

PROVINCIAL PROGRAM

OF
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THE ALBERTA NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

by the

Provincial Leadership Convention

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MacDonald Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta.

THE PURPOSE AND NEED

Here is a Provincial Legislative Program which puts the interests of the majority of the people in Alberta ahead of the interests of the few.

This political economic program will give the people of Alberta an interest in and some control over the development of their natural resources. It is a Provincial fiscal program that will put Alberta's potential and fiscal reserve to work for Albertans in a planned manner. Its implementation is an immediate necessity since it embraces full employment, alleviation of the tax burden on the residents and elimination of the cost-price squeeze for the farmer. Albertans will be assured of economical power for industrial and residential consumption; an equitable share in the petroleum industry; the opportunity to sustain a competitive agricultural industry as well as benefiting from an equitable Provincial-Municipal tax sharing program.

A New Democratic Government would discontinue the pious hand-out approach to the basic affairs of Albertans. Albertans would be assured of "planned progress" through the institution of an Economic Advisory Council Representative of all basic interests in the Province inclusive of Agriculture, Commerce, Industry, Labour and the Consumer. The Power resources could be re-organized and extended in such a manner as to lower costs and to allow all areas of consumption to benefit therefrom.

A New Democratic Party Provincial Government would place the earning power of such an important resource as our Petroleum Industry to the greatest advantage to Albertans. The Government would safeguard petroleum reserves for the people of Alberta and provide them with an opportunity to partake of the development and the resulting benefits.

1. AGRICULTURE:

The welfare of the farmer and the rural areas is inextricably bound up with the general prosperity of our Province. The promotion of co-operative endeavour in all aspects of our agricultural industry is needed in order to provide the farmer with maximum planning assistance for attaining optimum results. The New Democratic Party is dedicated to policies that will assure farmers a fair share of our growing wealth.

The New Democratic Party believes that the family farm, enlarged to meet modern needs and conditions, is a basically sound unit for agricultural production and a desirable social institution. It provides a unit of production in which families may exercise ownership and management; it fosters personal responsibility and human dignity -- all of which contribute to a greater stability for our rural communities.

A New Democratic Government would provide all possible assistance in establishing the Family Farm as an efficient unit of production. The Government would:

- (a) provide long-term credit on favourable terms for the financing of adequate acreage and equipment for modern operations.

- (b) maintain and expand research, extension services, information programs and generally help farmers keep abreast of efficient methods of operation.
- (c) assist producers to retain control and to minimize vertical integration within the industry since this integration has traditionally caused the exploitation of the farmer.
- (d) enact Marketing Board Legislation.
Furthermore, it is the objective of the New Democratic Party to relieve the agricultural industry of the cost-price squeeze through the promotion of co-operative production and co-operative methods of distribution of both produce and manufactured goods used by the industry. If necessary to achieve these aims, a Department of Co-operatives would be established.

A program would be developed for associating the agricultural complex with secondary industry. This could provide added commerce, employment and a further cash income for the farmers. The promotion of such industry would utilize surplus agricultural products, surplus agricultural labour and investment.

It is one of the aims of the New Democratic Party, as a Government, to reduce the costs of farm machinery immediately through legislation that will attempt to standardize farm machinery parts.

The New Democratic Party, as a Provincial Government, will assure the well-being and maintenance of the Family Farm through the provision of grants to municipal and county districts for the establishment of qualified Veterinarians in all districts.

2. INDUSTRY:

Alberta, along with all the prairie provinces of Western Canada, needs a dynamic approach towards supplementing it's economy through industrial expansion. Alberta has among it's many power sources; coal, water-power and petroleum. This is a substantial basis upon which to establish profitable industries within the province. Alberta also has a growing manpower potential.

In order to take advantage of our Industrial Potential and to develop it for the benefit of Albertans, A New Democratic Provincial Government would:

- (1) institute a plan of intermediate and long-term low-cost credit to small growing industries.
- (2) offer assistance in planning and promotion of small growing industries.
- (3) plan the promotion of co-operative enterprise in areas of need.
- (4) enact such labour, industrial and other legislation that will provide the necessary impetus for the development of industry and commerce in Alberta.

The New Democratic Provincial Government will give immediate consideration to the maximum development of :

- (a) electrical power production.
- (b) the Petro-chemical industry and allied research.
- (c) pulp, paper and lumber with emphasis on assisting the small operator.
- (d) fertilizer and other farm chemicals.
- (e) development of a primary steel industry in Alberta under public auspices.
- (f) the Alberta Lakes Fishing Industry.

3. PUBLIC POWER

Electric power, which is a natural monopoly, but is deemed essential to the welfare of the people of Alberta will become the responsibility of the New Democratic Government.

Today, electrical power has become as essential to our well-being as water and sewage systems, streets and highways. It is often detrimental to the welfare of Albertans to have such a public utility under private ownership and especially absentee ownership which alienates an essential natural resource.

Compensation to the private owners will be in terms of paid-up capital.

Public ownership and control of the production and distribution of consumer electric power in Alberta would be advantageous to Albertans.

A principal feature of Public Power for such a utility as electric power would be that any financial surpluses, after allowances for depreciation and expansion, would be applied towards :

- (a) Re-imbursing the farmer's who have paid exorbitant installation costs.
- (b) Provide installations in the future at a reasonable cost, and
- (c) Maintain present lines.

Such a policy would :

- (a) Avoid subsidizing private industry at public expense through so called "break-even" prices which do not provide for replacement and expansion.
- (b) Provide for the replacement and expansion of plant out of earnings, thus avoiding the burden of interest charges on borrowings.

- (c) Provide a good wage and salary policy, thus promoting employee morale and efficiency.

The development of coal-burning thermal units for electric power in coal mining areas of the province will be encouraged as economic aids to these depressed areas and as an added source of power for industry and domestic use.

4. OIL AND GAS POLICY:

Since the people of Alberta have first call upon the rich resources of natural gas in the province, a vertically integrated, equitable and efficient system from natural gas fields and producing wells to the distributive services will be developed.

A New Democratic Party Government will set up:

1. Crown-ownership and development of the Athabasca oil sands in the long-term interest of the people of Alberta and Canada.
2. Public ownership of the consumer public utility natural gas companies in order to utilize their profits for necessary public welfare services and to provide domestic and industrial consumers with a cheap source of energy not subject to foreign pricing.
3. Increased royalties on the production of oil and gas from conventional fields after the recovery of exploration and development costs by the private oil and gas companies, in order to maintain the provincial revenue from these resources.
4. Support for Federal and Provincial incentive measures designed to increase Canadian ownership of private oil and gas companies in Alberta.
5. Government aid through a Department of Co-operatives, to expand the existing Co-operative Oil Refineries of Regina or a similar Company into Alberta and to develop an integrated producer-consumer co-operative oil company.
6. Support for an oil pipe-line to Montreal to expand the Canadian Market.
7. Reform of the Right of Entry Arbitration Board and the Expropriation Procedure Act to assure fair dealing for the owners of surface rights in connection with the exploration and development of the oil and gas industry.

A reduction in the cost of production may be expected as a result of such policy providing Albertans with a naturally economical supply of consumer gas, thusly benefiting home owners, commercial and industrial users.

The Public Utilities Board would be re-organized and the regulations governing it brought into conformity with the policy on Public Power and Oil and Gas.

Contracts for supplies will be handled under definite rules of conduct designed to prevent the exploitation of these public utilities by private manufacturers of equipment. When faced by organized trade or monopoly suppliers (submitting for example, identical bids), the utilities will be authorized to seek bids outside Canada, appeal for an investigation of the cost structure of the suppliers, and if necessary, enter into the manufacture of equipment. Similar rules will govern engineering and construction contracts.

5. MEDICARE:

A New Democratic provincial government would institute a prepaid, comprehensive publicly sponsored Medical Care Plan similar to those of Saskatchewan, England and Sweden.

6. WELFARE:

A New Democratic Government will replace the present badly co-ordinated legislation and inadequate assistance with a well-rounded, up-to-date program designed to meet the social problems created by our modern complex society.

The New Democratic Provincial Government will:

- (a) Proceed to develop a co-ordinated welfare program designed to help those who are genuinely in need.
- (b) Negotiate with Ottawa for a single unconditional Welfare Grant to replace the present multiplicity of specific grants, and then to assume full financial responsibility for welfare.
- (c) Establish county or municipal district welfare regions in co-operation with the municipalities, so as to optimize administration efficiency and employment of trained personnel at the local level in all parts of the province. Administration of welfare allowances will be placed entirely in the hands of county or municipal district authorities.
- (d) Establish a School of Social Work and a School of Clinical Psychology at the University of Alberta and offer scholarships to encourage capable young men and women to enter these fields.
- (e) Establish a Social Research Centre to develop effective ways of dealing with group and individual social problems in Alberta.
- (f) Support private agencies by the co-ordination of all welfare agencies, both public and private so that facilities and trained personnel may be most advantageously used. Services and results of research centres would be made available to all agencies.
- (g) Establish a policy of periodic review and adjustment of widows' and disabled persons' pensions, and of supplementary allowances - so that such persons can maintain an adequate standard of living.

- (h) Make provisions to assist widows who have children for whom home care must be provided.
- (i) Establish a Royal Commission to enquire into child welfare problems including those of retarded children, in an effort to find new and improved approaches, and to strengthen and broaden the program of child welfare.
- (j) Request that the Dominion Government pay a \$75.00 pension without a means test at 65 years for men and 60 years for women

7. EDUCATION:

The New Democratic Party believes that a political democracy provides the means by which people through their government, may progressively develop and expand the social and economic sector of society in the interests of all people so that they may truly govern themselves.

The policies and program of the New Democratic Party (Alberta Section) established by the membership of the party in convention, endorsed by the people of the province in general election, shall become mandatory as government policy.

We believe that education should be the major concern of any worthwhile provincial government and that in a truly democratic community the provision of free and equal educational opportunities for all should have the very highest priority.

We consider that the primary aim of education should be to raise the level of thought and understanding throughout the whole community, to train informed citizens with critical, alert minds, capable of thinking about the many problems which face our world and able to make a wise and reasoned choice of political representatives and policies.

While we pursue this major educational objective, we should at the same time, provide every child with adequate preparation for his chosen vocation whether it be a trade or a profession, and we should strive to prepare as many scholars and scientists as we possibly can.

As well as accepting the responsibility for the education of the normal child we should also be responsible for providing the education and training to retarded and handicapped children to the maximum of their potentialities.

To achieve these purposes, it will be necessary to increase the supply of teachers and to improve their training and qualifications. The salary and status of the teaching profession should be raised. The Alberta Teacher's Association should continue to be recognized as the official bargaining agent for the teachers so that it will attract many young and able recruits to its ranks. Our objective should be to achieve small classes in order to make more individual teaching possible. It should be the aim of any progressive Provincial Government to remove the major part of the financial burden of education from the shoulders of the municipalities and thus to aid in spreading improved and equal educational facilities throughout the province.

Great importance should be attached to adult education and community colleges established in various parts of the province. These would abolish semi-literacy, provide training for the unskilled or for those whose skills have become obsolete and provide opportunity for continuing education.

University education has entered a period of enormous expansion and development. We should see that all who can benefit from university training have the opportunity available without financial or other obstacles. University fees should be abolished and bursaries should be available to cover the reasonable living expenses of all qualified students.

The right to a University Education should depend entirely upon intellectual ability and achievement, and not upon the financial standing of the student.

Libraries - Adequate library service is fundamental to implementation of the education program and to adult education programs. Therefore, we propose a regional library program which will bring readily accessible library service to every area of Alberta with the consideration of the school library program being integrated into this regional program.

8. EMPLOYMENT:

In addition to any Federal plan for full employment, a flexible provincial development program of public works would be planned for the needs of seasonal and short-term periods of unemployment, and to assist municipalities financially with a similar program.

Such a program would not only provide jobs in time of need, but could provide schools, hospitals, roads, parks and other public facilities in an efficient and orderly manner.

9. LABOUR LEGISLATION AND LABOUR RELATIONS:

Both Provincial and Municipal employees would be given the right to organize and to bargain collectively on the same basis as private employees, to be covered by unemployment insurance and to be protected by an Alberta Labour Act in all respects.

A New Democratic Party Government would co-operate with the Federal Government in establishing a Federal minimum standard for; a five-day week, a 40-hour week.

The New Democratic Party would establish legislation and incorporate it in the Alberta Labour Act to provide legal protection of minority groups in fair employment and fair accommodation.

A New Democratic Government would co-operate with the Federal Government on a sound and realistic program for the development of a full Health and Social Security program and would take whatever legislative means necessary to assist the Federal Government to include portability of pensions for both public and private employees.

10. COMPENSATION AND SAFETY:

Industry and Labour working together have brought about tremendous

reduction in accidents. If all segments of society worked together under a Provincial Safety Program, highway, home, farm and factory accidents would be greatly reduced. The present Compensation Act would be revised and extended. It would be to cover the agricultural industry; and revised to provide workmen with full wages during periods of injury resulting in loss of work, to provide widows and disabled workmen the means of maintaining a standard of living comparable to that received at the time of such fatality or disabling injury.

11. URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

Hand in hand with an industrial development program will go a challenging redevelopment program for aiding growing cities with: slum clearance, progressive arterial road development, schools, hospitals, libraries, cultural and recreational facilities. Provincial leadership planning and financing would be offered for necessary re-organization of metropolitan complexes such as the Edmonton and Calgary metropolitan areas.

Legislation designating authority and responsibilities of cities, towns and villages would be brought into context with the times. The original powers allotted are not to-day extensive enough for coping with the major responsibilities with which these growing centres are burdened both administratively and financially.

Re-definition of towns, villages and hamlets would be undertaken in the light of their ability to finance and their potential to entice industry which could provide reasonable industrial tax revenues.

The relations between such bodies as the Administrative Council and the School Boards would be reconsidered in order to develop harmonious association, effective programs and ample financing.

Sociological studies of rural areas would be undertaken by the government. Library and other advantageous services would be provided for rural residents.

12. PROGRESSIVE TAXES:

A New Democratic Government will raise money by the following means:

- (a) Increase corporation taxes, reduce depreciation allowances and eliminate the tax-dodging which now takes place through such devices as excessive expense accounts and sales promotion.
- (b) Adopt a progressive policy regarding the prices paid to breweries and distilleries to divert a large proportion of the exorbitant profits into the public treasury without affecting the price to the consumer.
- (c) Collect a proper share of the tremendous revenues now being realized by companies exploiting the province's natural resources.

- (d) Impose a weight-distance tax so as to require highway carriers to pay a fair share of the cost of building and maintaining the highways they use.
- (e) Urge the Federal Government to amend the Bank Act to provide that assets of a province (including municipal assets) be discounted in a manner similar to the discounting of bankers' securities now in practice. This would mean a great reduction in excessive interest carrying charges.
- (f) If our province becomes responsible for income tax collections, increase tax-deductions to compensate for increased cost of living.

13. ALBERTA'S NATIVE PEOPLE:

The New Democratic Party recognizes that the needs of the Indian and Metis people of Alberta pose special problems. It is the responsibility of the government to bring those citizens equal privileges and opportunities with other Alberta citizens. The New Democratic Party proposes special study and action in full accord and co-operation with the Indian and Metis people and co-ordinated with the Federal Government. These citizens should have the full right to maintain and develop their own culture and recognition of their treaty rights.

The New Democratic Provincial Government will:

- (a) establish an Alberta Department of Indian Affairs.
- (b) establish an Alberta Council on Indian Affairs to advise the Department. This council would consist of representatives from the Indian Association, it's Advisory Council Sociologist and others as the Council deems necessary. It would be a permanent standing committee. It would function to recommend studies and action to the Department of Indian Affairs. The New Democratic Provincial Government would negotiate with the Federal Government to effect compliance with as many as possible of the recommendations pertinent to Indian needs made to the Joint Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate and House of Commons.

14. HOUSING:

To avoid the crushing burden of second mortgages and short-term financing, a New Democratic Provincial Government would set up a crown corporation to enable residents to purchase old homes at NHA rates.

A New Democratic Provincial Government would seek agreement with the Federal Government to provide additional assistance for adequate low rental and low cost housing.

15. FLUORIDATION:

Benefits of adding fluorides to the municipal water supplies are widely recognized in medical circles. A New Democratic Party Government would turn the question of adding fluorides to the municipal water supplies

over to the Department of Health. This Department would appoint a committee to study the question of fluoridation, publish its findings and submit recommendations. Municipal authorities would be given statutory power to enable them to carry out the recommendations of the Department on the basis of a simple majority vote.

16. NUCLEAR ARMS AND RADIATION HAZARDS:

Fallout Shelters, as advocated by the Provincial and Dominion Governments, are neither exceptionally sturdy nor impervious to dust. Since it is also questionable whether life would persist in areas exposed to the intense radiation resulting from a nuclear blast, a New Democratic Party Government would undertake to present the public with true facts about radiation hazards. A governmental policy which through spectacular publicity and propaganda, prepares the public for the acceptance of nuclear war would be rejected.

The provincial New Democratic Party government would also appoint a committee of experts to monitor radiation levels in the province and inform the public through the provincial Department of Health at weekly intervals.

17. AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE:

As private insurance is not meeting the needs of the people the New Democratic Party would institute a publicly owned automobile insurance plan, similar to the plan in Saskatchewan.

18. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:

A New Democratic Party Government would make optimum use of the Alberta Research Council. The Alberta Research Council would be responsible to the Alberta Legislative through a delegation. The Alberta Research Council would assist the Government in planning the economy by means of research results and by means of scientific information. Industry would be encouraged and allowed to develop for the best interests of Albertans.