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**Directions for British Columbia's Future**  
*Policies and Priorities*

**Rita Johnston**

**1991**

**British Columbia Social Credit Party**

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## **TAX FREEDOM**

*Leaving in the hands of the people what is rightfully theirs to begin with.*

### **Rita Johnston on Tax Freedom**

"We have become a province of public servants. We now spend more time working to pay for government than we do working for ourselves. The tax burden faced by the average British Columbian is too high.

Tax Freedom must become a fundamental commitment Social Credit makes to the people of British Columbia in the next election. Each and every year we must roll back the tax burden until a reasonable and sustainable level has been achieved. The increasing size of government and its intrusion into the everyday lives of British Columbians is eroding the ability of our business to compete, and provides dis-incentives for people to enter the private sector.

It is time we set free the spirit of enterprise in our province and commit to reducing the role of government in the lives of British Columbians."

### **SPECIFIC TAX INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **5-YEAR TAX FREEDOM PLAN:**

Each year Government should set out its tax freedom plan, identifying specific tax reduction goals.

#### **AUTOMATIC PROGRAM SUNSET AND NEW PROGRAM FUNDING:**

All programs should have mandatory sunset provisions that require a five year review against a set of original objectives. All new programs will be required to specifically demonstrate the source of funding and these new funding sources will have to be compatible with the tax freedom plan.

#### **PREMIER'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TAX FREEDOM:**

A private sector advisory board to work with the government in the development of the tax freedom plan. In addition, the committee will conduct a comprehensive review of our tax system based on the priorities of simplicity, equity, and fairness, enhancing the ability of the British Columbia business sector to compete and the need to maintain a high calibre of social programs for our people.

#### **PRIORITY TAX ROLL BACK:**

In keeping with our commitment to the right of British Columbians to own their own home, one of the first areas for the Government to roll back taxes would be the Property Purchase Tax for first time home buyers, the second priority would be to roll back this tax for seniors to assist them in purchasing housing appropriate to their needs, and over time the tax would be eliminated completely.

## **RESTRAINT FOR PUBLIC SECTOR SALARIES MUST CONTINUE:**

The largest portion of budget expense comes in the form of salaries and other forms of pay. The fact of the matter is that over the last five consecutive years, public sector wage settlements have on average exceeded those in the private sector. This places an unfair burden on taxpayers and ultimately threatens the very same jobs and services that they provide. It also continues to push upward private sector settlements. This wage spiral must stop.

Achieving the primary objective of tax roll backs will require a greater emphasis on expenditure control and that means wage restraint.

Now is not the time to start to reconsider or withdraw from restraint. Tax freedom depends entirely on our ability to control our expenditures, tighter control than we have experienced in the past. A commitment to Bill 82 and Compensation Fairness is a commitment a Rita Johnston government will not back away from.

## **EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT**

*Getting more out of the tax dollar and less out of the taxpayer*

### **Rita Johnston on Managing the Government**

"We need better government, not bigger government. If we want to be serious about tax freedom, it means controlling expenditures, it's that simple. We must resist the temptation to say yes to special interests groups; we must continue to moderate public sector wage growth; and we must be innovative in enhancing the efficiency of government.

We must say no to politicians who won't tell us clearly where they stand. We must say no to politicians who would promise us flashy new programs paid for with our own money. If every time the government makes gains in revenue, such as the anticipated returns of the Columbia River Treaty, and we promise expensive new programs, the public will know we are not serious in our commitment to reducing taxes.

Every year we spend more and more, but the real question is are we giving to the people better programs and services. It is no longer good enough to try and tell people what a good job we are doing by always pointing to an increase in spending. We must improve the ways we ensure we are getting value for the money we spend."

### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **ENHANCING THE TAXPAYER PROTECTION PROGRAM:**

The program provides for the limitation in the growth of government spending to the average rate of growth over the past five years. Social Credit must ensure that this does not become an expenditure target. Our target should be the lowest possible growth in overall spending for the next three years which will provide us the basis for the return of tax dollars to the people of British Columbia.

#### **ENHANCING GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY**

We will place increased priority on encouraging the people who work within the public sector to share in the benefits of efficiencies and savings. There will be an accelerated program of "value for money" audits to ensure that we are getting the very highest value for every dollar the taxpayer sends to us.

#### **DEDICATED FUNDING FOR NEW PROGRAMS:**

Any new program initiative will have to specifically identify the sources of funding. In presenting the program the people of the province will know not only the cost of the program but where that revenue is going to come from.

## COMPETITIVENESS

*Our ability to compete is critical to our success in the global market place*

### Rita Johnston on Competitiveness

"British Columbia must earn its living in the international market place. Our economic future depends on our ability to compete in a highly competitive global market place. Our policies must have as their fundamental objective, increasing the value of the products we sell and ensuring that we can compete with other producers around the world.

Increasingly it is critical that the provincial government have a larger say in the determination of Canada's trade related policies. We must ensure that national trade policies do not penalize our industries, that monetary policy does not restrict access to markets through an artificially high dollar and that capital for expansion and modernization is generated.

The human resource policies and programs of both the federal and provincial governments, in education, training, research and development must be focused on improving our competitive position in world markets."

### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **REDUCING THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS:**

The cost of doing business must be reduced and this means reducing the tax and regulatory burden placed on business. It means that we should insist that potential trading partners have plans to achieve similar social, employment and environmental standards, as part of allowing them free access to our goods and markets.

#### **VALUE ADDED - EDUCATION THE KEY TO THE FUTURE:**

We must assist industries to accelerate the transition to value added operations. Economic development programs should ensure industry will progress to higher levels of production values. Education and employment training policies should help generate a workforce capable of meeting the demands of new production technologies.

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:**

We must place greater emphasis on research and development. Research within both universities and the private sector must be encouraged, including continued advances in establishing our universities as attractive places for world class researchers to locate.

The province's commitment to the KAON project remains firm and we must encourage the federal government to assist in making this project a reality. The development of the KAON project will dramatically further British Columbia's reputation as a desirable location for high technology industries.

Government must continue to reach out to high technology industries to jointly develop a new agenda in order to ensure that the private sector has the ability to attract the investment and the talent they need. This will foster a resilient high-tech industry capable of changing, growing and competing in the most dynamic market of all.

**MANAGING OUR CHANGING ECONOMY:**

Change in the structure of the economy is never easy: it means change for employees, investors, managers and the communities where they live. While we must not prevent our industries from adapting to the new economic realities, we must anticipate and manage those changes in order to minimize disruption and ensure long-term benefits are maximized. This will require new re-training programs and relocation assistance for those affected by the change.

## **REGIONAL AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

*Ensuring the quality of life in our regional communities*

### **Rita Johnston on Sustainable Development**

"Around the world the new age of environmental awareness has brought with it the need to ensure economic growth is managed within a healthy and sustainable environment. This is equally true in British Columbia.

Yet, we must not forget the needs of the people and families who live and work here; their legitimate needs must be given priority. Stewardship of our resources means ensuring the protection and creation of jobs while improving our environment. We must not allow single interest, special interest groups to determine government policy. Balanced choices and balanced decisions are required.

Access to international markets is also critical to our economic future. Jobs and pay cheques depend on our ability to compete in the international market place. We must do everything possible to enhance our competitive edge and open access to the world markets."

### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **GROWTH FOR THE FOREST INDUSTRY:**

In the short-term, Social Credit's priorities must be to restore fair and free access to the American market and to aggressively launch a new industry/government European marketing initiative to ensure competitive access to one of the world's emerging economic powers.

In the longer term we must continue our commitment to renewing our resources through continuing the largest reforestation effort in the history of the Province. We must also develop policies which encourage modernization of our forest industry. Our export products for the industry must, over time, continue to advance along the value added spectrum, enhancing the return to our companies, and to those employed in the industry.

#### **BUILDING MARKETS FOR NATURAL GAS - THE FUEL OF THE FUTURE:**

Consumers around the world prove that natural gas is the clean, environmentally sound fuel of choice. We must build domestic and international markets for natural gas while ensuring careful supply management. This will provide the highest commercial return to ensure solid long-term economic growth.

A Rita Johnston government recognizes the importance of the export market and would be committed to an aggressive but balanced approach to the export of natural resources. Initiatives such as accelerated rural gasification, vehicle conversion and the Vancouver Island Pipeline will continue to ensure that domestic markets for natural gas will continue to grow.

### **HYDRO ELECTRIC POWER:**

A Rita Johnston government will commit to accelerating the construction of the Site C project, within the context of full environmental review and assessment. The long term benefits to the people of the province are significant and it should be advanced.

The downstream benefits of the Columbia River Treaty, which are a direct result of the policies of Social Credit, should flow directly to the taxpayers of the province. Government should not view them as a revenue windfall for expensive new programs.

### **SINGLE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY:**

To eliminate duplication and waste and to more effectively protect our environment, the federal and provincial governments should establish one agency to enforce one set of standards. Jointly managed and jointly funded, this agency could be more effective in protecting the environment while at the same time simplifying the rules and regulations for business and industry.

### **AGRICULTURE - AN INDUSTRY CHANGING FOR TOMORROW:**

The farmer in British Columbia has a special role in our economy and society as the basic producer of food. We must ensure a healthy and vibrant industry. The industry is under tremendous pressure from international producers who enjoy much lower costs and a more hospitable environment for food production. To that end, new tax incentives need to be examined which would offer assistance to the food processing industry. Our industry requires the support of government and it shall have it.

### **BALANCING REGIONAL GROWTH:**

As part of an ongoing review of its operations, a Rita Johnston government will continue to look for ways in which it can focus its own resources, through relocation of government ministries, crown corporations and other agencies to assist in the development of secondary industry and enhance community stability.

As an example, we will review which elements of the head offices of British Columbia Railway could be relocated to the City of Prince George. Throughout the interior of the province there is considerable public concern over the continued reliance of communities on resource industries. The government must do all that it can to influence the development of related and complimentary economic growth in various centers throughout the Province.

### **STABLE FINANCING FOR TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES:**

Dedicated funding sources is the preferable way of securing financing for all our provincial transportation systems. A fixed proportion of related taxes and fees should be targeted to the funding of transportation infrastructure. Designating specific revenues would ensure a greater degree of stability in planning and implementing the long-term transportation infrastructure essential to the development of this province. Such an initiative would also provide for greater linkage between revenue and expenditure.

## **HOME OWNERSHIP IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

*The right to own your own home must be an affordable right*

### **Rita Johnston on Home Ownership**

"Nothing is more central to preserving a free enterprise system than ensuring that all British Columbians have the opportunity to own their own home.

We must ensure that the right to own your home is an affordable right.

To this end, as we embark on our course of bringing tax freedom to British Columbia, the very first tax that will be rolled back is the property purchase tax, first for the first-time homebuyer, then for seniors, then for everybody."

### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **TAX ROLL BACK FOR FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYERS:**

A Rita Johnston government will roll back over 60 million dollars in direct tax relief to first-time homebuyers; the second phase of the roll back will be for seniors, and over time the entire property purchase tax will be eliminated.

#### **NEW PROVINCIAL HOUSING BOND:**

A bond issue, fully backed by the provincial government, with tax incentives for both the private and institutional bond markets and administered by private sector lending institutions, will make available a source of lower cost mortgage funding for first-time homebuyers.

#### **GROWTH MANAGEMENT - REGIONAL PLANNING:**

Throughout the Lower Mainland the rapid rate of growth is becoming more and more difficult to manage in a co-ordinated fashion.

Regional planning needs to be developed in conjunction with local municipalities, which would assist in making balanced and stable growth a reality. Care must be taken however not to develop a system of planning which leads to duplication and confusion. Regional planning initiatives must reduce the overall planning burden on the private sector, not increase it.

#### **CROWN LAND TO BE LEASED FOR MARKET HOUSING:**

The availability of land is one of the key drivers in the price of housing. A program which would accelerate the availability of crown land for housing will assist in moderating prices. This, in conjunction with a broadly based, market sensitive regional planning process, will stabilize the long term prospects for the housing industry, particularly in the Lower Mainland.

## **COMMON SECURITY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

*Freedom begins with a fundamental respect for the law*

### **Rita Johnston on Law and Order**

"Our peaceful way of life, and the assurance of public and personal security, is just as important to our quality of life as maintaining a clean environment or prosperous economy. Freedom begins with a fundamental respect for the law and each other.

To those who are concerned for public safety let me say to you the streets, parks and public places of this province are to be safe and secure for the people and not the preserve of the lawless elements of our society. There is a growing concern and need for action against violence against women, children, and seniors. These are the priorities of my government."

### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **STRENGTHENING POLICE ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES:**

It has recently been announced that 45 new R.C.M.P. officers and an additional 400 auxiliary police officers will be brought on over the next two years. Criminal gang capacity within the Co-ordinated Law Enforcement Unit (CLEU) will be doubled.

#### **PROSECUTING THE CRIMINALS:**

Special prosecution units will be established around the province. These units will focus on the prosecution and investigation of violent, gang-related crime and other serious crime offenses.

#### **MAKING THE COURTS EFFECTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE:**

Additional provincial court judges will assist in managing the growing level of activity within the courts, and a new computerized case tracking system will be implemented to make the courts more efficient and effective.

#### **IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY:**

New store-front police offices will be established in communities. New local task forces will help coordinate community efforts to fight crime and to make the streets and parks safe.

#### **PROPOSED TOUGHENING OF CRIMINAL CODE:**

A priority in our relations with the Federal Government will be the urging of reforms to the Criminal Code and the Young Offenders Act; and to review the deportation provisions relating to those accused and convicted of crimes.

#### **ATTACK ON DRUGS:**

Our objective must be a drug-free province, where our children can attend school free from the pressures of pushers. I will promote initiatives to further enhance education programs and related activities to equip people to be responsible in their use of alcohol and to say no to drugs.

## EDUCATION

*There is no greater security for our future than educating our children*

### **Rita Johnston on Education**

"Over the past five years we have doubled our spending on education, held a Royal Commission on Education and embarked on some of the most advance reforms in education anywhere in the country. Yet this is not enough.

We must stop judging our performance in the education field simply by the amount of money we are spending; we must now make sure that the education system is actually providing a broad and practical education for our children and grandchildren."

### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **PROVINCE-WIDE BARGAINING FOR TEACHERS:**

Stability in our schools, uniform standards and compensation fairness are all objectives of the proposed province-wide bargaining. Increasingly we have seen individual school boards get into situations where inefficiencies and inconsistencies were developing. Province-wide bargaining will go a long way to introducing much needed stability in our education system.

#### **PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT:**

People who are in positions of public trust with children have a special responsibility. No where is this more evident than in our schools.

Persons convicted of a serious crime, especially sexual or violent offenses, will be permanently ineligible to be licensed as a teacher in this province. Legislation to this end was introduced in the last session and will be passed.

Over time this approach will be extended to people in other areas where they have a special responsibility for children.

#### **NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS:**

People in British Columbia should be able to move anywhere in the country they choose and be able to transfer their children from one school to another without concern over differing standards of education. To this end we should work together, with all other provinces, in seeking to establish national standards for education and professional training.

#### **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:**

Increasingly we will need to determine the effectiveness of our education system. We will need to place greater effort in the development of evaluation programs which will allow us to more effectively determine whether or not we are in fact improving our education system, or whether we are simply spending more and more money with no significant improvement in the quality of our system.

**NEW UNIVERSITY FOR FRASER VALLEY:**

With the dramatic shift in population in the Fraser Valley, there is a clear need for another university situated nearer to the population it must serve. An Implementation Planning Group will be reporting to the government on the next steps towards siting and building a new university for the Fraser Valley.

**UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH:**

Students will be able to attend the new University of the North. Serving a growing population of students across the central interior and the north, the university located in Prince George will provide easier access to post-secondary education for all students.

**BUILDING BUSINESS SKILLS:**

Our education system should equip people with skills which will assist them in earning an independent living. Business skill development in our schools, colleges and universities should be expanded and enhanced. Specific curriculum should be developed, and existing curriculum expanded, which will build the skills and experience necessary to ensure students are aware of the dynamics of the free market, and are equipped to meet the challenges of the business world.

## HEALTH

*British Columbians have the right to expect the very best health care system*

### Rita Johnston on Health Care

"We have one of the finest health care systems in the world; we have the best technologies, and the best doctors, nurses and health care workers.

We must ensure that our health care system is providing the most effective treatment and care for those who are ill or suffer injury. As well, we must orient future priorities to wellness and prevention as a means of improving the quality of life for British Columbians while at the same time lessening the burden on our system.

We must confirm our resolve to protect the quality of care which has become the hallmark of our medical system, making it the envy of the world.

Our challenge is to ensure that we spend the health care dollar wisely and reduce waste. We must, in partnership with those involved in the health care system, look for ways to control the overall cost without reducing the level of service to the public.

Social Credit must not allow uncontrolled cost to eventually place financial burdens on our system to the point where it can no longer sustain itself. We should not refuse to consider reasonable user fees if it would help us ensure the quality and the financial stability of our system."

### SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES

#### **ROYAL COMMISSION ON HEALTH CARE TO REPORT THIS FALL:**

One of the most comprehensive reviews of our health care system will conclude its deliberations later this year and will report to government. The report will help us set out a multi-year plan for improvements in our health care system.

#### **IMPROVED HOMECARE FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA:**

Greater priority must be given to helping people help themselves, particularly for people who receive a level of health care in the home. There are indications that, increasingly, people would prefer to remain at home while receiving certain kinds of medical treatment and only go to the hospital for treatment when it is absolutely necessary.

#### **ACCESS FOR THE REGIONS:**

As populations shift, so too should the resources necessary to serve them. The increasing population growth around the province means that there will be a need for growth in health care facilities in those communities.

## SENIORS

### *Recognition of their contributions and acknowledgement of their future potential*

#### **Rita Johnston on Seniors**

"People who have served their province and country well deserve better than to simply be labelled 'seniors'. They are individuals who have every desire and right to continue to participate in our society to the full extent of their ambition and talent.

The critical objective is to ensure that people, once they have chosen to retire, do not have their quality of life diminished because of financial or health considerations. For this reason, policies and programs should be developed to support those who have served their community. Policies which not only recognize the special contributions they have given to their community, but are sensitive to, and supportive of, their hopes and dreams for the future."

#### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

##### **ELIMINATION OF THE PROPERTY PURCHASE TAX FOR SENIORS:**

To encourage those on fixed income to maintain themselves as homeowners, a Rita Johnston government will eliminate the property purchase tax for seniors. This will be the second phase of a program designed to eliminate altogether the property purchase tax. Seniors should be able to down-size their homes as their needs change without the financial penalty of this tax. They should not feel that they must give up the right to own their own home and move into rental accommodation.

##### **INCREASING INVOLVEMENT OF SENIORS IN OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM:**

Community-based initiatives involving seniors in programs with youth should be established. The wisdom of experience should be shared with those who are preparing to meet the challenges of the world. The next Social Credit government will establish a registry of seniors who would like to participate in providing their expertise to students through informal seminar and discussion group activities in the schools.

##### **PENSION AND SERVICE PROTECTION:**

Social Credit recognizes the need to reassure those living on fixed incomes that the level of services and the level of income assistance to them will not be reduced through the erosion of programs or through inflation. This is a commitment that we must give to those who have served the province and country well.

## **NATIVE INDIAN LAND CLAIMS**

*A fair settlement, respecting the rights of all*

### **Rita Johnston on Native Indian Land Claims**

"In August of 1990, the Government of British Columbia acknowledged that the time had come for it to become a full participant in the negotiation of land claim settlements. The decision was made because it was, and is, the right thing to do.

All citizens of this province, native and non-native, need a greater degree of certainty to plan our future. The issue of Native Indian land claims must be settled.

We must also be clear, open and honest that there are many people who will be affected by the settlement of these issues and it is incumbent on all participants to ensure that the rights of all people are protected in this process. A Rita Johnston government will follow the spirit of the Task Force Report and will also commit to those non-native groups and third party interests that they will have an ability to participate in the process.

It is easy to take positions that will generate fear, anger and mistrust between native and non-native people. But this is not in the interest of anybody. A fair settlement, respecting the rights of all, is achievable. It will lay the foundation for greater economic growth and opportunity for all British Columbians."

## **BRITISH COLUMBIA'S PLACE IN THE NEW CANADA**

*"The Constitution is a law that belongs to the people, all the people not just those living in Ottawa or Quebec City. British Columbians must be directly involved in the reform of their constitution and the rebuilding of our country."*

### **Rita Johnston on Canadian Federalism**

"To be a British Columbian is to be a Canadian, to be welcomed and feel at home in all parts of the country, to be able to invest, work and live in any part of the country we choose to.

For millions of Canadians today there is a feeling of anger, frustration and alienation. They want responsible government, accountable government and affordable government. Our Constitution protects our political freedoms and civil rights, it must protect the individual's economic rights and freedoms."

### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION OF PERSONAL ECONOMIC RIGHTS & FREEDOMS:**

Proposed amendments to the Constitution will confirm the right of the Canadian citizen to hold and enjoy private property. In recognition of the continuing threat of a growing tax burden, the proposal will also require governments in Canada to balance their budgets over a five year business cycle and impose reasonable limits on the growth of governments.

#### **QUEBEC MUST COMMIT TO CANADA:**

There is no point in trying to make a deal with Quebec if they fundamentally don't want to be part of the country. We should stop kidding ourselves about reaching consensus when they won't join with us in finding solutions. The "make us an offer" approach taken by Quebec should be dismissed outright.

#### **ALL PARTY COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

Rita Johnston has initiated an all party committee of the Legislature to seek the views of a broad range of British Columbians on a variety of issues. A series of position papers prepared for the Government by academics, interested groups and recognized experts have been prepared and are available for review and discussion.

## **GOVERNMENT REFORM**

*Open and accountable government is a right of every citizen*

### **Rita Johnston on Politics and Government**

"Trust, confidence and respect are earned. Governments must be more visible, open and accountable to the people they serve. These are simple truths which must be recognized and acted upon.

Politicians must learn to trust the people they serve and have confidence in their sound judgement. They cannot close themselves off from the people, even when the decisions government makes will offend some special interest groups.

Openness and accountability must be the fundamental elements of reform. Such reform cannot be imposed on the people, it must be their decision, their direction. For this reason we will be seeking the support of the people in a reform referendum this next election."

### **SPECIFIC INITIATIVES/PRIORITIES**

#### **REFERENDUM - LET THE PEOPLE CHOOSE:**

This election will see the people give direction to the government on a variety of key reform initiatives. The kinds of questions which ought to be considered are:

Should government continue to put questions to the public in binding referendums?

Should constituents be able to recall their elected MLA?

Should the Legislature be reformed to encourage non-partisan, free votes and a more independent role for the MLA?

Should all constitutional amendments require approval in a provincial referendum before being accepted by the B.C. Government?

Should referendums be required to allow government to increase the direct provincial debt?

All Social Credit candidates will be free to debate these matters according to their consciences; the only thing which a Rita Johnston government will commit to is that the outcome will be binding.

The decision by the people will be developed through further public discussion and implemented in the next mandate through a new Constitutional Act for British Columbia.

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PROTECTION OF PRIVACY:**

There is no greater threat to the supremacy of the individual in our democracy than undue secrecy in government. The right of the individual to know what the government is doing and what personal information it might have must be respected and enforced through the law. At the same time the citizen must be confident that legitimate private information respecting themselves is protected.

To this end the Rita Johnston government recently introduced a comprehensive new bill, *Access to Information and Privacy Act*, for public review and comment. This initiative, much sought after, has been welcomed.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

The best conflict of interest policy is the election of men and women of sound character, supported by reforms enhancing openness and accountability in our political system.

Social Credit has introduced and passed specific Conflict of Interest legislation and the Rita Johnston government has just introduced significant new amendments to the legislation. Specifically, there have been changes proposed to the conflict of interest laws to ensure a more effective administration of the Act. The Legislature recently confirmed the appointment of a permanent, independent Commissioner reporting directly to the Legislature. There are also guidelines and disclosure rules for M.L.A.'s and even tougher guidelines for members of Cabinet.

### **TELEVISION FOR THE LEGISLATURE:**

Another Social Credit first was the implementation of the broadcasting of proceedings of the Legislature which provides every British Columbian direct and unedited access to the activities of the elected M.L.A.'s.

### **CONSTITUENTS TO HAVE GREATER ACCESS TO MLA'S:**

For members representing constituencies other than Victoria, it is often difficult to get back to meet with constituents other than on weekends. In order to assist in making sure that members have greater opportunities to work in their own communities, a Rita Johnston government will implement a proposal to have the Legislature sit longer daily hours for three consecutive weeks followed by a week for M.L.A.'s to return to their constituencies.