, based on clearly articulated policies, without political interference.

### **Review of Regional Structure**

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador occupy an enormous geographic area with diverse health needs and expectations. This diversity is best addressed by assigning operational management of health services to regional authorities that are closer to the people, and can get community input into decisions affecting the delivery of health services.

While we believe regional structures make sense, there is a need to openly examine the effectiveness of the existing regional structure. The administration of health services provided in hospitals, communities, and homes should be amalgamated at the regional level to improve services to clients, avoid unnecessary costs, and make sure clients are getting the right type of care in the right type of facility.



# 4

## Education & Lifelong Learning

"As a province, our potential is unlimited and the time has come to capitalize on our human, economic and natural resources. Ultimately, however, the future of Newfoundland and Labrador depends upon our single most precious resource – our children and grandchildren. Schools represent our highest aspirations, and a highly educated population is the key to a bright and successful future for Newfoundland and Labrador. Whenever I visit schools in the province, the character of our young people and the quality and energy of our teachers always inspire me. I am motivated to improve both their physical learning environments and their educational opportunities. It is our responsibility to provide for them every chance to learn and succeed and we will achieve this by providing safe and caring schools, and a top quality education that will allow them to compete provincially, nationally and internationally. In the real world, a superior education is the most valuable gift you can give to a child, and my government is committed to fostering a spirit of life long learning in Newfoundland and Labrador." – **Danny Williams**

### SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Many different factors affect the well-being and learning of children, including economic and social conditions, nutrition, the quality of health services, and places in the community for play, recreation and social interaction among friends. The range of issues spans every area of public policy, and requires active partnerships with everyone who can and should contribute to the well being of children and youth.

A Progressive Conservative government will establish a collaborative approach to youth policy that will integrate concern for the well being of children and young people into all decision-making processes across the whole of government, with particular emphasis on the following:

- Early childhood education programs, pre-natal care, child nutrition, and support for families in order to yield lifelong learning and health benefits for children and youth.

- A planned and sequential health and physical education program in schools to develop a lifelong commitment to regular exercise, proper diet, and control of stress.
- Access to comprehensive health and child protection services that deal promptly and effectively with emotional and behavioural issues that impact on the health and safety of children and youth.
- Sharing school and community facilities for the mutual benefit of students and adults, and to expand opportunities for children and youth to pursue recreational and cultural interests as well as social interaction with their peers.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

Learning begins at home. Parents are the first and most important teachers of children, and many find it difficult to balance family responsibilities with the demands of the workplace. The rise in single parent families and

dual earner households leaves little time and resources for the adult interactions with children that lay the foundation for all future learning.

Progressive Conservatives share a strong public commitment to young children and their families. All children should be able to benefit from high quality early childhood experiences to promote their healthy development and learning.

A Progressive Conservative government will:

- Promote the central role of families in nurturing the early learning experiences of children, and create places and settings to help families provide for their children's early childhood learning needs.
- Encourage a national cost-shared agreement to provide fully accessible, high-quality early childhood development services.
- Fully participate in a national commitment to early childhood development policies that reduce child poverty and promote gender equity; seek to reconcile work and family life through parental leave, child tax credits, and school lunch programs; and generally improve the quality of life for children and families.

A Progressive Conservative government will recognize Early Childhood Learning as an important part of the education process, and create strong partnerships between Early Childhood Learning and the Primary Education systems to encourage a smooth transition for children and a focus on all aspects of child development.

- The Minister of Education will chair a *Ministerial Council for Early Childhood Learning*, which will foster comprehensive programs across government departments and agencies that cater to the learning needs of children and their families.
- The *Ministerial Council for Early Childhood Learning* will be mandated to develop strategies for efficient allocation of public resources to support Early Childhood

Learning programs and services across the whole of government, with particular emphasis on support for low-income families and children with special needs.

- We will establish a Division of Early Childhood Learning in the Department of Education, which will be a centre of expertise and a focal point for information on Early Childhood Learning. The Division will also be the Secretariat to the *Ministerial Council for Early Childhood Learning* to facilitate co-ordination of Early Childhood Learning policies, programs and services across the whole of government.

## **PRIMARY, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

In Newfoundland and Labrador, everyone is entitled to quality learning opportunities in public schools from kindergarten through high school, whatever their ability and needs, and wherever they live.

We are in a new age of information and global competition, where the skill to learn is the most effective way of getting and keeping a job, and where the most productive economies are those that have the best-educated and best-trained workforces.

Access to quality education is fundamental to the success of our economy and the prosperity of our people. We will guarantee it for every child.

### **A Commitment to Educational Equity**

All children have the right to learn. Education policy must strive to ensure that all students can access a complete range of educational programs, services and supports that meet their learning needs regardless of school size, geographic location or ability to pay. Educational funding must be sufficient to fully implement these principles of access, opportunity, and equity in every school in the Province.

A Progressive Conservative government will:

- Reinvest savings from population decline into programs and services to ensure that all children have access to a quality education.
- Guarantee levels of educational services for each student relative to educational need, and allocate the resources required to support these services in every school in the Province.
- Identify students who have special needs at the earliest stage possible, and provide support for schools to reduce the need for bureaucratic assessment processes.

### **A Commitment to Successful Schools**

Schools represent our highest aspirations. We expect them to nurture strong social and ethical values in our children and the skills to achieve economic success and personal satisfaction in their adult lives. We want schools to help students reach their full potential, and to be person-friendly places where gender, religious and ethnic differences, and different physical and intellectual abilities, are acknowledged and accepted. We entrust schools with the futures of our children and the best of our values. No school can be allowed to fail. To make sure schools are biased to succeed, a Progressive Conservative government will:

- Allocate resources to support learning in every classroom in the Province.
- Re-assign redundant teaching units to cap class sizes in the primary grades at 25 students, to be phased in by grade level over three years starting with kindergarten; the cap will be extended to elementary classes beginning with grade four in 2008.
- Help all schools to improve performance, but will target under-performing schools and help them reach the level of success we expect for all children. As part of that initiative, we will identify what works in high-performing schools, and assist principals and teachers in those schools to help other schools improve their performance.

- Build a complete curriculum for our schools that provides a solid foundation in the basics. The curriculum will focus on reading, writing, spelling, math, science, computer skills and technology, and foster learning about our history and culture.
- Introduce a mandatory Newfoundland and Labrador history and culture course in the school curriculum.
- Expand distance education offerings to broaden the curriculum and facilitate excellence in learning for high school students across the province.
- Set achievement standards in core areas of the curriculum and assess school performance based on those standards at least once every 5 years, and we will legislate reliable and fair Province-wide evaluation and reporting systems to inform parents about their children's achievement.
- Our successful schools program will include a multi-year plan to improve resources for children with special needs that will be developed in consultation with educators, child development specialists, and parents of special needs children. We will ensure that special-needs children receive the attention they need, and that classroom teachers have the support they need to teach them.
- Understand that the conditions for successful learning must be supported and protected in every classroom. We will make classrooms safe places to learn by setting an enforceable code of conduct, and backing up teachers, principals and students with child health, social services and legal supports to reduce disruptive behaviour in the Province's classrooms.

### **Achieving National Standards in Basic Learning Skills**

Literacy and numeracy are the foundations for all learning. It is crucial for children to develop these skills as early as possible to ensure their success in later learning, and in overcoming educational and economic disadvantage.

- A Progressive Conservative government will make literacy and numeracy by age 11 a priority for all students.
- We will put in place a Provincial Literacy and Numeracy Plan designed to help students who need support to achieve age-related levels of literacy and numeracy in the primary and elementary grades. The Provincial Literacy and Numeracy Plan will also set standards and targets for School Districts to achieve national norms in literacy and numeracy by 2010.

### **Information Technology Skills**

In the information age, it is in everyone's best interest to be computer literate. A computer is a basic tool in almost every place of work and in learning. It can help us get a job, learn new skills and advance in our careers, access news and information, do on-line shopping and banking, and manage virtually every routine of our lives. People will not be able to function efficiently on the job, or in the management of their personal lives, without knowing how to save and open a file, use a word processing program or spreadsheet, access the internet, or send and receive email.

- A Progressive Conservative government will implement a multi-year program to make sure all young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are computer and Internet literate by high school graduation.

### **Making the Right Choices**

High school graduates face what is often a bewildering array of choices at the post-secondary level, some of which concern choices of courses to take while in high school. All too often, students make program choices in high school that preclude their participation in certain types of post-secondary programs later. Other concerns include choices of type of post-secondary education, field of study, costs, potential financing, including student loans and scholarships. Often, neither students nor their parents have the information they need to make intelligent and informed choices.

- A Progressive Conservative government will ensure that students and parents are able to access the knowledge and skills they will need to make appropriate choices about further education and career opportunities at key transition points in elementary and high school, and in preparation for high school graduation.

### **A Commitment to Excellence in Teaching**

Students bring a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities to school, which affect individual learning outcomes. But within the learning environment of the school what matters most is good teaching. The most important thing any government can do to improve learning and raise achievement levels is to make sure that every student in the Province has access to a good teacher.

A Progressive Conservative government will work with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association, school boards, and teacher educators to develop and implement a plan that will place an expert teacher in every classroom in the Province. The plan will form the basis for significant investment in five areas:

- A recruitment and retention strategy for teaching professionals.
- Improved teacher training.
- High quality professional development connected to teachers' needs.
- Instructional materials and technology that support good teaching.
- Teacher evaluation processes that improve teaching.

### **Safe, Healthy and Caring Schools**

Healthy, safe and comfortable school buildings are essential for schools to succeed in their core mission of educating children. Children and young people depend on the adults around them to protect them from illness and harm, and we must be responsible and diligent in ensuring their safety and good health.



The goal of a Progressive Conservative government is to ensure that each school has a healthy environment that is safe for children and suitable for learning.

We will develop a capital financing and maintenance plan for schools that will:

- Meet environmental standards, and provide a safe and clean learning and teaching environment in which students and teachers share a sense of comfort, health and well-being.
- Recognize differences in facility needs among school jurisdictions.
- Commit funding over a reasonable period of time to provide a degree of certainty for capital planning and implementation.

### **School Bus Safety**

School buses in this Province carry our most precious cargo – our children. School transportation must be held to the highest levels of safety.

- A Progressive Conservative government will review school bus regulations to make sure they meet rigorous safety standards and provide the best possible protection for children.
- We will commit \$2 million over four years towards upgrading the school bus fleet with a goal of reducing the number of buses that are more than 10 years old.
- We will review driver training programs and hiring practices for bus operators, as well as programs to educate students, school staff and motorists about safe behaviour that reduces the risk of accidents and injury to students.
- At the conclusion of our review of school bus transportation, we will bring in a comprehensive school bus safety program that will provide the Province's school children with the safest school transportation possible.

### **Responsible and Accountable School Boards and School Councils**

The past decade has seen responsibilities moving away from locally elected school boards to the Department of Education and the Department of Works Services and Transportation. As a result, political and bureaucratic decisions often interfere with the efficient management of the Province's schools.

A Progressive Conservative government is not interested in running school boards. However, the Province has a duty to ensure that all boards manage education finances responsibly and are accountable for their decisions, and that all those decisions comply with the Schools Act, meet provincial performance standards, and deliver quality education.

Progressive Conservatives see school councils as a positive step to making our school system more accountable. We believe parents have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect their children's education. The education system as a whole will benefit from their input. However, school councils are not as effective as they should be. There is confusion over their role and mandate, and little training or support to assist them in assuming meaningful roles in school improvement.

A Progressive Conservative government will:

- Give local school boards more autonomy and control over the delivery of education services, subject to provincial curriculum and performance standards, and approve multi-year budgets for capital and program funding to improve long-term education planning and budgeting.
- Require school boards and school principals to consult with school councils in preparing and spending school operating budgets.
- Delegate appropriate responsibility to school councils to promote school improvement, and provide them with comparative data on school performance, so that they can make meaningful decisions about school improvement.

- Require boards and school councils to jointly publish annual school progress reports giving emphasis to school improvement and student performance.
- Require school boards to conduct all discussions and decisions, except matters of personal privacy, in public sessions and by public vote.

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Higher levels of education generate higher levels of employment and income, and greater accessibility to post-secondary education generates a more equal and open society.

The post-secondary system has suffered in recent years at the hands of federal and provincial governments that have cut funding and shifted cost to students and their families. Post-secondary education is a largely ignored victim of federal cuts to the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), and of provincial decisions to spend what was left of the CHST to maintain health services. The consequences include: increased student tuition and fees; vastly increased student borrowing and accompanying indebtedness; loss of talented researchers, scholars and lecturers; crumbling infrastructure; and, deteriorating laboratories and library collections.

We need a new national and provincial commitment to provide adequate resources to post-secondary education and to the students who attend post-secondary institutions.

- A Progressive Conservative government will seek restoration of Canada Health and Social Transfer to the 1994/95 levels adjusted for inflation, and restoration of dedicated funding for post-secondary education.
- We will urge the federal government to build indexes into the CHST that reflect increases in the use of funded services, as well as provincial cost and ability to pay.
- We will work with the federal government to improve student financial assistance to better support students in need, and ensure

effective implementation of the *Canada Study Grants* for students with disabilities.

## Improving Affordability and Equity

Affordability is a key element in post-secondary opportunity. Tuition costs have increased faster than family incomes, as have transportation and living expenses for students who must live away from home to get a college or university education. The rising costs mean that students must borrow more than ever before in relation to their family incomes. Many students are graduating with crippling debt loads.

Progressive Conservatives are committed to the idea that talent and motivation, rather than financial resources or geography, should govern post-secondary opportunity. The issue of cost and high debt loads on students must be addressed in the context of affordability for all students, regardless of their demographic circumstances.

A Progressive Conservative government will work with postsecondary institutions to develop provincial funding formulas that:

- Make sure all qualified students in the Province have access to postsecondary education.
- Take into account the economic circumstances of families and the relationship of tuition levels and living expenses to family incomes. When costs go up, provincial funding will be increased to mitigate the effect on students' ability to pay relative to their family incomes.
- Cover increased operating costs of Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic, so they can freeze tuition fees, so they can maintain the current level and quality of programs.
- Introduce a loan remission program and needs-based grants that will make post-secondary education accessible and affordable for all qualified students.
- Create an incentive program through a business income tax credit for employers to

recruit new graduates, and encourage government, government agencies and crown corporations to hire students.

In the meantime, we will continue the current freeze on tuition fees and discuss with the University what actions may have to be taken to offset the cost of the tuition freeze to the University.

To ensure the Province will have the highly skilled workers it needs, a Progressive Conservative government will establish a provincial income tax credit for post-secondary graduates who accept employment in professions and industries where there are skills shortages or in under-served areas of the Province. The tax credit would allow graduates to write off their student debt or an amount equivalent to the average debt load in their program, whichever is less, over a period of 5 to 10 years.

#### **Performance and Accountability**

Post-secondary students and their families have a right to expect that post-secondary decisions be guided by objective and transparent assessments of post-secondary programs and services. Following consultations with post-secondary institutions and post-secondary students, a Progressive Conservative Government will:

- Review the Province's post-secondary education system to ensure that it provides the best possible instructional, research and community-oriented services for Newfoundland and Labrador in the twenty-first century. This will lead to an updating of the Memorial University Act to make sure the province's only University serves the interests of communities and people in all regions of the Province.
- Establish an effective mechanism for regularly evaluating the financial and program decisions of Memorial University and public and private colleges, and use the information to make sure students receive full value for the dollars they invest in their education.
- Double student representation on the Board of Regents at Memorial University, to ensure students have a greater voice in university affairs

#### **ADULT LEARNING**

There is an ever-increasing demand for well-educated and skilled workers in all sectors of the economy and in all areas of the Province. Most new jobs require post-secondary education, and the skills required for many conventional occupations are changing rapidly as new technologies and new industries emerge.

These realities mean that post-secondary education must not only supply well-educated and highly skilled new entrants to the workforce, they also mean that post-secondary institutions and employers must make it possible for adult workers to continuously renew and upgrade their education and job skills. A Progressive Conservative government will:

- Help create a framework of opportunities for people to learn, and remove barriers that prevent them from improving their skills and education.
- Build stronger links between education and employment by creating partnerships with post-secondary institutions, business and labour in key industry sectors to forecast skill requirements and plan ways of meeting them.
- Work with post-secondary institutions to introduce more courses in information and communication technology, and integrate technology training into more areas of advanced education to maximize the benefits of new technologies in all areas of the economy.
- Encourage post-secondary institutions to offer courses through extension services, distance education, and the Internet to bring high-quality instruction to working people in their home communities; and we will provide tax and other financial incentives to employers who support essential skills development for their employees.

# 5

## Responsible and Responsive Government

"Above all else, a government must be accountable and responsive to the people. Elected officials are the people's representatives, the people's voice, and must at all times act in the best interests of the Province as a whole. In particular, financial accountability and transparency is critical to any successful and effective government. It is a profound and significant responsibility which we as an elected body must never lose sight of, as ultimately our decisions determine the future course of Newfoundland and Labrador. My government will provide real financial management, real transparency, and real accountability. Ours will be a new approach, and one which will benefit every Newfoundlander and Labradorian in a positive and powerful way." –

**Danny Williams**

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

One of the greatest barriers that have prevented the government of Newfoundland and Labrador from addressing the real world issues of job creation, outmigration, health care and education is the Province's weak and fragile fiscal position. Through the development of new business opportunities in the private sector and targeted government investment, a Progressive Conservative government is committed to increasing the Province's revenue stream.

Unfortunately, it will take more than increased revenues to put our fiscal house in order. It will also require sound fiscal management of government's current expenses. Our fiscal policies will keep a tight rein on government spending, and orient new spending to areas that enhance economic growth.

In order to stabilize government's fiscal position, a Progressive Conservative government proposes the following policies:

- Keeping real program spending constant by limiting the annual growth in spending to the anticipated growth in inflation. New needs that arise will be accommodated within this budget constraint.
- Ensuring value for money by eliminating ineffective and inefficient programs, and by setting objectives for program spending and tracking results.
- Halting the practice of year-end spending to use up un-spent budget allocations, and assign any unanticipated budget surplus to debt reduction.
- Reviewing financing arrangements. In 2001-02, the province spent \$700 million to service its debt. We will immediately review all financing arrangements in all government departments and crown agencies to reduce interest costs. Such a review will include all debt, investments and cash management practices. We will also review the \$1 billion sinking fund to determine if a portion should be used to



reduce the Province's debt and reduce interest costs.

- Approximately 40% of all government expenditures go towards salaries and employee benefits. Over the next five years, approximately 25% of the public service will be eligible for retirement. A Progressive Conservative government will use this five-year period to reduce the size of the public sector through attrition.
- Conducting a review of government's fleet of approximately 1,000 light vehicles to determine how many are necessary for government operations and downsize accordingly. We will also conduct a cost benefit study to determine whether these vehicles should be purchased or leased.
- Addressing travel expenditures. All travel expenditures for elected and non-elected officials will be reduced. Spousal travel for elected members will be frozen indefinitely.
- Reviewing all computer systems presently in operation or under development to determine their utility. Those with questionable benefit will be eliminated.
- Strengthening the Public Tendering Act. All government departments and agencies will be required to comply with a strengthened Public Tendering Act with an aim to strengthening competition and eliminating costly lawsuits that occur as a result of violations to the Act.
- Reviewing all government owned and leased space with an objective of rationalizing space requirements. Similarly, all government owned assets will be reviewed to determine if it can be provided for a lesser cost by the private sector or if it should be sold.
- Improving and strengthening the process for collecting monies owed to government. All government fees will be reviewed to determine if they are a barrier to economic development.

- Reviewing the number of cellular telephones in government and conduct a cost benefit analysis of various cellular telephone purchasing programs and user packages.

During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will apply expenditure controls and effective program management to eliminate operating deficits and reduce debt to a prudent level. Our key fiscal targets are:

- Eliminate the total capital and current account deficit by 2008.
- A net debt to GDP ratio of 40% or less by 2008.
- Annual payments to the public sector pension funds that will achieve real year-over-year reductions in the unfunded liability of public sector pension plans

#### **Financial Accountability**

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have every right to know how government and its agencies spend their money, and if they spend it wisely. Good fiscal management and accountability will contribute to the economic health of the Province

During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will bring in a *Transparency and Accountability Act* which will provide the legislative framework for the conduct of fiscal policy, encourage better decision-making by the government, strengthen accountability and ensure more informed public debate about fiscal policy.

*The Transparency and Accountability Act* will require government to:

- Adopt consolidated accrual accounting in the preparation and reporting of the provincial budget and budget documents.
- Fully disclose the impact of government's fiscal decisions over a three-year forecasting period in semi-annual economic and fiscal updates.

- Require the Department of Finance to prepare and publish three-year forecasts about the impact of policy decisions and significant economic developments on fiscal performance and the performance of the provincial economy.

These requirements mean that government has to be transparent about the short and long term impact of its spending and taxation decisions and economic development initiatives. Such transparency will lead to more stable fiscal policy, promote economic growth and give people a measure of certainty about the delivery of public services.

Government has an obligation not to spend or raise money without the prior consent of the legislature, or to continue to spend money when there is no longer a clear and cost effective public benefit. These are fundamental principles of our democracy that must be respected by ministers of the Crown and executives of Crown agencies.

- During its first mandate, a Progressive Conservative government will make it illegal for government to spend money without prior legislative approval when the House of Assembly is in session, and restrict spending by Special Warrant to a specific emergency that occurs when the House is not in session.
- We will review all government programs and office spaces and eliminate those that cannot be justified on the basis of need, cost, and the protection of equality rights. Every single dollar spent by government and government agencies must benefit the people of the Province.
- Finally, we will enact sunset clauses in all future legislation to require that every program prove its value before being continued beyond a date specified in the legislation.

### **PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

*The Transparency and Accountability Act* will require performance planning and reporting for all government departments and agencies.

Every department and government funded agency will be required to present annual performance plans to the House of Assembly on or before the date when the main budget estimates are presented to the Legislature.

The performance plan must include a statement of goals and specific objectives, key strategies for achieving each goal and objective, costs and benefits, and the performance measures that will be used to track results.

At the end of each fiscal year, departments and agencies will be required to table annual reports in the Legislature that compare actual performance results for the fiscal year with expected results identified in their performance plans.

Departments and crown agencies will be required to report financial information on a basis consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) to enhance comparability and reliability of the financial information provided.

The Act will require the formulation of performance contracts between Ministers and executives. These contracts will specify expectations of performance and provide a basis for performance evaluations.

### **OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN CONTRACTS AND PURCHASING**

Accountable and sensible spending from the public purse is a fundamental principle of parliamentary democracies. Democratic governments have moral as well as legal obligations to purchase services, supplies and capital assets in competitive markets. Competition serves the public interest because suppliers and contractors compete on price and quality, and the people do not have to spend more than is necessary to get the quantity and quality of services they require.

A Progressive Conservative government will base policies and regulations for the procurement of goods and services and capital works on the following principles:

- Open and effective competition.
- Value for money assessed on the basis of net economic benefit to the Province as well as acquisition cost.
- A simplified tendering process.
- Participation of local business and industry.
- Environmental protection.
- Ethical conduct and fair dealing.

A Progressive Conservative government will designate the administrative head of each government department and agency as an Accountable Officer under the *Transparency and Accountability Act* with specific responsibility to report all invitations to public tender and acceptance of a tender to the House of Assembly, and to certify compliance with the *Public Tender Act*.

We will make the Government Purchasing Agency independent of any government department and responsible for compliance with the *Public Tender Act* for all purchases of goods and services on behalf of government departments and agencies, and amend the *Public Tender Act* to:

- Authorize the head of the Agency to issue Certificates of Exemption from the requirement to invite public tenders in accordance with clear criteria that will be specified in the Act.
- Designate the head of the Agency as an Accountable Officer with responsibility to report all public tenders and Certificates of Exemption to the House of Assembly on a monthly basis, and to certify compliance with the *Public Tender Act*.

### **INCREASING THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE**

A Progressive Conservative government will restore the House of Assembly to its rightful place as the "People's House". Our aim is to create a system of government in which power is shared with the legislature and the people,

instead of being concentrated in the office of the premier and cabinet.

We will restore a significant, independent role to the House of Assembly through:

- The election of an independent speaker, who will not sit in a caucus or be eligible for a cabinet appointment during the term of a legislature over which he or she presides.
- Setting up legislative committees in key policy areas with the power to initiate legislation, propose amendments to government legislation, and investigate and report on the progress of government programs in their policy areas.
- The appointment of a special committee of the Legislature that will ensure proper scrutiny and public discussion of federal proposals in areas of provincial concern.
- Obliging government to table a comprehensive response to committee reports within a fixed time indicating acceptance or rejection of the Committees' findings and giving reasons for its acceptance or rejection.
- Amending the Elections Act to require a by-election to be called within 60 days of a vacancy and held within 90 days of a vacancy.

To encourage more people, particularly persons with family responsibilities, to run for election to the House of Assembly, a Progressive Conservative government will:

- Ask the Legislature to adopt family friendly election timetables and work schedules, so that Members can combine their work more easily with family and childcare responsibilities. This will involve workable time lines that ensure a proper balance between Members' responsibilities to the Legislature, their constituents, and their families.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have grown tired of the flurry of closed-door, invitation-only consultations in recent years

that were little more than "telling and selling" exercises.

- Under a Progressive Conservative government, the House of Assembly will play a key role in enabling real public dialogue that will have a genuine influence on government policies and priorities.
- A Progressive Conservative government will adopt an open legislative process to allow maximum consultation with groups and individuals in open forums, particularly through legislative committees.
- Legislative committees will be able to call government ministers, senior civil servants and experts outside government to provide information and analysis in public sessions so that committee members and the public can benefit from informed opinion on specific issues.
- Committees will be expected to meet regularly outside St. John's to provide better access to the general public and to encourage greater participation by individuals and groups.
- A Progressive Conservative government will increase the power of the public to influence its agenda and actions through social partnerships with families, communities, voluntary and charitable organizations, professional organizations, business, labour, and cultural organizations.
- Finally, the House of Assembly itself will have an open and accessible atmosphere, with light-touch security and a feeling of public ownership.

### **Reducing the Power of Money and Special Interests**

The Elections Act limits election campaign contributions and spending, and attempts to promote electoral fairness by allowing candidates to recover part of their campaign expenses from public funds. The intent of the Act is undermined by loopholes that allow political parties to raise and spend unlimited

amounts of money before an election is called, as well as unlimited contributions and spending on candidate nominations and leadership contests.

A Progressive Conservative government will take the following actions to close those loopholes:

- Limit political contributions by a person, corporation, or union in any year, including an election year, to a total of \$10,000 to a registered political party and a total of \$5,000 to one or more district associations of a registered party or one or more candidates in a provincial election in relation to their candidacy, by way of cash, cheque, money order, credit card or goods and services, but excluding the purchase of tickets or passes and donations in kind to fundraising events sponsored by a registered political party or district association of a registered party.
- Legislate contribution and spending limits for Party leadership contests and nominees in Party candidacy races.
- Require full disclosure of contributions and expenditures in party nomination contests and elections.
- Require disclosure of contributions to leadership campaigns as they occur and disclosure of independently audited expenses within three months after the election of a new leader.
- Enact provisions requiring leadership candidates to return unused contributions to their leadership campaigns.

The party in power always has an advantage in political fund raising, but it has an unfair advantage over other parties by being able to determine when elections are called, and by spending unlimited amounts of public money to buy pre-election advertising that does nothing but polish its political image.

A Progressive Conservative government will propose amendments to the Elections Act and other relevant acts that will:



- Require that provincial elections are held on a fixed date every four years, or immediately if a government loses a confidence vote in the House of Assembly, or within 12 months if the Premier resigns during the first three years of a four-year term.
- Set and publish content rules for government advertising that will stop the use of public funds for political advertising.

### **Lobbyists Legislation**

A Progressive Conservative government will commission a process of public consultation to develop legislation for the registration of lobbyists operating in this Province.

The primary objectives of the legislation will be to:

- Establish a registry so the public will know who is lobbying and who is being lobbied.
- Require lobbyists to report their activities. It may also require those who hold public office to disclose circumstances in which they have been lobbied.
- Require lobbyists to file their general objectives and/or their specific lobbying activities.
- Differentiate between those who are paid to lobby government and those who represent volunteer or non-profit agencies.
- Impose significant penalties for those who violate these provisions.

### **Accountability of Members of the House of Assembly**

We will also ask the legislature to adopt a strict code of conduct for all Members, to be

enforced by the Commissioner of Members' Interests, emphasizing their accountability to the wider public interest and to their constituents, and the need for openness, honesty and integrity in their dealings with the public, constituents and lobbying organizations.

We will ask the Members of the House of Assembly to adopt new procedures to provide for the proper auditing and disclosure of their expenses.

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

The *Transparency and Accountability Act* will greatly enhance openness and accountability in government, but a comprehensive and effective *Freedom of Information Act* is the best safeguard against the tendency of governments to descend into official secrecy and elitism.

A Progressive Conservative government will:

- Proclaim new Freedom of Information legislation which will include amendments that will clearly identify information that should be in the public domain, including cabinet documents, and will require full and prompt disclosure of the information to the public
- Release to the public every government-commissioned report within 30 days of receiving it, indicate the action government will take on a report's recommendations within 60 days, and ensure prompt public access to all government reports in hard copy and on the Internet.

# 6

## Fairness and Equity in Canada

"In Newfoundland and Labrador, we have the potential and the energy to make significant contributions on the national and international stage. We bring to Canada not only our rich natural resources, but also our unique and diverse cultural heritage, and our spirited and tenacious character. There is no doubt that in 1949, our small province brought great things to the Canadian Federation, and we expected great things in return. Unfortunately, reality has far too often seen Newfoundland and Labrador taken advantage of and treated as second-class citizens on the national agenda. The time has come for us to stand up and demand respect, attention and equality. Our voice in Ottawa must be strong and passionate, however it must also be rational and levelheaded. Only then will we be effective in achieving for this Province the rights and benefits we have earned and deserve. My government will work cooperatively and collaboratively with our federal counterparts. In so doing, we will develop a mutual respect with the federal government, which in my experience is the key to successful and productive relationships. We will not, however, sit idly by and allow Ottawa to continue to take advantage of our resources and our people – we will stand up and fight for fairness and equality for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians." - **Danny Williams**

Canada is a country of great economic, political and cultural differences. The problem of regional economic disparity has been part of Canada's history for a long time.

The strength of the federation is in redistributing national income generated in a few "have" provinces to support social programs and an income safety net for "have not" provinces. The weakness of the federation is that it lacks the constitutional structures, or political will, to allow a small ocean resource-based Province like Newfoundland and Labrador to develop its own economy, or to benefit from development as other provinces do.

### ALIENATION OF RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

This Province brought into Canada the bountiful ocean, land, and energy resources that could be the basis for the development of a strong economy, high employment, and adequate revenues to support programs and build infrastructure. There is a strong conviction in the Province that federal management of those resources subordinate the interests of this province in favour of political and commercial objectives in other provinces and countries. Federal economic and fiscal policies have had

the effect in this Province of transferring opportunities, revenues, jobs and people from here to other jurisdictions in Canada and to other countries.

- A well-managed fishery could have sustained a decent standard of living for thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as the fishery does for the people of Iceland today.
- Federal ownership and joint management of offshore oil and gas resources restrict the Province's ability to benefit from the resource. There are no such crippling restrictions on Alberta's ability to manage its oil and gas resources and benefit from their development.
- The federal government captures most of the revenues from offshore oil and gas and other non-renewable resources either directly from federal taxes and equity, or indirectly through claw backs from equalization payments.
- Even in areas of undisputed Provincial jurisdiction like development of the hydroelectric potential of the Churchill River and massive mineral deposits in Labrador,

the federal government has consistently used its powers and influence to secure maximum benefits for more voter rich provinces.

### **ISOLATION FROM THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

Newfoundland and Labrador sits on the eastern fringe of Canada and major North American markets. Efficient, competitive transportation systems are more important to us than to any other province in Canada. Yet, Newfoundland and Labrador is the only Province in Canada that does not have a continuous highway or railway linking it to the rest of Canada and to the lucrative markets in the North American Free Trade Area. The two major geographic and resource regions within the Province - Labrador and the Island of Newfoundland - are virtually inaccessible to each other. Exporters and importers are constantly challenged by inadequate ferry links and air freight and air passenger services, thus holding back growth potential of value added products and services. In an age when highroads and railroads link nations and cultures across continents, transportation continues to be the major deterrent to economic growth in Newfoundland and Labrador

### **RETREAT FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPARABLE SERVICES FOR COMPARABLE EFFORT**

Anxious to get its fiscal house in order, the federal government started cutting transfers to the provinces in the mid-1980s. The cuts were more severe in this Province than in any other.

- In health care, post secondary education and social services, what began in the 1960s as a 50-50 cost sharing program has been reduced, through a series of sometimes negotiated and sometimes unilateral changes, to a federal cash contribution of less than 20%.
- The federal government unilaterally reduced the Province's entitlement to equalization by putting a ceiling on payments and lowering the benchmark for determining entitlement from a national average standard to a limited

five-province standard, even though equalization is the only fiscal transfer that is guaranteed in the constitution.

These changes have undermined the chief strength of the Canadian federation, which was the use of federal revenues to finance reasonably comparable public services throughout the country. The Province now bears most of the burden for financing public services, even though it has the least fiscal capacity in the country. The inevitable result is that essential services are falling behind those in wealthier provinces, and the Province is less able to manage its finances, maintain essential infrastructure, and promote economic growth.

### **A NEW RELATIONSHIP**

Our "have not" status in Canada is artificial. Canada needs to refine its jurisdictional and fiscal arrangements so that Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as other provinces that have been kept in a state of benevolent dependency, can maintain national standards of public services while growing towards self-reliance and respect as citizens of Canada.

We must ask a fundamental question about the Canadian federation: Does the federation in its present form provide adequate scope for a Province like Newfoundland and Labrador to develop?

The question deserves an answer, not as a political exercise, but in a genuine effort to find new cooperative arrangements within Canada that will give this Province the means to end its ruinous legacy of dependency and to achieve self-reliance.

A Progressive Conservative Government will begin the task of seeking a new relationship with Canada from the perspective of Newfoundland and Labrador around the following core issues:

- Integration of the Provincial highway system with the Canadian and North American highway networks.
- Ownership and management of offshore resources, including fish, oil and gas, and

other resources that may be found on and below the continental shelf.

- Reasonable conditions for the removal of non-renewable resource revenues from the calculation of equalization payments; for example, a binding federal-provincial agreement that would obligate the Province to spend non-renewable resource revenues to modernize economic infrastructure in the Province and to reduce the provincial debt, so that future generation of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will continue to enjoy benefits from non-renewable resource revenues long after the resources and royalties are extinguished.
- Principles and standards for national policies and cost-shared programs to make sure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and Canadians in every province, feel like full partners in confederation.
- The federal constitutional obligation to ensure that provinces have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation.
- New channels of co-ordination between federal and provincial governments to advance social and economic justice in national policy.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have shown tolerance and goodwill while other provinces and regions have vigorously advanced their interests in the Canadian federation. In a federation, we cannot afford to

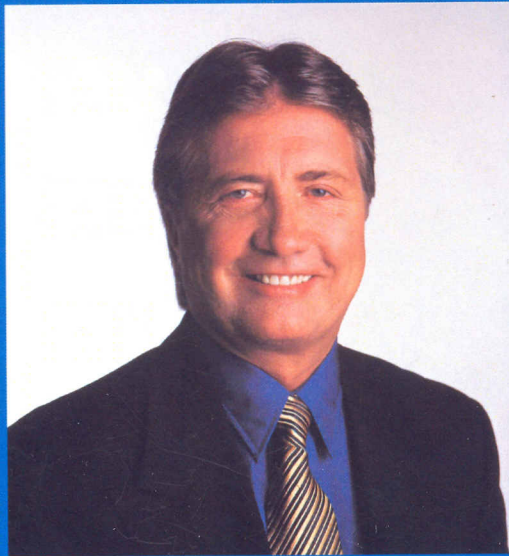
be short of goodwill, but we must never be indifferent to our own interest or to demonstrable injustices to this Province or to any partner in Confederation. It is our time to start down a new path to fairness and equity for Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada.

#### **NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR OFFICE OF FEDERAL – PROVINCIAL RELATIONS**

A Progressive Conservative government will establish the Newfoundland and Labrador Office of Federal – Provincial Relations in Ottawa. Some areas of focus will include:

- Health transfers, home care and pharmacare
- Post-secondary transfers
- Changes in offshore ownership and management
- Transferring Hibernia shares to the province
- Custodial management
- Joint fisheries management
- Equalization reform and removal of the clawback
- A highways agreement, including a fixed link across the Strait of Belle
- Development of the Lower Churchill
- International marketing of the military base in Goose Bay





*a Danny Williams Led Government*

# **REAL Leadership**

*The New Approach*



**PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE**

PC Party Headquarters  
29-31 Pippy Place Place, North Atlantic Petroleum Building, 2nd Floor  
P.O. Box 8551 St. John's, NL A1B 3P2  
Telephone: (709) 757-7265 Fax: (709) 757-7267

[www.pcparty.nf.net](http://www.pcparty.nf.net)

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