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# **A BETTER WAY FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**New Democrat Election Platform**

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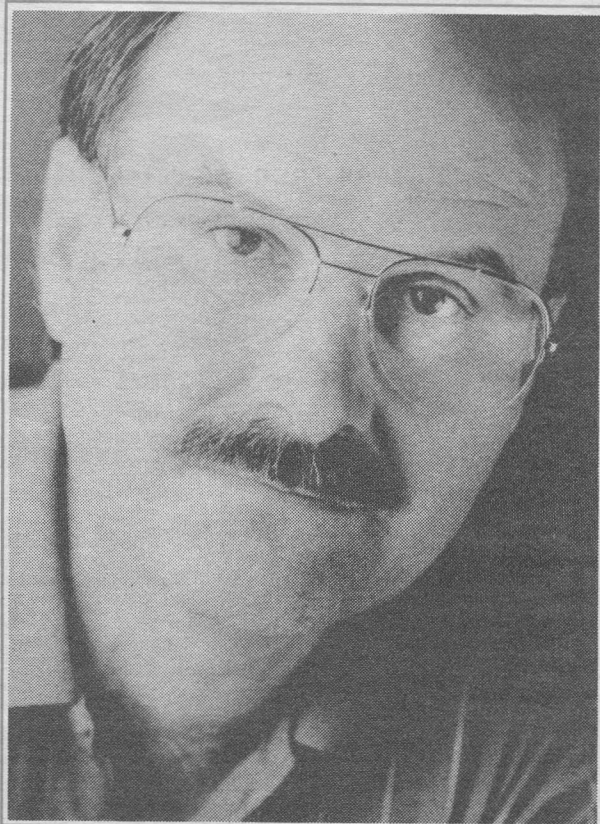
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**Dear British Columbian:**

**B.C. has unbounded potential.**

We have a wealth of energy and ideas and an abiding faith in tomorrow. What is missing is a government as honest and hardworking as the people who pay for it.

This booklet spells out new, constructive directions for our province. These are the priorities a New Democrat government under my leadership will pursue in the years to come.

I'm not promising miracles. We can't solve every problem overnight. I've consistently said we can only do what we can afford. But we can do a lot better than the last five years. We can get B.C.'s priorities right.

I will lead a government that is open and balanced . . . that will work with all British Columbians to encourage initiative and share the opportunities and rewards that I am confident lie ahead.

*Mike Harcourt*

# 1

**Mike Harcourt and the New Democrats are committed to open and balanced government that deals fairly with ordinary men and women instead of playing favourites with political friends and insiders.**

A New Democrat government will put an end to secret deals and special favours for political friends.

- We will bring in tough conflict of interest laws which will be enforced instead of ignored. Financial disclosure requirements for MLAs will be strengthened.
- We will implement an effective Freedom of Information Act and will provide for full disclosure on major decisions like the Expo land deal, the distribution of lottery funds and the awarding of pub licences.

# 2

**You won't need an inside track to get fair treatment from a Harcourt government.**

New Democrats are committed to fair and open access to government, to an open tendering process for public contracts, and to a broader mandate for the Ombudsman.



3

## Our justice system will be free from political interference.

British Columbians should not have to fear that the deck is stacked against them because of political interference in B.C.'s justice system.

Former Social Credit cabinet minister Brian Smith understood this vital principle. He resigned his post as Attorney General because Bill Vander Zalm did not accept "the unique independence" that the Attorney General's office must maintain.

The Bill Reid lottery fund affair further illustrates Brian Smith's concerns . . . and the refusal of the government to recognize the serious problems he saw.

New Democrats welcome the Owen Commission's recommendations for an Independent Prosecutor to guarantee the impartial administration of justice in our province.

4

## We'll balance the budget over the business cycle . . . and keep taxes fair . . . for everyone.

A New Democrat government will control government spending openly and responsibly. We can't solve every problem overnight. We will set priorities. New Democrat programs will be affordable and within our means. We will not spend more than British Columbians can afford.

Working and middle income families have been squeezed for an extra \$4400 in new Social Credit taxes and user fees since the last election, while profitable corporations have been let off easy, getting tax cuts, and paying a smaller and smaller share of provincial income taxes. That's not right.

A New Democrat government will stop Social Credit's targeted tax grab on ordinary people and small businesses. We will make sure that large profitable corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share of income and property taxes.

# 5

## A prosperous British Columbia needs a dynamic market economy.

A New Democrat government will work with the business community to develop new markets and new products that diversify our traditional resource base.

We will promote B.C.'s position as Canada's gateway on the Pacific to tap our potential as a trade, communications and financial centre.

Our province's future economic success also depends on an innovative, highly trained and educated workforce; yet our schools, colleges and universities are over-crowded and underfunded.

We will begin to reverse these short-sighted educational policies, expand research and development, encourage increased processing of resources in B.C., and stabilize the labour relations climate.

# 6

## We want small business to grow.

Small business is a vital part of B.C.'s free enterprise economy. It creates most of our new jobs and is the backbone of every community in the province.

A New Democrat government will help small and medium-sized businesses grow. We will work with business to achieve regulatory reform and reduce the paperwork burden.

We will work with small businesses to encourage innovation, develop export-oriented 'niche' markets for B.C. products, highlight quality products, improve training, and design financial and technical assistance programs to help small businesses better access market opportunities.

We will also encourage the growing contribution of women to the small business sector.

# 7

## Fair and practical laws to improve our labour-management relations.

It's time to put one-sided and extreme labour laws behind us.

New Democrats will work with business, management and labour to develop balanced and fair labour legislation, with practical mechanisms for resolving disputes impartially, with improved mediation services to assist the collective bargaining process to work more effectively, and with proper protection of the rights of workers in both the public and private sectors.

We will introduce new employment standards legislation to ensure fair treatment for all B.C. workers.

# 8

## Jobs and paycheques for working men and women are a priority.

Under a New Democrat government, when decisions on plant closures or layoffs are made, workers will come first.

We will strengthen job security legislation requiring advance notice of plant closure or layoffs, and giving better protection to the employees and communities affected.

9

## B.C. women are paid in 63 cent dollars compared to men. That's not fair.

A New Democrat government will develop a legislative framework to provide for the negotiation and implementation of pay equity programs throughout the public sector to end the discriminatory wage gap between men and women.

This will be a first step towards eliminating wage discrimination in British Columbia and developing, through consultation, a phased-in approach in the private sector.

10

## Full equality and opportunity for women in B.C.

A New Democrat government will lead the way in eliminating the disparities in income and opportunity between women and men in B.C.:

- We will expand opportunities for upgrading and for job and managerial training and will provide more flexible access to post-secondary education for women.
- We will extend benefits and protections afforded full-time workers to part-time and seasonal workers.
- We will establish a Women's Equality Ministry with program responsibility. Affirmative action programs will ensure equal opportunity for women in the public service.



# 11

## Women . . . not government . . . have the right to make their own choices on abortion.

British Columbians have had enough of too many Socreds trying to impose their religious views on women.

New Democrats believe that women have the right to make their own choices on reproduction and that their choices must be respected . . . not judged.

A New Democrat government will guarantee access to, and fund, reproductive counselling and abortion services in hospitals and community health centres in all parts of British Columbia. The power of public hospital boards to deny such services will be ended.

# 12

## Women's centres, sexual assault centres, and transition houses will get support.

Violence against women is unacceptable. Abuse and assault victims must be able to count on immediate and trained help when they need it.

The core funding of these vital services will be guaranteed and new regional centres will be established.



# 13

## Affordable child care for families who need it.

A New Democrat government will expand the availability of safe and affordable, non-profit child care and after-school programs.

These services will be responsive to the needs of parents and will be provided by qualified workers receiving equitable wages with fair working conditions.

# 14

## Families and children are the heart of our society. They'll get the help they need.

A New Democrat government will respond to the needs of children and today's families. We will help ensure that each child has a chance to grow up in a secure and stimulating environment. We will support parents in their role as parents and will improve maternal and family leave.

We will take special steps to protect the rights of children in B.C. through a child advocacy program. We will restore provincial child abuse services and preventative programs. We will expand counselling and mental health programs for adolescents.

# 15

**There's no excuse for poverty in a fortunate province like B.C.**

Food banks. Hungry school children. Thousands of homeless. Many more thousands of working poor and their families, the majority headed by women, below the poverty line. This is unacceptable in British Columbia today. We can do better.

A New Democrat government will increase the minimum wage and GAIN rates. We will ensure that social assistance recipients are given the opportunity and help to find work.

We will assist local school boards in setting up programs to feed hungry kids.

# 16

**Fair treatment for our regions and our suburbs. Our growth, our prosperity, and our services must be shared fairly by all British Columbians.**

Under Social Credit, it makes too much of a difference where you live in B.C.

A New Democrat government will work with local governments and communities to make sure that every region gets its fair share of economic development and opportunities.

We will make sure that needed public services such as hospitals and health centres, new universities and colleges, and public works programs such as new highway construction and transportation facilities are fairly distributed among communities throughout B.C.

# 17

## B.C. needs a balanced forest policy to guarantee jobs in our forests for generations to come.

The forest industry is cutting more and more wood in B.C. while we get fewer and fewer jobs.

- We will re-establish the link between access to wood and jobs that was secretly removed by the Social Credit government.
- A New Democrat government will ensure increased processing of forest products to get more jobs in B.C.
- A New Democrat government will provide fair access for small operators. We will work toward eliminating the export of raw logs.
- We will establish a broadly based Royal Commission on Forestry to make recommendations on the management, ownership and tenure of our forest lands.

# 18

## We will restore and protect our working forests.

As the Auditor General has pointed out, the public interest in protecting our forests has been virtually abandoned by the Social Credit government. The big companies have been left to police themselves in our forests.

- Social Credit cuts in the Forest Service have been a big mistake. The public's representatives must be sent back into our forests.
- A New Democrat government will take immediate steps to eliminate wasteful practices in the forest industry on both public and private lands. We will develop, with public consultation, a Forest Practices Act as recommended by the Forest Resources Commission.
- Our goal is to replace every tree cut.

# 19

## We will end the neglect of our forests.

Without leadership from government, conflicting interests have been left to slug it out . . . watershed by watershed, in the Carmanah and elsewhere. This has got to stop.

- New Democrats propose an Environment and Jobs Accord to resolve land use conflicts on a provincial and regional basis rather than valley by valley.
- A New Democrat government will immediately initiate a comprehensive inventory of B.C.'s forests to ensure a sustainable level of harvesting.
- The Environment and Land Use Secretariat will be put back in business to work with local communities in assessing land use decisions and in determining the full impact, costs and benefits of development.
- We will provide for greater community involvement in managing local forests, as recently recommended by the Forest Resources Commission.

# 20

## We can have environmentally sensitive jobs in our resource economy.

A New Democrat government will ensure that resource extraction meets strict environmental standards. Linking extraction to the processing of our resources here in B.C. will be a priority.

We will encourage research and development in the manufacture of resource equipment and technologies, particularly those which are environmentally beneficial.

Consultation with the resource sector will ensure stable development and public policy planning by all parties.



## It's time to get down to business and negotiate a fair settlement of the Indian land question.

A New Democrat government will proceed jointly with the Federal Government to negotiate the settlement of land claims.

The failure of the Social Credit government to face up to this urgent responsibility for so long has been unfair to aboriginal peoples and has seriously hampered B.C.'s economic development.

New Democrats will cooperate fully in expediting the process. We will ensure that third party interests are represented and protected. Private property will not be on the negotiating table.

New Democrats recognize the right of aboriginal people to self-government and aboriginal title.

Our object in negotiations will be to honourably resolve the nature and extent of aboriginal entitlements and to determine the costs of implementing a fair settlement in the interests of all parties.

All British Columbians will benefit from a fair settlement. Significant benefits will flow to all regions. There will be an end to uncertainty and confrontation.



# 22

**New Democrats will get tough with polluters. We won't let them off the hook.**

Clean air, clean waters and uncontaminated soils are our heritage and our right.

New Democrats will act quickly and fairly to protect our environment by enforcing new and comprehensive legislation that sets high environmental standards and serious penalties.

We will crack down on the pollution of our air, water and soil by pulp mills, refineries, smelters and other industrial operations. We will protect the jobs of employees reporting violations.

# 23

**Environmental monitoring is a public, not a private, responsibility.**

A New Democrat government will restore public confidence in B.C.'s air, water and soil quality by reversing Social Credit's short-sighted privatization of our environmental labs and public monitoring capability.

A New Democrat government will make sure that tough new standards are firmly and fairly enforced in the public interest.

# 24

We must do our part in British Columbia to protect our atmosphere and the ozone layer. With a New Democrat government, we will.

Cleaner air must be a major objective. There's no other way to protect our planet from the greenhouse effect and depletion of the ozone layer.

A New Democrat government's Clean Air Act will progressively cut smokestack emissions from industry and eliminate ozone-destroying chlorofluorocarbons.

We will work with municipalities to achieve targets for air quality improvement in B.C. We must reduce slash burning and the use of small-scale apartment and commercial incinerators.

# 25

Clean air means cutting emissions from automobiles, as well as from industry, and that means bringing back B.C.'s successful motor vehicle testing program.

New Democrats will do it . . . for the obvious highway safety reasons . . . and in order to make sure motor vehicles meet the standards required by our target of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20% over the next 15 years.

A New Democrat government will promote increased use of public transit and will encourage the use of clean alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas.

# 26

**Reduce, Re-use and Recycle waste . . . it's not good enough just to know the words. B.C. wants action.**

Social Credit has been very quiet about reducing and recycling waste since their entire recycling program got lost in the Bill Reid lottery scandal.

A New Democrat government will help local governments and regional districts speed up and expand the introduction of recycling programs. We will assist them in the marketing of recycled products.

In cooperation with business, consumer and environmental groups, we'll reduce the amount of waste generated from all sources . . . commercial and individual as well as industrial sources.

# 27

**Local services are running down and need fixing. We'll help.**

Local roads, bridges, sewers, water and sewage treatment systems and other facilities badly need upgrading in many areas of the province.

A New Democrat government will help local governments get the job done. It's a sound investment. It's a realistic source of jobs. And it's better to start now before the costs of complete breakdown become prohibitive.

# 28

**Each region must take care of its own garbage.**

A New Democrat government will assist local municipalities and regional districts to upgrade waste management and sewage systems in order to process garbage locally and to end the dumping of raw sewage into coastal and inland waters.

# 29

**Local governments need help to clean up toxic wastes and dangerous chemicals. They'll get it.**

The province will take the lead in finding safe ways to deal with toxic and biomedical wastes, pesticides and dangerous chemicals. A New Democrat government will work to develop province-wide solutions to these hazards on our doorsteps.

# 30

**Oil spills . . . an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.**

New Democrats in office will act quickly to reduce the threat of oil spills by strictly regulating existing tanker traffic and stopping further increases, and by requiring a quick and effective oil spill response capability.

A New Democrat government will permit no relaxation of British Columbia's moratorium on offshore oil drilling.

# 31

**We'll make sure energy conservation no longer takes a back seat.**

B.C.'s abundant energy resources give us a competitive edge in the global economy.

A New Democrat government will become a leader in energy conservation to ensure this energy heritage is safeguarded for ourselves and for generations to come.

We will improve environmental practices on existing and future energy projects and will ensure citizen participation in major energy development decisions.

# 32

**We will double B.C.'s parks and wilderness areas.**

A New Democrat government will preserve our unique parks and wilderness areas. We will enhance the quality and diversity of outdoor recreation in B.C. We will protect our parks from logging and mining.



# 33

**It's time government got back to supporting agriculture and preserving our farmlands.**

British Columbia agriculture was abandoned by the Vander Zalm Socreds when they supported the Mulroney trade deal with the United States.

A New Democrat government will end this neglect. We will introduce new programs to support farmers, particularly those in the tree fruit industry, under direct and immediate threat from the trade deal. We will actively promote "Buy B.C." marketing strategies.

We will restore the integrity of the Agricultural Land Reserve after years of Social Credit attacks. We will once again put the interests of agriculture ahead of the self-interest of developers.

# 34

**We will fight to protect B.C.'s fishing industry threatened by the Mulroney trade deal.**

When they supported the Mulroney trade deal, the Vander Zalm Socreds also joined Ottawa in abandoning B.C.'s fishing industry.

A New Democrat government will provide leadership in working with all sectors of the industry to conserve our fishery and to protect the jobs and communities which depend upon it.

We will declare a moratorium on new aquaculture ventures and increase support for salmonid enhancement programs.

# 35

## Tourism is vital to our economy. We'll boost it.

A New Democrat government will aggressively encourage tourists to come to B.C. by:

- Protecting our spectacular environment that draws tourists to B.C.
- Working closely with the industry to address taxation, transportation, accommodation and training issues.
- Actively marketing all of B.C.'s nine tourist regions and coordinate tourist services.

# 36

## We can build more affordable housing for young families and seniors.

A New Democrat government will act to make housing more affordable by:

- exempting first-time B.C. home buyers from the property purchase tax.
- introducing a "flipping" tax on real estate speculators.
- working with B.C. builders to provide economical starter homes for young families.
- assisting new cooperative housing initiatives and non-profit housing starts, and establishing a home improvement program for renovations.
- allowing municipalities to restrict the demolition and conversion of rental housing.
- helping municipalities increase the supply of serviced land.

# 37

## Tenants will be protected.

A New Democrat government will introduce rent stabilization legislation to stop unjustifiable rent hikes. We will establish an effective process to deal with landlord and tenant disputes.

We will prohibit discrimination on the basis of family status. We will provide incentives for the private construction of more rental housing.

# 38

## Better public transit will improve mobility and the quality of life in our suburbs.

Traffic congestion and air pollution will only get worse if commuters don't have more transportation options. We'll help provide them.

A New Democrat government will give high priority to improving bus services. We will complete the Skytrain extension to Whalley. And we will expand rapid transit links to Richmond, Coquitlam, and the Fraser Valley communities.

We'll also improve B.C. Ferry services and work with local communities to meet transportation needs throughout the province. New Democrats will ensure spending on public transit is based on meeting peoples' needs rather than the political needs of government.

## Hospitals and health care throughout B.C. that we can count on.

A New Democrat government will staff our hospitals properly to eliminate waiting lists and to make sure that quality health care is available to all who need it. We will not permit extra billing or two-tier medicine . . . one for the rich and one for the rest of us.

A New Democrat government will immediately freeze medicare premiums and review health care financing. There will be no new user fees. We will increase outpatient and home care to reduce the current pressures on hospital acute care. We will assist with travel costs under the medical services plan of patients requiring specialized medical treatment outside their regions.

A New Democrat government will establish new funding for community health centres: to improve preventative health programs, to provide earlier diagnosis and treatment, to provide reproductive health and abortion services, and to ensure the best possible use of our health dollars.

We will ensure full availability of drugs and therapies to people with AIDS. Confidentiality will be protected.

A New Democrat government will seek the cooperation and work closely with our health professionals and workers in making the health care system work more effectively.



40

## Workers' health and safety come first.

A New Democrat government will ensure injured workers get fair compensation. We will update and extend the coverage of our industrial health and safety laws.

41

## Education is key to everyone's future . . . yet we're falling behind.

A New Democrat government will make sure that young people throughout B.C. get the best possible education. It's the best investment we can make in our future.

B.C., under Social Credit, has the highest high school drop-out rate in Canada and lags far behind the national average in providing the opportunity to go to college and university. With a New Democrat government, B.C. will catch up.

We will reduce the financial barriers to education at all levels. Funding will be geared to local needs rather than to artificial provincial averages. We will give special attention to literacy programs and to the unique needs of women, aboriginal people, mature students and cultural minorities in higher education and training.

Educators will get the respect they deserve and will be drawn back into educational planning. Elected school boards and college boards will have their mandates restored.

Young British Columbians will get a quality education that encourages self-reliance and social responsibility in a democratic society and which provides the skills and training needed in the highly competitive global economy.



# 42

## Arts and culture must be accessible to all.

A New Democrat government will expand artistic and cultural opportunity throughout British Columbia. We will improve the funding of both amateur and professional arts and will assist the continued growth of the B.C. film industry.

# 43

## A multicultural province where everyone belongs.

A New Democrat government will give new Canadian families a fair start and full opportunity in B.C.

We will restore funding for English language training programs for immigrants and their children, and assist them in getting better access to public services.

We will assist non-profit immigrant service agencies; and we will ensure that positive race relations programs are in place in our schools and communities throughout the province.

# 44

## A Human Rights Code to protect us all.

A New Democrat government will introduce a new Human Rights Code that reflects British Columbia's values of openness and tolerance.

It will extend the protections of current legislation and will ban discrimination in British Columbia on the basis of sexual orientation, and family status. It will contain specific provisions to prevent sexual and racial harassment.

An effective Human Rights Commission will be established, free from political interference, reporting directly to the legislature, with adequate resources to fulfill its mandate.

# 45

**Young men and women have the intelligence to make their own informed decisions about sexual responsibilities.**

New Democrats believe that schools must provide balanced information to young people on sexual responsibilities.

Government has no business suggesting, as the Vander Zalm government did in its AIDS video, that women alone, rather than both men and women, are responsible for providing condoms and for taking sexual precautions.

A New Democrat government will initiate an unambiguous education program to counter the spread of AIDS. We will ensure that our schools provide young people with balanced sex education material.

# 46

**New Democrats will lower the voting age to 18.  
It's long overdue.**

There's no excuse for the voting age for British Columbia elections to be higher than the voting age for federal elections. A New Democrat government will correct this anomaly and show our young men and women the respect they deserve.

## We will stand up to the Mulroney government in Ottawa.

Too many Socreds are too close to the Mulroney Tories. As a result, the provincial government has been ineffective in standing up to the Mulroney government. They have failed to get results.

- New Democrats will pressure Ottawa to cut the federal deficit by closing tax loopholes and deferrals . . . instead of imposing unfair taxes like the GST on ordinary people.
- Under the New Democrats, Victoria will no longer look the other way while B.C. jobs in our forest, fishing, and agricultural industries are threatened by the one-sided free trade deal with the United States, and possibly Mexico in the near future, supported by Brian Mulroney and Social Credit.
- We will fight the Mulroney sell-out of our west coast fishery, our ship-building industry, and our rail services.
- We will negotiate hard for a fair share of federal spending in B.C. instead of lecturing Ottawa to further cut needed programs.

# 48

## New Democrats stand for a united Canada.

A New Democrat government will not throw in the towel on Canada's 124 years of history as a sovereign nation on this continent, separate from the United States.

We will push hard for constitutional reforms which are fair to all regions in our country; which will preserve national standards and programs like medicare; and which will protect the rights of women, aboriginal people and minorities.

We will ensure that a full and open process of public consultation takes place before committing British Columbia to fundamental changes in Canada's constitution.



clip and mail

# Yes. I want to help elect Mike Harcourt and the New Democrats

- ☐ Please send me more information
- ☐ Please send me a membership application
- ☐ Please send me information about the  
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