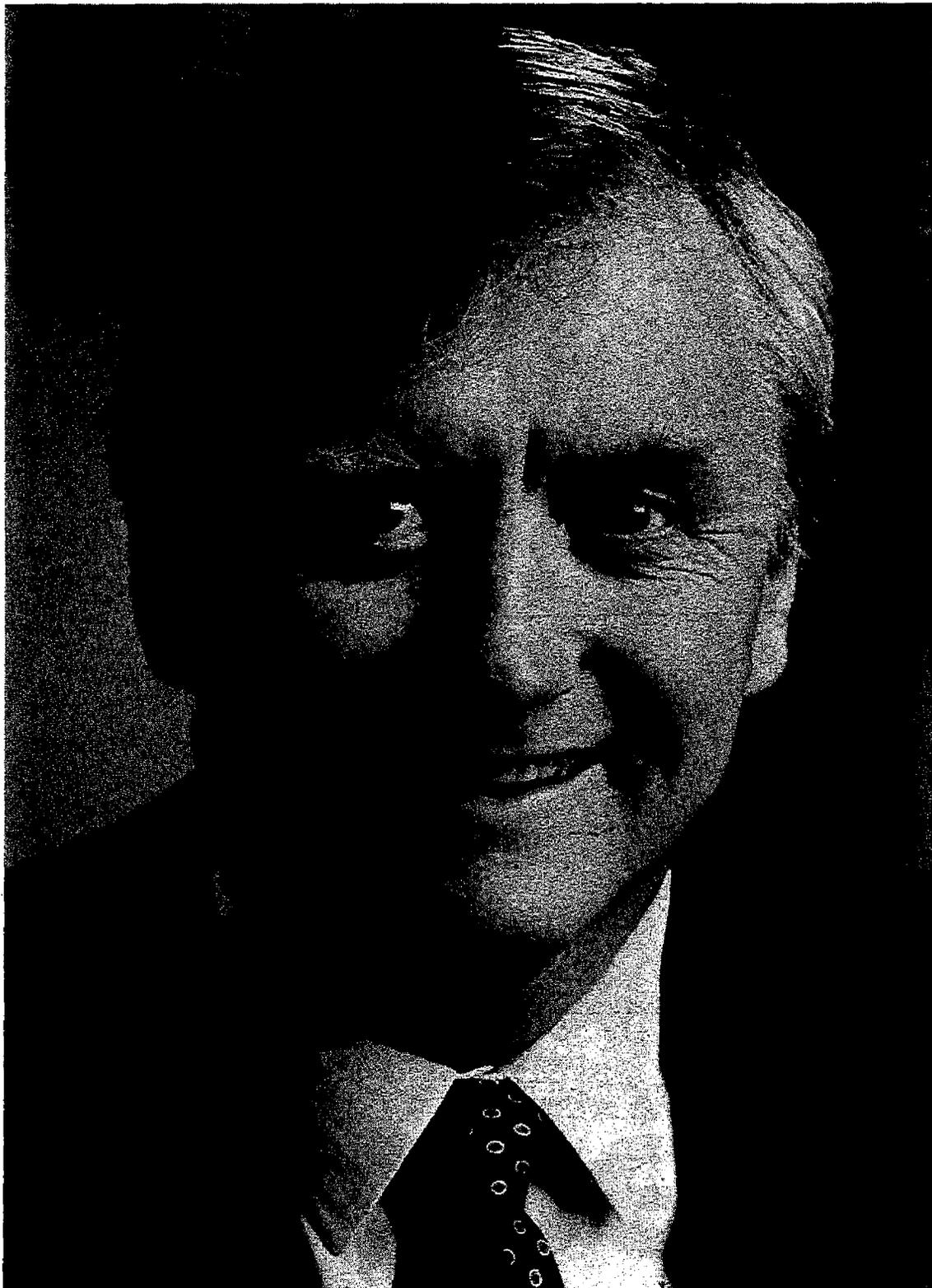


Make it Happen!

ALBERTA NEW DEMOCRATS
(CAMPAIGN LITERATURE) 1986

PAMPHLET

DO NOT CIRCULATE



Ray Martin, Leader of Alberta's New Democrats.

Ray Martin

This booklet is about Alberta's future.

As Albertans, we are truly fortunate. We live in one of the richest provinces in one of the richest nations in the world. We enjoy a high standard of living, based on a great wealth of natural resources and a tradition of hard work, courage and enterprise.

But the future seems far from secure. What sort of Alberta will we leave to our children?

We can reach boldly out and grasp the future we choose — or we can continue to drift along, leaving important decisions to others.

The world is getting more complex every day. We can no longer rely on simple answers. Making Alberta all it can be will take some careful thought, some detailed planning and a commitment to positive action.

We cannot solve the problems which face us overnight. No government can promise miracles.

But I — and the New Democrat team — promise to work, and work hard. We will work to bring justice and fairness back to government. We will work to guarantee every woman and man the basic freedom, dignity and security to build their own future as best suits them. We will work to make the most of Alberta.

In this booklet I have outlined some of the plans and programs I believe will help bring about this new Alberta. I ask you to take a few minutes to read it, and to consider these ideas.

And if you agree — as I am confident you will — that these are the programs and policies Alberta needs to bring us into the twenty-first century, then I invite you to work with me and the New Democrat team.

Together, we can make it happen.

People

People are Alberta's greatest resource.

Albertans have always been hard workers. Generations of hard work have gone into building our province. Given a goal, and the chance to work towards it, we can surmount great obstacles and succeed despite the odds.

All we need is a chance.

We must make sure that all Albertans have this chance — the chance to live their lives fully, to build the best future they can — regardless of where in Alberta they live, regardless of their age, their sex, their ethnic background or religion.

Give youth a boost

Young Albertans are our province's future. Yet, many young Albertans feel they have no future. Some believe — with good reasons — that they may never find a secure job.

Three important programs would go a long way towards giving our youth a fighting chance:

YouthStart would provide young Albertans, aged 18 to 24, the chance to apply for a business start-up grant of up to \$4,000 (or \$8,000 for a partnership). Applications would be screened by a panel with significant youth representation, and successful applicants would be sponsored through a week-long intensive business training course before receiving their grant.

A similar program introduced recently by Manitoba's New Democratic government succeeded in helping 71 new businesses start in its first year alone — at a total cost to the provincial government of less than \$5,700 each. More than half these businesses were started in rural Manitoba, allowing recipients to put down roots in their own communities and resist pressure to move on to the cities.

Farmstart would give young farmers the chance they need to take over the family farm without being burdened with an enormous debt.

At the same time, it would give retiring farmers a secure retirement fund and a guaranteed return for their land.

Farmstart would provide a guarantee of 80% of loans extended by farmers to their children. It's a government-backstopped vendor lending program.

Katimavik Alberta will fill the gap left by the incredibly short-sighted decision of the federal government to cancel Katimavik. Whether or not the proposed private-sector proposal is successful, the youth of Alberta should be guaranteed this opportunity.

For only \$2 million a year, this program would allow at least 200 Albertans aged 17 to 21 to spend a year learning about their province, themselves and each other. They would live and work with community members in a variety of communities, rural and urban, doing useful volunteer work and gaining skills and self-confidence.

At the end of the year, they would receive a \$1,000 bonus. But by far the greatest pay-off would be their new skills — tolerance, flexibility, self-reliance and the ability to work in a group setting.

Building strong communities

Albertans should have the right to build a secure future in their own communities.

Alberta has a tradition of strong local government, but the work of these municipalities is too often hampered by provincial control of finances. And when municipalities are unable to offer jobs at home, residents are forced to move to bigger centres, draining further the resources available to the local community.

We would strive to give economic control to municipal governments. We would immediately convene a municipal/provincial economic conference, to discuss the role of municipalities in economic recovery. We would make municipal governments a permanent part of economic decision-making. And, most important, we would act to remove the many strings and conditions attached to municipal grants.

In addition, we would provide four major programs to strengthen local communities:

Main Street Alberta would fund renovations and improvements to main streets and commercial districts in Alberta's many small towns.

Community Assets Program would assist in the construction of special projects, such as community halls, bridges, parks and recreational facilities.

Community Development Program. In Alberta communities suffering



long-term unemployment and slow growth, this program would help fund economic development corporations. Entirely controlled by locally-elected boards, these corporations would fund low-interest loans and equity investments for businesses the community feels have a good chance of succeeding.

Core Area Initiative would provide low-cost housing, recreational and cultural facilities, and economic development assistance for residents of inner-city communities in Edmonton and Calgary.

Making Alberta safer

We are committed to positive actions to make Alberta a safer place to live, and to provide needed services for victims of violence.

Ending family violence is, unfortunately, a long-term process of education, counselling and promotion of positive values. We will, of course, start this process — but we know victims of family violence have immediate needs.

Wherever possible, assistance to victims of family violence must be rooted in the community. However, the provincial government must take responsibility to ensure on-going funding of shelters for battered women and children, counselling programs, and emergency services — particularly in rural Alberta, where such facilities are often lacking.

We will also provide more resources to community service agencies to help identify cases of child abuse as early as possible, and to provide necessary counselling and other services.

We will work with local communities to create community-based crime prevention programs, and establish locally-administered victim counselling services.

Farms

Without farmers, there would be no Alberta.

Every dollar of farm income means up to six dollars circulating in Alberta's economy — dollars spent at local businesses on groceries, clothing and hardware; dollars spent on farm implements, fertilizer and other inputs; dollars spent on wages, on cars and trucks, on shipping and on services.

Every farm bankruptcy leaves all Albertans poorer. That is why every Albertan must be concerned about the farm crisis.

Rising costs, falling receipts and high interest rates have made farming an all-but-impossible business. Short-term emergency programs will do little to help solve these problems. Alberta's farmers — and all Albertans — need a carefully thought-out, long-term farm policy, including the following:

A fair price

Unlike most businesses, farmers have no control over the prices they charge for their goods. As costs increase and prices remain stable, farmers find themselves in a vicious squeeze. Many end up selling their crops and livestock for less than it cost to grow them.

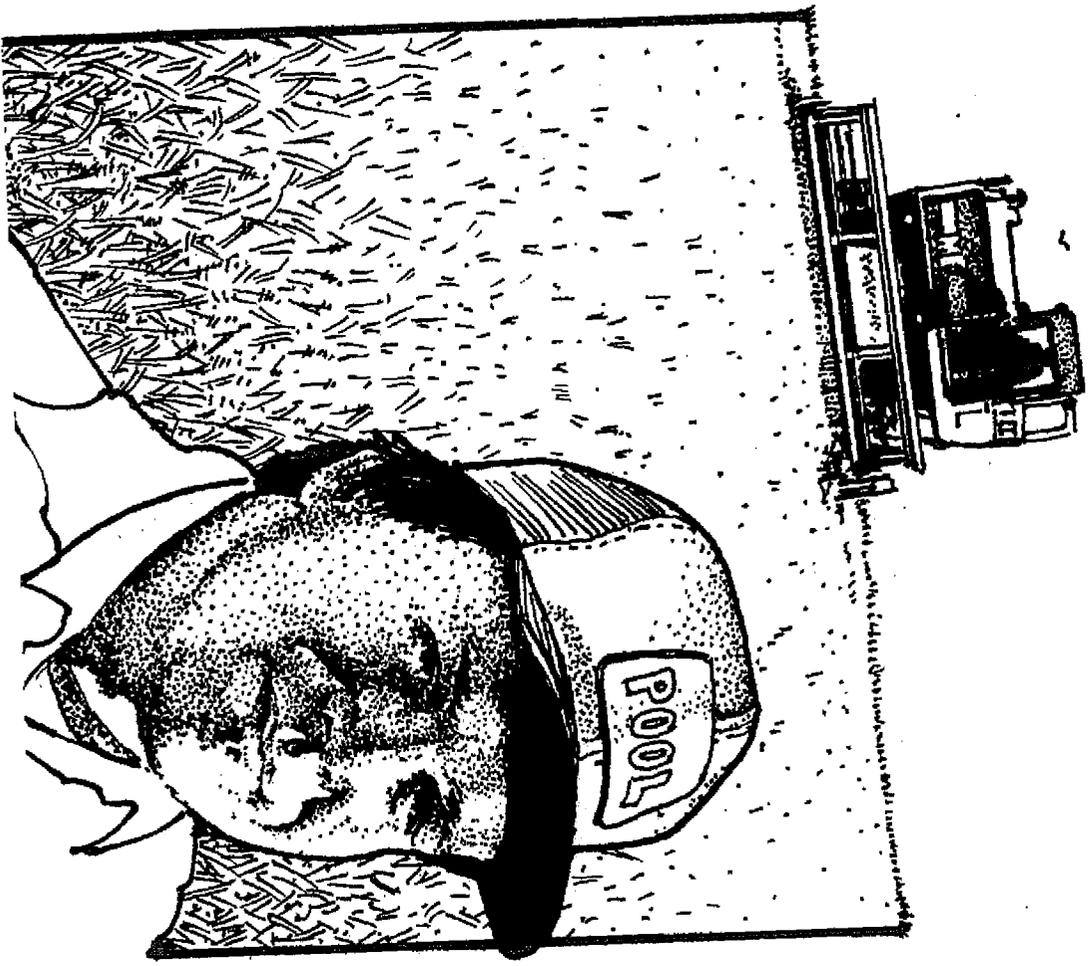
Clearly, this can not go on for very long.

New Democrats are committed to a fair price for farm products, a so-called "parity price" which reflects production costs. We have worked hard to convince federal governments to bring in such a program.

Only the federal government can create a parity pricing program, but a provincial government could put much pressure on the federal government.

As a first step, Alberta's New Democrats propose a payment, to be made this August for the 1985/86 crop year, which would bring the price of #1 grade wheat to \$6.00 per bushel, for up to 2000 bushels per farm. (Equivalent payments would be made to growers of other wheat grades, barley or oats.)

This would provide a much-needed injection of cash into the farm economy, and would help demonstrate to the federal government the urgent need for parity pricing.



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A fair interest rate

There are few farm costs which the government has any control over — but we can certainly do something about interest rates.

Interest payments are one of the largest items in a farmer's budget. On average, interest accounts for almost one-third of the cost of running a farm.

We would provide farm producers long-term loans at a fixed interest rate of 6%. Loans would come from the Heritage Savings Trust Fund, but administration costs would be kept to an absolute minimum by using the existing Treasury Branch and Credit Union systems. In this way, we would be able to eliminate the expense and unnecessary bureaucracy of the Agriculture Development Corporation (ADC).

We would also create a debt adjustment program to allow farmers who cannot meet their debt load payments to re-negotiate their payment schedule. These farmers could continue working their land while paying off their debt in a way they can afford.

Fair assistance after disasters

Farm disasters happen. Drought, hail, 'hoppers, early frost — any of these can strike leaving whole farm communities on the brink of financial collapse.

While the provincial government has managed to respond to recent disasters, it has not seen fit to create a consistent policy. Disaster relief has been arbitrary, and sometimes unfair.

When disaster strikes, it is too late to work out a disaster relief program. We would work towards creating an assistance program which would kick in automatically once certain conditions were met (for instance, a certain amount of crop damage). Acreage and per head payments would be calculated from a pre-set formula based on production costs and actual loss.

Such a program could only be introduced after negotiations with the federal government. We would start these negotiations immediately.

Building

We must build in Alberta an economy for the twenty-first century.

A 21st century economy cannot rely on world oil prices. It cannot rely on the goodwill of the federal government. It must be based on Albertans working together for Alberta.

A 21st century economy will rely on oil and gas revenue — but a reliable revenue based on a pricing system which reflects production costs. Much more, it will rely on a diverse range of Alberta-based and Alberta-owned enterprises, producing a variety of goods and services for Alberta, and for export.

A 21st century economy will be built from the facilities, programs and projects we are planning today. It will be built by the Albertan women and men gaining important skills today, in school and on the job.

A 21st century economy needs these building blocks:

Building our own facilities

Major oil and gas projects must be started now: a heavy oil upgrader, the capacity expansion at Syncrude, new oil sands mining projects.

Wishful thinking will not create these developments. Neither will huge give-aways to foreign-owned oil companies.

The facilities we need will only be built if the provincial government takes the initiative.

We would create the **Alberta Resource Agency** to co-ordinate and manage the launch of needed Alberta resource projects. Each project would be operated in co-operation with a private sector operator, who would be guaranteed a fair return on investment — no more and no less.

The Alberta Resource Agency would provide investment dollars — but as equity, not as giveaways. This would ensure Alberta a strong voice in long-term decision making — and guarantee Alberta taxpayers fair return on their investment.

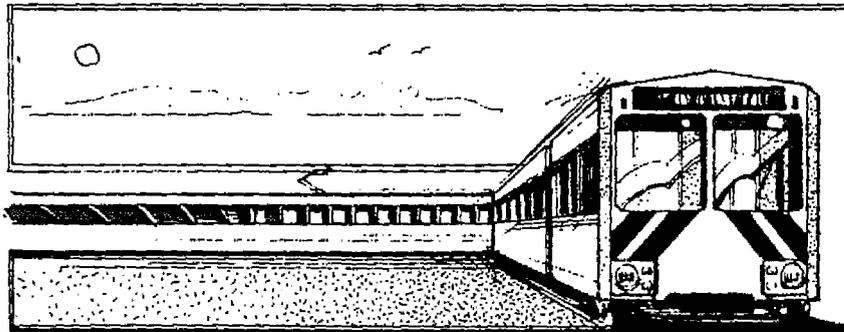
Setting our own oil price

Alberta cannot afford to be held hostage to world oil prices. We must take a tough negotiating stance with the federal government, demanding a fair **floor price** for oil.

Setting a minimum price for oil would allow netrol-

return, and keep many small Alberta-based resource companies in business. It would result in slightly higher pump prices — but when world oil prices do rise, consumers would be protected:

We would also negotiate project-specific support prices for new frontier projects managed through the Alberta Resource Agency. These support prices would be rolled into the blended oil price.



21st Century transportation

The bus and air services between Edmonton and Calgary are among the busiest on the continent. In the next 20 years, the number of people travelling between these two major cities will double.

Current transportation services are slow, uncomfortable, expensive — or all three. We need a system which is convenient, comfortable and which can handle the ever-increasing demand.

A high-speed rail link is the obvious answer. Using technology already in use in France, Germany and Japan, we could provide a service linking downtown Edmonton and downtown Calgary in less than two hours — with fares about half the current business class round trip air fares.

Electric trains carrying up to 400 passengers would travel at speeds of up to 270 km/h on an entirely new twin rail line built along Highway 2. Safety would be ensured by eliminating all level crossings between Edmonton and Calgary.

Construction of this high-speed rail link would cost about \$927 million over the next five to seven years. By 2010, it could be providing revenue of as much as \$100 million in today's dollars. Construction of this project would create jobs for 1,600 people each year, and indirectly employ another 2,520 people each year.



Putting Alberta to work

Creating jobs must be our first priority. Wherever possible, these jobs should be created where they are needed, so that Albertans can find a job without disruptive relocations.

Four programs would help create these local jobs — and upgrade Alberta's assets:

Alberta Works. We would shift \$100 million a year over the next decade from the Alberta Municipal Finance Corporation to this program. Alberta Works would help municipalities expand and upgrade roads; renovate and replace corroded and decaying water mains and sewer systems; and provide other municipal improvements. With federal and municipal cost-sharing, Alberta Works could create as many as 92,000 jobs over ten years.

Rural Telephone Upgrading. Over the next ten years, we would completely replace Alberta's obsolete rural telephone service with a modern fibre-optic system. This would give every rural Albertan a private telephone line, allowing the use of computer modems, telephone answering machines, cordless phones and other telephone attachments presently available only to city dwellers. Costing \$50 million a year over the next decade, this project would create 3,000 new jobs.

Highway Improvements. Bad roads cause needless highway deaths. We would act immediately to twin Highway 16 from Lloydminster to Jasper as rapidly as possible. Also, we would upgrade Highway 63 to Fort McMurray. And we would make every attempt to open highway construction tendering to smaller contractors.

Clearwater Alberta. Now, before it's too late, we must act to protect our precious fresh water supply. We would commit \$10 million a year to a major effort to rid our rivers and streams of unhealthy pollutants such as PCBs, pesticides, untreated sewage and industrial chemicals.

Fairness

Fair taxes

Today, middle and low-income Albertans shoulder an unfair tax burden. Our province has twice the national average percentage of citizens earning more than \$50,000 a year who pay no tax. Alberta corporations pay a vanishingly small share of provincial tax revenue.

Average Albertans deserve a fair break. We would ensure all Albertans pay their fair share.

We would immediately repeal the recent 13% across-the-board provincial tax increase, and replace it with a minimum provincial tax on wealthy Albertans.

A fair health care system

Alberta is one of the only two provinces which still allows doctors to extra-bill. Extra-billing is simply unfair: it is a tax on the sick, and leads to a health care system which provides better health care for the rich than for the rest of us.

Under the Canada Health Act, Alberta is fined \$10 million a year for allowing extra-billing. We would end extra-billing immediately, and put that \$10 million to use for the people of Alberta.

Fair wages

There is no reason why women should be discriminated against in the workplace — or anywhere. Yet, in Alberta, the average full-time woman worker earns only 63¢ for every dollar earned by a male worker.

We would act immediately to create and enforce laws guaranteeing Albertan women the right to equal pay for work of equal value.

Fair treatment for children

No child should have to suffer because of their parent's poor economic circumstances. New Democrats are committed to a child care system which would give every Alberta child the right to high-quality and affordable child care.

We would also eliminate school use fees which discriminate against children of poorer parents.

Fair recognition of cultural groups

Members of many different ethnic groups came together to build the Alberta we live in today. New Democrats recognize the contributions of all these Albertans, and would make a real commitment to multicultural activities.

As a first step, we would immediately create a Ministry of Multiculturalism, to co-ordinate all multicultural programs and to recognize the importance of these activities.



Openness

Too many Albertans have lost confidence in their own government. Many of us have come to think of our own government as distant and apart from our lives.

New Democrats want to open up the government to ordinary Albertans; to give all Albertans the power to be a part of the decisions that shape their lives.

We propose two major reforms.

Giving people a voice

Albertans should have the right to force their government to consider matters of public concern.

We would require the legislature to consider any petition signed by 3% of Albertans eligible to vote. (A slightly higher percentage would be required for a petition affecting the provincial budget.)

During consideration of such a petition, all votes in the Legislature would be considered free votes, freeing members to vote on the people's concerns without worrying about party discipline.

Opening up the Legislature

A New Democratic government would end the rigid party discipline which allows virtually all decisions to be made in closed cabinet meetings and then rubber-stamped by obedient MLAs.

We would give more power to MLAs who are not members of the Cabinet. We would free MLAs, except in the most critical cases, from the restrictive bonds of party discipline — and we would allow much more time and freedom for individual MLAs to present their own ideas to the Legislature.

In addition, we would hold at least two Legislative sessions each year, each one long enough to deal adequately with public's business.

By giving individual MLAs more of a voice, and making sure the Legislature sits more often, we hope to give all Albertans a voice. MLAs must be free to represent the interests of their constituents, even when those interests conflict with a Cabinet decision.

This booklet is only a brief summary of the platform of Alberta's New Democrats. If you want more information, please contact your local candidate, or write to:

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