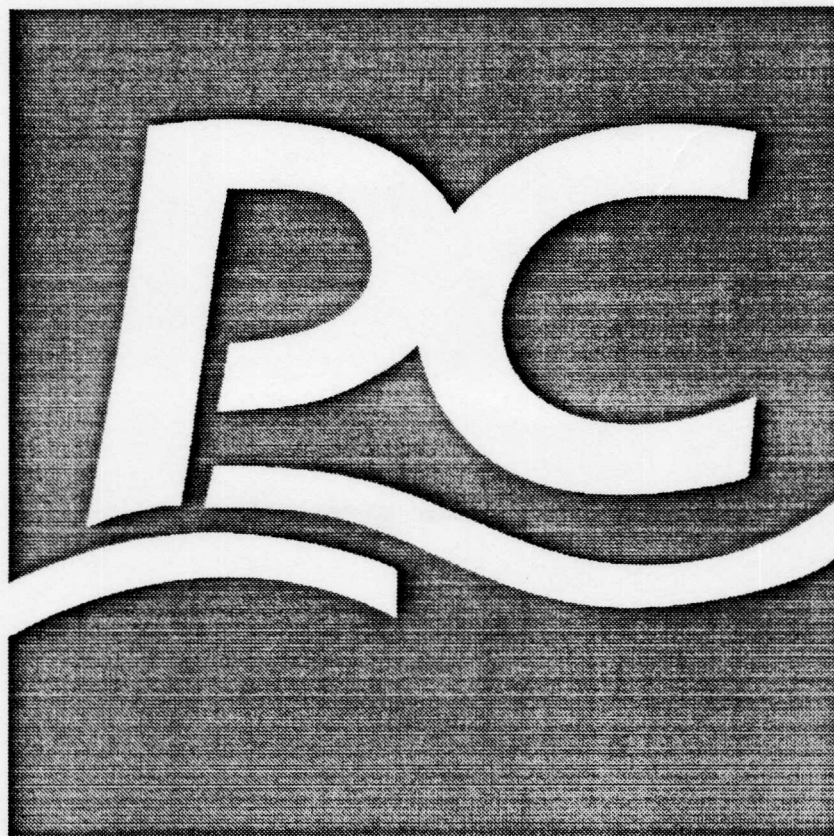


**People first ...
A better way to grow!**

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**Le retour du vrai pouvoir...
Celui de tous les citoyens!**

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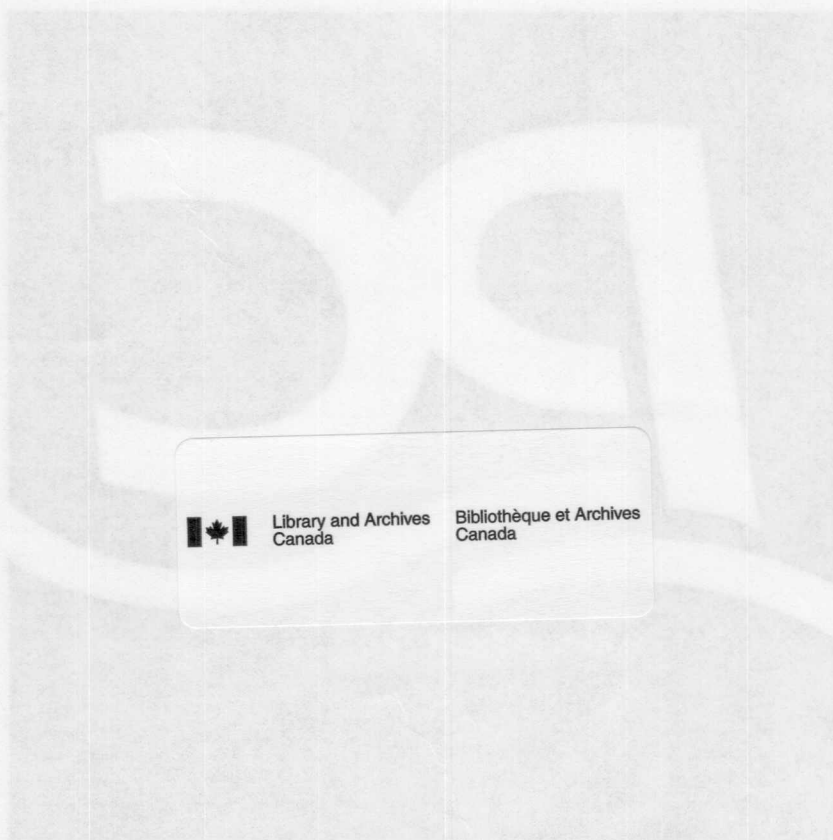
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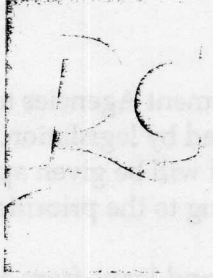
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People first ...



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Celui de tous les citoyens!
Le retour du vrai pouvoir...



August 1995

Dear New Brunswickers,

This is your platform. It was built from your ideas, ideas that you provided to me and my party through weeks of consultations since I became Leader of the PC Party of New Brunswick. Many of you took the time to phone our 1-800 number to tell me directly what you thought. It was so successful that my first pledge to you in this platform is to keep that 1-800 line open. This will always be your direct line into the Premier's Office. I want your ideas every day, not just at election time.

The key message of the 1995 New Brunswick Progressive Conservative platform is that local participation and government accountability must be restored in order to maintain standards and services in health and education, and to promote permanent, well-paying jobs in all parts of New Brunswick.

Illusory savings, and distant control over local institutions, have weakened health and education in many parts of the province. As a direct result of the McKenna Government's impulse to bureaucratize, to centralize, to downsize -- and now to privatize -- essential services of the government while increasing the tax burden on New Brunswickers, all at the cost of local authority, local responsibility and local democracy, the people of our province have been robbed of their voice.

Promoting New Brunswick as a source of cheap labour goes hand in hand with Mr. McKenna's high-tech talk to the voters and subsidies to low-wage, part-time jobs at the lowest end of the communications and information technologies sectors. Meanwhile, the government's neglect of manufacturing, notably the value-added potential of our natural resources, has caused economic under-performance and job losses in sectors of New Brunswick's traditional strength and growth.

New Brunswick voters have a clear choice in the election. Another four years under the McKenna Government would widen the gulf between distant decision-making and the tax-payers. The McKenna momentum to centralization and concentration of power would be unstoppable. The New Brunswick Progressive Conservative program offers New Brunswickers the opportunity to reverse the trend, regain their voice and restore their influence in the decisions that most affect them. The program of the New Brunswick PC Party offers qualitative change, in both process and policy.

Where the McKenna Government is preoccupied with a single track strategy to attract low-wage call-center jobs, the New Brunswick PC Party emphasizes regional and rural economic potentials and New Brunswick's traditional strengths.

We would establish Community Development Agencies to develop rural and urban economic development plans and initiatives. Created by legislation, they will enfold the current regional economic development commissions, and will be given appropriate powers and authority to implement and deliver programs according to the priorities of each region.

The Agencies will deliver venture equity and loans from a Regional Venture Investment Pool for small firms. They will provide the local focus for a Small Business Technology Assistance Program and for a small business incubator program.

New Brunswickers will be encouraged to invest in medium-sized New Brunswick corporation through New Brunswick Equity Units which will pay tax-free dividends. A New Brunswick Trade Development Corporation will help small and medium-sized companies take advantage of export opportunities created by free-trade arrangements.

Where the McKenna Government has made credit harder to obtain for family farms, has reduced assistance to the agri-food sector and has exposed farmers to sharp increases in municipal taxes, the New Brunswick Progressive Conservative program offers a change in priorities. New initiatives outlined in our platform will help farmers gain exemptions from local taxes, will give them access to assistance where Farm Credit Corporation credit has been unavailable, will re-instate financial assistance to family farms, and will provide supplements to crop insurance under an Agriculture Disaster Relief Fund.

Where the McKenna Government has tilted the balance in regard to private woodlot owners being the first source of supply, the New Brunswick Progressive Conservative program will restore their position as the prime source of wood supply. A new Regional Woodlot Resource Management Act will empower regional boards to legally bind their members and to enforce annual allowable cuts. A long term silviculture program will be cost-shared, and the government will invest cooperatively with industry, academic and research institutions in new product development.

Where the McKenna Government has abolished local control over health care institutions, expropriated and downgraded community and religious hospitals, reduced the number of hospital beds in rural areas and established a network of distant, secretive and costly regional hospital corporations, the program of the New Brunswick PC Party offers a complete change of emphasis. A PC Government will establish the New Brunswick Health Strategy Council to actively involve the public, health service providers and government in the establishment of specific health goals, objectives and improvement targets.

Regional Health Boards and District Health Service Councils will integrate the planning and delivery of regional and local health services. These boards and councils will have elected community representation and input from health service providers. All Department of Health policy proposals will be filtered through the Council prior to consideration by Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly. Health Action Strategies will be developed on significant health issues affecting the people of New Brunswick.

A PC Government will establish a Health Improvement Innovation Fund and establish a New Brunswick Health Research and Policy Agency.

A network of community health centers throughout the province will provide a wide range of integrated health and social services to include health promotion, illness and accident prevention, crisis and emergency, diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation and support. A PC Government will recognize an acute care mission for St. Joseph's Hospital in Saint John.

Where the McKenna Government has abolished more than half of the province's school boards and has increased centralized control over public education, the New Brunswick Progressive Conservative program will restore the balance between central policy authority and local participation in setting educational standards, assessing the achievement of individual schools and students, accountability, and the creation of real partnerships between schools and communities. A PC Government will convene a New Brunswick Forum on Quality Education and Life-Long Learning to include students, parents, teachers, trustees, administrators (school boards, community colleges, universities) community leaders, labour, business and government. Proposals from the Forum will be acted upon by the Legislative Assembly. Three year rolling budgets by school boards and "block funding" from the province will provide more flexibility and a greater incentive to achieve economies and to set priorities at the local board level.

A PC Government will establish a Life-Long Learning Council including all stakeholders through which to filter all departmental policy proposals prior to consideration by Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly.

In all the fields outlined above, as in all the others outlined in our platform, the New Brunswick Progressive Conservative Party offers a fundamental change in orientation. In youth opportunity, in labour relations, in sustainable development, in municipal reforms, in our relations with aboriginal peoples, in our treatment of volunteer organizations, in our approach to political and legislative reforms, there is a single, consistent, connecting and unifying theme -- to bring government back to the people, to give them back their voice, their vote and their real influence, and participation in the decisions that affect their lives.

This is just not a matter of process. A more stable and prosperous economy will come from a policy of diversification based on regional strength. Better standards in health, education and social services will come from a sharing of responsibility with local communities, and from a recognition of different needs and circumstances in different localities.

New Brunswick has in the past been a vigorous democracy, with strong local institutions and a well informed electorate holding their leaders and their governments to strict accountability. That is as it should be, but the Liberal trend to bureaucratize and centralize robs our democracy of much of its vitality, and it is costly also in terms of the quality of government programs and services offered to the people.

Our program reverses this trend throughout government and in three vital areas - economic development, health and education. We are creating a formal role for community based organizations in the decision-making process of the Cabinet and Legislative Assembly.

- New economic development initiatives proposed by the Department of Economic Development and related agencies will be filtered through the Community Development Council before final government decisions are taken.

- All policy proposals of the Department of Health will be reviewed by the N.B. Health Strategy Council before action is taken by the Cabinet and Legislature.
- All policy proposals of the Departments of Education and Advanced Education will be filtered through the NB Life Long Learning Council prior to a final determination by Cabinet and Legislature.

Further, before proceeding with municipal amalgamations, a PC Government will seek the approval by referendum of the residents of affected municipalities and rural areas.

Our program will renew the relationship of confidence, partnership and mutual responsibility between the people and their government. The current government has broken its trust with the public by raiding and re-labeling reserve accounts to present a misleading "bottom-line" in the Budgetary Revenues Account, by imposing nuisance fees even where there is little revenue to be gained, and by the increasing abuse of its power to impose so-called "user fees" on public services that have been traditionally been financed from general tax revenue as part of government's responsibility to the population.

The McKenna Government, in its mistaken belief that government is a business like any other, has lost its political bearings and forgotten its essential public mission. The McKenna Government's fascination with the corporate culture and the corporate ethic pervades public policy and administration in matters great and small.

The McKenna Government would spread the concept of privatization even more widely to services that have always been public. A PC Government will cancel immediately the Wackenhut youth corrections deal. A PC Government will honor its contracts with its own employees and once again treat them with trust and dignity.

The N.B. Highways Corporation Act only serves to give the Premier and his inner circle of advisers sole authority to impose deals anywhere at any time in the province. This Act will be repealed immediately by a new PC Government. We will not impose tolls on New Brunswick highways.

A Progressive Conservative Government will simply respect the difference between the corporate ethic and the public interest. We will give the people back their government.

Where the McKenna Government has added nuisance fees and user charges on top of tax increases, while privatizing government benefits and cutting back on services, the Progressive Conservative program offers a fiscal plan which will balance government spending with the capacity of current taxpayers to pay. The key to a sound fiscal plan is to expand the tax base through the creation of more full time, well paying jobs.

External auditors will be appointed to undertake an immediate examination of the province's financial position. Two subjects require special study - the emerging financial crisis of NB Power, and the long term costs of the McKenna privatization and sourcing out decisions.

Until this audit has been completed, tax relief will necessarily be limited. However, a PC Government will roll back the last two Personal Income Tax increases (2% in 1993 and 2% in 1994) for New Brunswickers with an annual taxable income of less than \$30,000.

We will reinstate the Property Tax Rebate for all seniors, increase the level to \$250 from \$200, and adjust the eligibility rules to coincide with the federal government's Old Age Security program.


Consistent with our policy of linking government taxation to public services and benefits, a PC Government will review all nuisance fees introduced or raised by the McKenna Government. In particular, a PC Government will immediately eliminate trout fishing license fees, cut marriage license fees in half, and roll back license fees for recreational facilities and rental of Crown Lands for hunting camps and cottages.

This election is about a better way for New Brunswick to grow. After eight years, the McKenna Government has forgotten who put them in office and why they are there -- to serve the people of New Brunswick. "People first and money second," said Mr. McKenna, "ended when the money ran out". It's time to change Mr. McKenna's priorities.

Our priorities begin and end with people. People like you. Please take a few minutes and read our plan for job creation and growth, lower taxes, access to quality health care, better educational opportunities and, most important of all, a better way to govern our province that puts real decision-making back into the hands of you, the citizens and taxpayers of New Brunswick.

On behalf of the Progressive Conservative candidates across New Brunswick, I ask for your support on September 11th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernard Valcourt", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bernard Valcourt

“People First...A Better Way to Grow”

A Summary of the Progressive Conservative Program for New Brunswick

What this election is all about.

This election is about changing the way we govern ourselves. It is about getting our priorities right and spending taxpayers' money on the people's priorities. It is about giving New Brunswickers a clear choice in the direction, values, and ways we chart our future.

For eight years, people have been left out of decisions affecting their lives and their future -- decisions that cut hospital beds, decisions that raised taxes and added user fees, decisions that replaced the knowledge of the local community with the “know-it-all” of a Liberal political elite posing as civil servants.

For eight years, New Brunswickers have been subjected to slogans, not solutions -- sales jobs instead of real jobs. All this, at a time when New Brunswick suffers from the third-lowest economic growth of all provinces, when true job creation is 20,000 less than the McKenna government claims, and when public assets like our highways are proposed to be sold off with no accountability to the people who paid for them.

It's time to change that!

It's time to bring the people in as true partners in government decision-making, to put people at the centre of every decision the government makes. It's time to elect MLAs, your representatives, who believe in putting their constituents first. It's time to give voters a say before decisions are made by making MLAs, Cabinet Ministers, and civil servants consult with people.

Our platform is based on one fundamental principle: government should serve the people, not the other way around. Decisions affecting communities should be decided by people living in those communities; if not, their views must be part of the decision making process.

That is why a new PC Government will:

- * Say “NO” to Ottawa's intrusive and onerous Gun Registration bill.
- * Cancel the McKenna deal with the NB coin Operators Association and reinvest the \$17 million in recaptured revenues into health care.

- * Create new decision-making mechanisms that ensure public input is listened to, before government decides.
- * Allow PC MLAs to vote according to their conscience by restricting party discipline to matters of confidence in the government.
- * Roll back the last two McKenna personal income tax hikes for taxpayers with an annual taxable income of less than \$30,000.
- * Ensure rural New Brunswick is given the same priority as the rest of the province in job creation and economic growth.

Giving Government Back to New Brunswickers

The election of a PC Government is the first step in reversing eight years of centralized control and giving real decision-making authority back to taxpayers and communities. Economic development, health, education and municipal amalgamation will now involve your voice and your vote. Priorities in each of these important areas affecting you and your family will now be decided only after your input has been received.

We will pass legislation creating new policy-making and decision-making forums in each of these areas that will require government to listen and consult with local communities, interest groups, and those with a real stake in each decision. Government will no longer be able to decide unilaterally what's best for you.

Our plan to give government back to the people includes:

Economic Development

- * Community Development Agencies (CDA) will be set up throughout New Brunswick. Run by local boards of directors from business, labour, and local government, their mandate will be to develop and implement specific rural and urban economic development initiatives according to their priorities. Provincial small business programs will be transferred to each CDA thereby eliminating a layer of bureaucracy between government and the small business person.
- * A Community Development Council (CDC) composed of representatives from each CDA will review all provincial economic development initiatives prior to government decisions.

Health

- * *Regional Health Boards and District Health Service Councils* will replace the provincial government and hospital corporations as the primary decision-makers affecting health care in each region and community of New Brunswick.
- * *Regional Health Boards and District Service Councils* will integrate the planning and delivery of regional and local health care services. They will establish goals, service targets, and regional health priorities. They will have elected community representatives and advisory input from each service provider.
- * *A New Brunswick Health Strategy Council* will be initiated to bring health care professional associations, community leaders, and taxpayers together to set province-wide health care priorities, goals and targets. All Department of Health policy proposals will be filtered through the Health Strategy Council first prior to consideration by Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly.

Education and Life-Long Learning

- * *School Boards* will be given more authority and responsibility in setting educational standards, assessing school and student achievement, and building stronger relationships with parents, teachers, and communities.
- * *A Life-Long Learning Council* with representatives of parents, students, public schools, community colleges, universities, business and labour will be established to review and advise on all education policies and any new proposed initiatives.
- * *A New Brunswick Forum on Quality Education and Life-Long Learning* will be convened within the first year of a PC government's mandate to set new directions for our province's education system. All educational interests will be represented from parents to teachers, to students, to communities.

Municipal Amalgamation

- * All future municipal amalgamations will be put on hold until affected voters and taxpayers are given the opportunity to vote directly to proceed through a local *referendum*.

Reforming Government and Empowering the Legislature

In 1987, Frank McKenna became Premier with no Opposition. Eight years later, with three other parties represented in the Legislature, he believes he deserves no Opposition. This imperial attitude has led to centralized control and secretive government. Leadership must begin with the Premier, the Cabinet, and the Legislature.

A PC Government will:

- * Reduce the size of Cabinet, shrink the size of the Premier's Office, and eliminate the communications "spin doctors".
- * Maintain a direct, open-line from the people to the Premier's Office through a 1-800 number. The Legislative Assembly is the People's Forum. We will return it to its rightful heritage in New Brunswick political life. No more ramming through legislation. No more ignoring elected MLAs in favour of what the Premier and his personal entourage want. Consensus will be our rule, it will be the yardstick by which our caucus endorses, not a proposal to the Legislature.

A PC Government will:

- * Plan for two sittings of the Legislature: a fall session to table government plans and legislation and consult the public and a spring session to act on them. This will allow time for Standing Committees to consider proposed legislation and hear the views of New Brunswickers.
- * Propose to the Legislative Assembly that MLAs be provided with appropriate resources at the riding level to effectively represent the interests of their constituents.

Fiscal Responsibility

Under Frank McKenna, the Liberals have more than doubled the net public debt of our province. Despite record tax increases and harmful cuts to health care and education, spending has actually increased under the Liberals. We will get the balance right by always taking into account the taxpayer's ability to pay.

At the same time, how does the taxpayer know he or she is receiving true value for money from government spending? Under the Liberal government, they don't. Under our government, they will.

A PC Government will:

- * Conduct a special, public audit of the province's financial books to ensure all true spending is accounted for and presented to the Legislature for debate.
- * Ensure a full public airing of the NB Power fiasco on account of politically motivated capital spending and the deceptive accounting practices used by the Liberals to conceal the true financial situation of this public corporation, once the pride of all New Brunswickers.

- * Institute formal "rolling" three-year business plans for each government department and agency which will detail the policy objectives being pursued, the targets to be attained, the resources allocated, and the criteria used to measure outcomes.
- * Institute an annual public consultation process for the Budget so voters and taxpayers have a true opportunity to present their views in advance of government decisions.

Privatization and the Public Service

The New Brunswick public service has a reputation as one of the most professional in all of Canada. That reputation has been systematically and insidiously attacked by the blatant politicization of their role by the McKenna Liberals. Key Liberals are now "cleansed" civil servants, usurping the traditional non-political and non-partisan advice of the rest of the civil service.

Privatization initiatives, funded by taxpayers money and paid to outside American consultants, are replacing the public policy responsibility of elected, responsible government. This is wrong.

A PC Government will:

- * Reverse the politicization of the New Brunswick public service and restore its professionalism and morale.
- * Stop the American Wackenhut privatization initiative of the province's youth correctional institutions.
- * Limit privatization of government activity and institutions and/or out sourcing of government activity, only when this activity or institution no longer serves a public policy purpose. All proposed privatization deals will first be referred to the Legislature for open debate.
- * Review all other privatization deals concluded and evaluate how they conform to this new policy, and if they don't we'll cancel them.

Jobs and Growth

Jobs and economic growth will be an immediate priority for a PC government. The McKenna government promised 25,000 new jobs since the last election -- in fact, only 5,000 were created by the end of 1994. Employment in the first 6 months of this year is 8,000 below the same period for last year. We have lost 5000 manufacturing jobs between 1988 and 1994. These are the solid facts of the "McKenna job creation miracle".

The only lasting way to create jobs is to generate solid economic growth in New Brunswick's traditional job generators, small business and local communities, and get a solid foothold in the new economy. All New Brunswick will be the focus of our job creation priorities, not just low-wage call centre jobs in some areas.

A PC Government will:

Jobs in the Community

- * Give local communities the tools to set their own job creation and economic growth priorities through Community Development Agencies.

Small Business Growth

- * Create a small business *Regional Venture Investment Pool* to supply equity and loans for between \$5,000 and \$50,000.
- * Offer more financing through *New Brunswick Equity Units* that New Brunswickers can invest in to receive provincial tax-free dividends while helping our businesses grow and create jobs.
- * Introduce a *Small Business Technology Assistance Program* to help firms hire specialized engineering and scientific personnel to carry out R&D, as well as to acquire new shop-floor technology that will create more leading edge jobs in New Brunswick.
- * Establish a *New Brunswick Trade Development Corporation* to help small & medium sized business export more and create jobs at home.

Jobs for Young New Brunswickers

- * Institute a *Student Jobs Corps* program for graduating university students with outstanding student loans and no immediate alternative job prospects by providing job opportunities in various public services such as libraries and child care and paying off the loan in the process.

Healthy Communities, Healthy New Brunswick

Health care in New Brunswick has deteriorated during the last eight years. Hospital waiting lists are up, the number of beds is down, and services have been cut. Control of your health care has been taken away from local communities and put in the hands regional hospital corporations and bureaucrats. The quality of health care in our province has suffered and too many residents now worry whether adequate health care will be there when they need it.

A PC Government will move quickly to end central control over your health care and return decision making back to New Brunswickers through a *New Brunswick Health Strategy Council* and elected *Regional Health Boards* and *District Service Councils*. Our goals will be to:

- Design an integrated approach to health and community services at the provincial, regional and local levels.
- Develop a new health financing framework for services and service providers.
- Manage the number, mix, and utilization of health human resources.
- Create comprehensive health and community services.
- Shape a supportive health regulatory environment.
- Change health beliefs and service expectations.

A PC Government will:

*Develop *Health Action Strategies* with stakeholders on significant health issues facing the province.

*Create a *Health Improvement Innovation Fund* to seek innovative community health projects.

*Institute a *New Brunswick Health Research and Policy Agency* to ensure policies and programs are guided by the latest evidence and research findings.

*Establish a network of *Community Health Centres* throughout New Brunswick to provide services in acute care, emergency services, long term care, home care, ambulance services, community health and mental health.

*Recognize an acute care mission for *St. Joseph's Hospital* in Saint John.

Lower Taxes

The McKenna government has given New Brunswickers the second-highest rate of personal income tax in Canada. Direct taxes collected by the province have risen 42% since Frank McKenna became Premier. He has introduced or increased over 1000 taxes and user fees since taking office. The real average weekly earnings in New Brunswick have gone up only by 12 cents during the last eight years compared to a Canadian average of 9 dollars. At the same time, the government's total net debt doubled during Frank McKenna's two terms from \$2.9 billion to \$5.8 billion.

Higher taxes and more debt - that's the McKenna miracle.

New Brunswickers don't just need, but deserve, a tax break. Putting more money into the pockets of taxpaying families will increase consumer confidence, generate more spending, and create more jobs.

A PC Government will:

- * Roll back the last two McKenna personal income tax increases of 2% in 1993 and 2% in 1994 for low and middle-income taxpayers with an annual taxable income of less than \$30,000.
- * Re-instate the Property Tax Rebate for all senior citizens and increase it from \$200 to \$250 while adjusting its eligibility to coincide with federal Old Age Security.
- * Eliminate immediately trout fishing license fees, reduce marriage fees by 50%, and roll back to a more reasonable level the rental fees for hunting camps and cottages on Crown Lands.
- * Review each of the 1000 McKenna user fees and taxes to ensure they don't exceed the level of cost recovery.
- * Undertake a comprehensive review of all business taxes and charges that hamper small business growth and job creation.

These first steps will be undertaken within the first year of our mandate leading to a more comprehensive review of the provincial taxation system.

Education and Opportunity

Three years ago, the McKenna government suddenly and arbitrarily abolished more than half of the province's school boards. Education funding has declined for the last two years. Education is an investment -- a fact the McKenna government refuses to recognize.

Parents and grandparents are worried about their children's education. You don't achieve excellence in education by cutting families out of the equation, by unilaterally attempting to recertify our teachers.

A PC Government will reverse the systematic downgrading of education during the last eight years. Our plan will include:

- * A strengthened role for local elected school boards in education decisions with guaranteed annual "block-funding" that empowers school boards to determine their own financial priorities.

- * More involvement of parents and students in shaping education.
- * A New Brunswick Forum on Quality Education and Life-Long Learning.
- * Creation of a Life-Long Learning Council with representatives from parents, students, the public school system, universities and community colleges, as well as business and labour.
- * An apprenticeship training task force to make action recommendations on implementing a province-wide apprenticeship training program.

**The New Brunswick
Progressive Conservative Party Program
for the
1995 New Brunswick General Election**

***People First...
A Better Way to Grow!***

PART I JOB CREATION

Goals and Principles

The creation of well-paying jobs, permanent jobs, jobs with a future, had always been the number ONE priority of past provincial governments in New Brunswick. The standard of living of New Brunswickers depends on these jobs. Security and growth as individuals and as families depend on these jobs. Government revenues to finance the essential services needed by our people depend on these jobs.

There is only one way to create these jobs. They come from a growing economy--a growing economy based on our natural resources and on the entrepreneurial talent of our population, entrepreneurs who seek a solid foothold in the real economy.

The recent efforts at diversifying the economy solely by seeking, promoting and relying on low-wage jobs at the low-end of the communications and information technologies sectors only serve to eclipse the jobs potential of the other sectors of the economy, those based primarily on human and natural resources. The current government's response to a stagnant economy, cutting essential services and raising taxes, is exactly the wrong approach to maximizing job creation in this province.

Government does not create jobs. The role of government is to lay the foundation, to provide the climate, infra-structure and resources.

It is the private sector that creates jobs, the men and women who take the risks and start their own businesses. These businesses grow by acquiring new production technologies and by branching out into new products and services; by launching into new export markets where the competition is tough, but the rewards in terms of job creation are the strongest.

The main goal of a Progressive Conservative Government will be to emphasize the job creation potential of the manufacturing sector and an aggressive value-added processing of our natural resources, and on the entrepreneurial talents and drive of New Brunswickers.

To achieve this goal, a Progressive Conservative Government will encourage the private sector to be actively involved in the training and development of our work force. In return, the new PC Government will ensure the number of jobs created becomes a prime element of consideration in resource allocation.

People First, A Better Way To Grow

Small Business Sector

Small businesses are synonymous with job creation. Empowering local communities is the most effective way to encourage the creation and expansion of new small businesses. Consequently, a Progressive Conservative Government will establish, by legislation, Community Development Agencies (CDA) in all regions of the province. These CDA's will be given the responsibility and the authority to develop and implement specific rural and urban economic development plans and initiatives in all sectors of the economy according to their own priorities. Part of their role will be to participate in the provincial efforts to seek and find investors, partners and opportunities for job creation in their region. Existing regional economic development commissions will be folded into the new agencies. Transferring small business programs from a centralized department to the CDAs will eliminate a significant layer of bureaucracy between the small business and the development agency.

CDA boards of directors will consist of representatives from business (industrial and service sectors), labour (public and private) and local government. Each CDA will be required to submit an annual business plan to the government for approval. In addition, CDAs will be accountable to the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations of the Legislative Assembly.

- A PC Government will form a Community Development Council (CDC) made up of representatives of all CDAs. All new economic development initiatives proposed by economic development departments will be filtered through the CDC prior to a government decision.
- A PC Government will abolish the New Brunswick Stock Savings Plan and the Community Development Bond Program. Not a single project has ever been approved under either program.
- A PC Government will establish in partnership with institutional investors a Regional Venture Investment Pool for small firms. These pools will supply venture capital (equity and participating loans) to small start-up firms. Individual investments will be in the \$5,000 to \$50,000 range. The program will be delivered through the new Community Development Agencies.

- A PC Government will introduce a Small Business Technology Assistance Program which will underwrite the cost of hiring engineering and scientific personnel dedicated to research and development within small firms. The program will also assist in the acquisition of shop floor technology not eligible under programs offered through ACOA or the National Research Council's IRAP program. The program will be implemented by a revitalized Research and Productivity Council, to become known as Innovation New Brunswick, in partnership with the new CDAs.
- A PC Government will expand the Fredericton based Incutech small business incubator model to the rest of the province. The program will be delivered through Innovation New Brunswick, in collaboration with the new CDA's.
- A PC Government will establish a new financial investment instrument to become known as New Brunswick Equity Units. These special shares will be available to growth-oriented small and medium-sized New Brunswick corporations for offerings to investors through the marketplace. Dividends paid to investors by these units will not be taxable income at the provincial level. An independent board will qualify eligible firms through review and approval of the offering prospectus.
- Global markets are at our fingertips. Free trade arrangements are opening major opportunities for growth and expansion. Large firms can tap into these markets - small and medium companies cannot. A PC Government will establish a NB Trade Development Corporation to address this problem. The Corporation will receive an equity base and will be required to operate with private sector rules. It will focus on market intelligence, form export consortia, provide financing and assist with export/import regulations. It will work in partnership with Canada's Export Development Corporation wherever possible.

The Agri-Food Sector

- A PC Government will ensure that the Crop Insurance Program and the Net Income Stabilization Account continue as essential components of its agricultural policy. Enhancements will be made to enable these programs to remain affordable and to improve their effectiveness.
- A PC Government will introduce legislation to allow farmers to finance and operate an Agriculture Disaster Relief Fund, also known as a "third line of defense", to supplement crop insurance when a disaster is clearly over and above normal risk.
- In conjunction with farm organizations and producer groups, a PC Government will undertake a review of all existing provincial farm assistance programs with a view to consolidate these programs and delegate implementation responsibility to the two Agriculture Federations and producer groups wherever feasible.

- A PC Government will extend the Farm Land Identification Program to local property taxes. It will also amend the *Real Property Tax Act* and the *Assessment Act* to ensure that properties and improvements used for farming operations are excluded from local taxes. Adjustments will be made to provincial transfer programs to compensate municipalities for this loss in revenue.
- Despite some progress achieved in the mid-eighties, entrenching the right to farm is unfinished business. A PC Government will strengthen the Agricultural Operations Practices Act by including all agricultural practices under the Act.
- A PC Government will re-instate financial assistance to the family farm (annual sales of less than \$150,000) unable to receive credit on reasonable terms from the Farm Credit Corporation.
- A PC Government will assist in the establishment and operation of cold storage and packaging facilities in key locations across the province to help produce farmers secure "local grown" markets within large food retail operations.
- A PC Government will place priority on sound soil conservation practices. It will provide for conversion of some Crown Lands for agricultural purposes where this will enhance soil conservation and productivity.

Natural Resources

- The Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick is committed to the original underlying principles of the 1982 *Crown Lands and Forests Act*. A PC Government will review the changes made to the Act in 1992 and, in partnership with all the key stakeholders in the sector, adopt the appropriate measures which will ensure primacy of wood supply to private woodlot owners. It will also consider a more streamlined method of establishing stumpage rates between licensees and sub-licensees.
- A PC Government will introduce a new Regional Woodlot Resource Management Act to provide the legislative framework for the structuring, operation and financing of current private woodlot marketing boards, and the licensing of contractors according to minimum harvesting standards. The Act will contain appropriate authority for the new regional resource management boards so that they are able to bind their members to the contractual arrangements entered into on their behalf, thus satisfying licensees and sub-licensees that the new boards can fulfill their contractual obligations.
- The concept of sustainable development of an entire resource takes precedence over certain practices aimed at achieving short term benefits. A PC Government will extend the Utilization Survey now conducted by the Department of Natural Resources on Crown Lands and large freeholds to woodlots under the regional resource management boards. Data from the survey will then be used to determine and enforce Annual Allowable Cuts on small woodlots as well as on Crown Lands and large freeholds.

- A PC Government will commit to a long term silviculture program on private woodlots with a cost sharing formula commensurate with the long term benefits of a sustainable forest. A system of incentives similar to the Farm Land Identification Program will be introduced for woodlots undergoing intensive forest management.
- A PC Government will review the *Crown Lands and Forests Act* to ensure that the current system of resource allocation is contributing fully to the prime objective of job creation through the best end use of the resource, especially as it relates to the hard-wood species. It will invest in cooperation with industry, academia and research and development institutions to find new, innovative products.

Mining

- A PC Government will encourage the further exploration and development of the province's mining potential. Efforts will continue to find improved and more environmentally acceptable methods of burning New Brunswick coal. A PC Government will take steps to achieve better economic returns on land reclamation programs and create new permanent jobs.

Fisheries and Aquaculture

- A PC Government will take a more assertive stance to ensure better treatment of New Brunswick fishermen by the Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans on matters related to specific fishing quotas under the DFO's annual resource management plans. Of specific concern are allocation of quotas for handliners between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in the Bay of Fundy and the loss of crab quotas in the Gulf.
- A PC Government will ensure that the new Trade Development Corporation emphasizes as a matter of priority the importance of market intelligence and export consortia to access new markets for fully-processed fish products.
- A PC Government will review existing regulations under the *Aquaculture Act* and speed-up the site approval process and the awarding of licenses once a site has been approved. A PC Government will also implement an enhanced research and development program to bring to commercial exploitation new species.

Tourism and Culture

- A PC Government will place renewed emphasis on ensuring that the all-season tourism potential of each region is fully realized. The new CDA's will work with tourism operators to promote cultural and small tour attractions within their respective regions, conduct regional training and advisory programs, and operate regional tourist welcome and support centers.

- At the provincial level, a PC Government will place additional emphasis, in cooperation with the Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick (TIANB), to attract tourists from the neighbouring New England states to complement the current program designed to attract tourists from Quebec. Also in cooperation with TIANB and the CDA's, a PC Government will upgrade attractions and programs that can expand tourist activity in the province year-round, including a special development and marketing initiative for eco-tourists.
- Arts and culture are not only important to the social fabric of the province, they also are important generators of jobs. In addition to the programs already described under Small Business, a PC Government will expand the mandate of the New Brunswick Arts Council and provide adequate resources to ensure its full participation in the development and implementation of a new cultural policy for the province. A PC Government will also appoint a task force consisting of the various interested stakeholders to assess the feasibility of establishing a New Brunswick Film Development Corporation.

Transportation

- A PC Government will repeal the *New Brunswick Highways Corporation Act* pushed through the Legislature by the current government in the final days of the last session. The powers conferred to the Corporation by this legislation were the authority to acquire, hold, own, lease, license or otherwise deal with land and highways, and with the approval of Cabinet, sell or otherwise dispose of land or highways, and raise revenues through tolls, access fees, franchise fees, right-of-way charges and the lease or sale of commercial rights in respect of highways. A PC Government will confirm and entrust the general supervision of construction and maintenance of highways to its Department of Transportation. No tolls!
- A modern secure and environmentally sensitive highway system is critical to the province's economic development. Hence a PC Government will continue the upgrading of the Trans-Canada Highway to a four-lane highway, and will also give priority to the upgrading of rural roads, almost completely abandoned by the current government. A PC Government will also review the planning of highway development to take into account the importance of better access to the Northeastern United States.
- A PC Government will not push ahead with the construction of a four-lane highway through the Grand Lake - Jemseg marshlands until a full Environmental Impact Analysis is completed and the full cost of construction carefully re-assessed. A PC Government will also consider a more cost-efficient alternate east-west routing, including the upgrading of the Renous-Plaster Rock Highway for through truck traffic.
- A PC Government will exert pressure on the Government of Canada to ensure that it lives up to its legislated responsibility to assist New Brunswick in providing its residents, businesses and institutions with a transportation framework for passengers and merchandise, both in and out of New Brunswick, which includes rail, highways, air and ports.

- A PC Government will devise a mechanism whereby the trucking industry will have meaningful input in the change or enactment of regulations affecting their industry whether it is in regard to highway regulations or any matter affecting trucking in the province.

PART II HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: HEALTHY NEW BRUNSWICK

Goals and Principles

People and communities are the heart of New Brunswick. Healthy people shape healthy communities that will generate prosperity and build a strong and vibrant province. The Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick celebrates our diversity and is committed to re-focusing health and community services to meet the unique needs of individuals and the communities where they live. Although fiscal realities demand efficiency, health and social programs must be responsive, effective and innovative. In establishing health as a priority, a PC Government will commit the necessary resources reflecting this priority.

New Directions: Collaboration, Integration and Wellness

- Health will become more than health care and will shape a new system that works with New Brunswickers to achieve wellness.
- Health goals and improvement targets for New Brunswick will be established based upon available evidence and specific provincial information.
- Citizens and community leaders will be re-introduced as active participants in assessing health needs and planning health services at local, regional and provincial levels.
- Health service providers, valued for their expertise and experience, will be afforded opportunities to create improvements in the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the services that are provided.
- Health and community service sectors will be challenged to create an integrated service delivery system that focuses upon individuals and their communities.
- Primary health care service networks will offer essential services that are accessible, comprehensive, affordable and acceptable to the people of local communities.
- Enhanced funding will be provided to education and prevention services and to service providers that foster wellness, while at the same time ensuring adequate funding for basic specialized health and social services.

New Policy Targets: A Comprehensive Approach

- Designing an integrated health and community services system: at the provincial, regional and local levels.
- Developing a new health system financing framework for services and service providers.
- Managing integrated health human resources: number, mix, and utilization.
- Creating comprehensive health and community services: scope, quality and integration.
- Shaping a supportive health regulatory environment: service system and health disciplines.
- Changing health beliefs and service expectations: public and service providers.

People First, A Better Way To Grow

- A PC Government: *New Initiatives - Leadership, Partnership and Innovation*
 - * A New Brunswick Health Strategy Council will be initiated to actively involve the public, health service providers and government in the establishment of specific health goals, objectives and improvement targets. All Department of Health policy proposals will be filtered through the Council prior to consideration by Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly.
 - * Health Action Strategies will be developed on significant health issues affecting the people of New Brunswick. These strategies will be sensitive to emerging differences among groups that may be defined by such factors as geography, gender and age.
 - * A Health Improvement Innovation Fund will be instituted which represents a partnership between the public and private sectors. This fund will seek innovative community health projects that are intersectoral and interdisciplinary.
 - * The first New Brunswick Health Research and Policy Agency will be developed to ensure provincial policy and services are guided by the latest evidence and research findings. Our "information highway" creates cost-effective opportunities that will connect our health system into the best health information networks across the country and around the world.
 - * Regional Health Boards and District Health Service Councils will be established to integrate the planning and delivery of regional and local health services. These boards and councils will have elected community representatives and advisory input from health service providers. Interdisciplinary Professional Councils will encourage service providers to strengthen collaboration and seek interdisciplinary consensus on health and health service issues.
 - * Community Health Centers will be promoted and expanded throughout the province. These community-based centers will offer communities a wide range of integrated health and social services that include health promotion, illness and accident prevention, crisis and emergency, diagnosis and treatment, rehabilitation and support.
- A PC Government will review the current boundaries of existing health regions to ensure that District Health Service Councils effectively achieve their objectives.
- A PC Government will convene a round-table forum involving pharmaceutical manufacturers, health insurance carriers, health professionals, beneficiaries and government to investigate an alternative delivery and cost system for prescription drugs. As an interim step, a PC Government would immediately restore funding for cystic fibrosis patients.

- A PC Government will recognize an acute care mission for St. Joseph's Hospital in Saint John, N.B.. This commitment will include a limited number of intensive care, medical and observation beds with back-up services and admissions. The day and short stay surgery, emergency services, extended care, geriatric assessment, expanded breast screening program, eye bank and counseling services will continue. Details of the program will be determined by the new Regional Health Board for Saint John in consultation with the new St. Joseph's District Health Service Council. Specific provincial funding will be made available to cover this program.
- A PC Government will insist that the cash portion of the new national health care transfer is maintained at an appropriate level to ensure that the five key principles (accessibility, universality, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration) of the *Canada Health Act*, to which the PC Party of New Brunswick is committed, are protected.
- A PC Government will amend the *Nursing Home Act* to make it consistent with the new long-term care mission of nursing homes arising from the Single Entry Point. The *Nursing Homes Act* will also be amended to incorporate special care homes so that the regulatory environment will be the same for both. A PC Government will review the current funding formula for patient care to ensure it is appropriate with the new long-term care mandate of nursing homes.
- A PC Government will establish a partnership with the Regional Health Boards, the Solicitor-General and the New Brunswick Seniors Federation to monitor and address the problems associated with elder abuse in New Brunswick.
- A PC Government will amend the current contract with the private insurance carrier providing drug benefits to seniors to incorporate the provision that changes to premiums and benefits will require prior consultation with the New Brunswick Seniors Federation.

PART III QUALITY EDUCATION AND LIFE LONG LEARNING

Goals and Principles

The New Brunswick Progressive Conservative Party is committed to quality education and training through a framework of life-long learning which incorporates the public school system, post-secondary education (community colleges and universities), and the work place to ensure the best value and results for the funds invested, i.e. the best educated, the best trained and the most highly skilled work force possible.

The New Brunswick PC Party believes that it is critical to our economic, rural and cultural development that we collectively invest more time, energy and effort to develop the best possible learning framework.

The New Brunswick PC Party believes that the current centralized management of public education must be reversed and local control placed back in the hands of those closest to the classroom -- the school, the parents, the community and the local school boards.

The PC Party of New Brunswick supports the belief that local school boards must have a more direct and strengthened role in setting educational standards, assessing the achievement of individual schools and students, being held accountable for these achievements, and creating real partnerships between schools, communities and all stakeholders that form the learning framework.

People First, A Better Way To Grow

Education, Training and Learning

- A PC Government will move swiftly to eliminate the feelings of distrust and powerlessness now present among stakeholders, as well as the concerns over future funding for education in New Brunswick.
- A PC Government will end the micro-management of the public education system by the current government bureaucracy. It will request school boards to prepare three-year rolling budgets based on generally accepted accounting standards and criteria. Funds will be transferred annually to individual school boards on a "block-funding" basis, once budgets are approved. School boards will be held accountable for the management of these funds within the prescribed budget and for achieving the agreed to outcomes.
- A PC Government will build on the submissions inputs to the Excellence in Education Commission, seek more ideas and engage in a dialogue with its life-long learning partners to reach a consensus on the goals, objectives and expected outcomes of a life-long learning framework, the priorities to be pursued, and the role, responsibility and accountability of each stakeholder.

- Accordingly, a PC Government will convene in the first year of its mandate a New Brunswick Forum on Quality Education and Life-Long Learning, to include students, parents, teachers, trustees, administrators (school boards, community colleges, universities), community leaders, labour, business and government. The provincial Forum will be preceded by a series of regional forums. Proposals from the Forum will be acted upon by the Legislative Assembly in the second year of the new PC Government's mandate.
- Following adoption by the Legislature of a new life-long learning framework for New Brunswick, a PC Government will establish a Life-Long Learning Council which will include representatives of students, parents, the public school system, the community colleges, the universities, labour and business. All departmental policy proposals will be filtered through the Council prior to consideration by Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly.
- A PC Government will explore ways and means of maximizing the use of public schools outside regular school hours -- to turn idle school facilities into community learning centers for all citizens.
- A PC Government will review school district boundaries to ensure that local school board districts as presently constituted contribute fully to the cost effective and efficient delivery of quality education in all parts of the province, especially our rural areas. If necessary, it will increase the number of school districts to reach this objective.
- A PC Government will establish as a major priority the provision of specialized services within the school itself for young people with special needs so that their educational and development progress can be assured. These will include diagnostic services in support of the learning program and special job and career counseling programs geared to the needs of these students prior to completing their schooling.
- A PC Government will ensure that a special training program for deaf and blind students be available to all such students throughout New Brunswick.
- By all accounts, apprenticeship training in this province is a dismal failure. The average age of apprentices is too high, there are too few of them and the failure rates are unacceptable. In developing our learning framework, a PC Government will establish a special task force consisting of labour, industry, public schools, community colleges and government to design an effective apprenticeship program for New Brunswick. A PC Government will also implement a special tax incentive program for business to participate fully in this program.

Youth Opportunity

- A PC Government will implement the following changes to the student aid program: immediately eliminate the requirement for credit checks in student loan application and modify the parental contribution guidelines to make them more sensitive to the realities of family life.

- A PC Government will introduce, in partnership with the New Brunswick Student Alliance, a Student Jobs Corps Program for university graduates with outstanding student loans who are unable to find full-time employment. This program will provide employment in such public services as literacy councils, public libraries, child care, small business counseling, etc. Employment duration could be for up to two years, with compensation to be a combination of wages and the forgiveness of outstanding balance on student loans.

PART IV HARMONIOUS LABOUR RELATIONS

Goals and Principles

The Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick supports the principle included in Canada's Labour Code: *recognition and support of freedom of association and free collective bargaining as the basis of effective industrial relations and for the determination of good working conditions and sound labour-management relations.*

The PC Party of New Brunswick believes that the pursuit of a low-wage industrial policy is detrimental to the economic and social well-being of this province. It only means lower living standards for our people and lower revenues for essential services.

The PC Party of New Brunswick also believes that a climate of harmonious labour relations is indispensable to a competitive and growing economy and a just society.

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- Twenty five years ago, it was a Progressive Conservative Government which implemented the most advanced legislation on labour relations in Canada at the time, our *Industrial Relations Act*. This Act was the product of intensive consultation and participation of all key stakeholders. Given the changes in the realities of our labour market in this new economy, as well as court and labour board decisions interpreting the Act, a PC Government will implement a comprehensive overhaul and modernization of all labour and workplace legislation currently on the books of the province.
- Accordingly, a PC Government will immediately appoint a Panel on Labour Relations and Fairness in the Workplace for the 21st Century. The Panel will consist of representatives not only of management, labour and government, but also of persons who represent the broader public interest for a competitive and growing economy as well as a fair and compassionate society. The proposals of the Panel will be considered for implementation by the Legislative Assembly in the second year of the new PC Government's mandate.
- Harmonious labour relations and sound workplace legislation are too important and critical to our economy to allow the Department of Labour's mandate to be combined with other functions of the government. Thus a PC Government will have a full-time Minister of Labour.
- To avoid the deterioration of the real purchasing power of minimum wage workers, and to remove electoral politics from this important issue, a PC Government will amend the *Minimum Wage Act* to implement an annual review and adjustment of the minimum wage. This amendment will allow for the decision of the Minimum Wage Board to become law, unless the government issues a contravening order within a limited set period following the Board's decision.

PART V SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Goals and Principles

The New Brunswick PC Party believes it is not enough to just speak of sustainable development. An appropriate legal framework must be put in place, clear government policy enunciated, and, consistent and fair enforcement implemented.

The New Brunswick PC Party believes that promoting a safe, healthy and clean environment is not only a sound societal goal, it also promotes one of the fastest growing sectors of the new economy.

People First, A Better Way To Grow

- A PC Government will be committed to the health of all its residents. To sustain the life and health of its residents, a PC Government, in close consultation with potential polluters, the NB Health Strategy Council and experts, will develop and introduce a Clean Air Act which will include realistic and recognized standards for air quality, timely implementation and effective enforcement procedures.
- A PC Government will provide adequate resources to ensure compliance with legislated environmental standards and regulations.
- A PC Government will introduce a Biomedical Waste Program in each of the province's health regions, and extend the program to medical clinics, doctor's and dentist's offices, nursing homes, etc.
- A PC Government will implement a major, province-wide litter clean-up initiative by enrolling our public school students in a "Don't Mess With Us" campaign.
- A PC Government will modify the rules under the Environmental Trust Fund to limit its application to cost-shared solid waste reduction initiatives with local governments and private enterprise. This will complement existing funding for transfer stations and landfills, which will be directed eventually to other solid waste programs such as recycling and composting.
- A PC Government will ensure that the concept of sustainable development applies to all aspects of resource development. Wherever feasible, the main emphasis will be on using industrial waste as an input to commercial industrial products. It will also introduce special incentives to develop markets for recyclables, products with a recycled content and for compost.
- A PC Government will review the whole issue of hazardous waste facilities and adopt a clear policy in that regard. It will also to implement an appropriate Site Decommissioning Program consistent with established guidelines to review the approximately 150 abandoned sawmills that produce leachate greater than a modern landfill.

PART VI BECAUSE OF WHAT WE BELIEVE IN ... OF WHAT WE STAND FOR ...

Goals and Principles

The New Brunswick PC Party is committed to the fundamental belief that government is first and foremost about helping people, about putting people first, about getting our priorities straight.

The New Brunswick PC Party has a deep belief in fairness and equality, in everyone having an equal opportunity to achieve their greatest potential.

The New Brunswick PC Party takes great pride in the bilingual character of the province, its two linguistic communities and the rich cultural diversity of our people, including its First Nations and aboriginal peoples.

People First, A Better Way To Grow

- In regard to video gambling in New Brunswick, a PC government will cancel the McKenna arrangement with the New Brunswick Coin Machine Operators Association, and through legislative and regulatory measures:
 - * assign, under the *Lotteries Act*, to the Atlantic Lottery Corporation, the responsibility to own, manage and administer video gambling in the province, thus eliminating the McKenna "middle-men" which deprive our province of millions of dollars of revenue each year;
 - * direct the recaptured revenues from the video gambling operation (roughly \$17 million in 1994-95) to health care and an effective gambling addiction program;
 - * bar the machines from being operated in the view and presence of children and other minors;
 - * delegate the responsibility for licensing the location of these machines to local municipalities and local service districts;
 - * direct that the employees of the current video gambling machine owners, who will be affected by this change in policy, be offered first preference for employment by the new government run video gambling operation.

- A PC Government will express to the Government of Canada its strong opposition to Bill C-68's firearms registration proposal. Moreover, a PC Government will offer to join other provincial and territorial governments across Canada in their opposition to the firearms registration proposal to combine their efforts and resources to challenge the constitutional validity of those portions of Bill C-68 that do not deal with criminal law, i.e., the firearms registry provisions. A PC Government will further make representations to the Senate in its consideration of Bill C-68, asking the Senate to reject among others those portions of the bill that deal with the firearms registration proposal.
- A PC Government will amend the *Municipalities Act* requiring that municipal amalgamations be preceded and approved in a referendum held by the residents of the affected municipalities and rural areas.
- To restore a sense of community spirit, to promote family values and to reward the efforts of countless volunteers, a PC Government will review the tax assessment and taxation of recreational facilities owned and operated by volunteer, non-profit groups and associations.
- A PC Government will put an immediate stop to the current government's Wackenhut deal privatizing our province's youth corrections and training facility. Private, profit-making objectives have no place in this essential government service. Also, economic development of one region cannot come at the direct expense of another. Given the costs already incurred at Kingsclear for a new facility and its central location, a PC Government will maintain the provincial youth corrections and training facility in its current location. Other priorities will be pursued to replace the jobs lost by the closure of CFB Chatham.
- In order to help reduce the number of children living in poverty, by forcing "dead-beat fathers/mothers" to meet their child support obligations, a PC Government will suspend the driving privileges of any person not meeting their court ordered child support payments.
- The status of women will be a priority of a PC Government. Among other initiatives to improve their status, the Minister of Labour will bring together representatives of business, labour (public and private sectors), academia and women's organizations to legislate pay equity in the public sector and determine how we can bring real pay equity in the private sector.
- Frugality starts with leadership. Hence, a PC Government will reduce the size of Cabinet, shrink staffing in the Premier's Office, and will eliminate the spin doctors whose primary mission is to make the Premier and his government look good.
- A PC Government will be committed to listening to New Brunswickers all the time, not just at election time. Therefore, we will introduce a direct 1-800 phone line into the Premier's Office.

- The self-government objective of the First Nations of New Brunswick and the economic and socio-cultural objectives of the New Brunswick Aboriginal Community are matters of fairness, respect, dignity and justice. A PC Government will assist, where required, NB First Nations to attain their self-government goal. A PC Government will also deal with the Aboriginal Community as equals. To this end a PC Government will establish a Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs within the Premier's Office. In turn, the Premier will chair a Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs for this purpose.

PART VII THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Goals and Principles

The Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick is fully respectful of the Parliamentary Democracy principles that are embodied in the powers, rules and traditions of the Legislative Assembly.

The PC Party of New Brunswick subscribes to the principle that a Member of the Legislative Assembly can only serve the best interests of New Brunswick by effectively representing the views of his/her constituents. The legislative process must facilitate, not impede, this principle.

The PC Party of New Brunswick supports the view that an MLA votes according to his/her conscience in the Legislature. Party discipline would be restricted to matters that constitute a vote of confidence in the government.

People First, A Better Way To Grow

- A PC Government will plan for two annual sessions of the Legislature - one in the fall for tabling of government plans and legislation, and a spring session to act on them. This will allow time for the various Standing Committees to consider the proposed legislation.
- A PC Government will propose to the Legislative Assembly that MLA's be provided with appropriate resources at the riding level to effectively represent the interests of their constituents.

PART VIII THE NEW BRUNSWICK PUBLIC SERVICE

Goals and Principles

The Progressive Conservative Party of New Brunswick is committed to the traditional values of trust, respect and fairness in dealing with the employees of this province.

People First, A Better Way To Grow

- A PC Government will never set the working conditions for its employees, including wages, arbitrarily by legislation. It will treat the employees of New Brunswick fairly, honestly, equitably and with decency.
- A PC Government will only consider privatization of a government activity or institution and/or sourcing out of a government activity when it no longer serves a public policy purpose, or where the public interest is best served by a privatized activity or institution. All privatization proposals will be referred to the Legislative Assembly for full debate and approval prior to implementation. In all cases where affected employees are part of a bargaining unit, their contract will be assured with the private employer through successor rights.
- A PC Government will review all privatization deals concluded to date and evaluate how they conform to our policy. In all cases where they do not conform they will be reversed.
- A PC Government will suspend the activities of the New Brunswick Investment Management Corporation until such time as it has been determined, in consultation with the unions representing the affected employees, that the objectives of this corporation are in their best interests and those of the province. If not, it will be dissolved.

PART IX THE FISCAL PLAN

Goals and Principles

The New Brunswick Progressive Conservative Party will manage the affairs of the province in a frugal and responsible manner. It views the role of fiscal policy as supporting the economic and social goals of the government while taking into account the needs of the population it serves and the taxpayer's capacity to pay.

The PC Party of New Brunswick is committed to achieving a true balanced budget on the Ordinary Account, not a fictitious and politically expedient surplus obtained by draining reserve accounts set aside over decades to protect residents from unforeseen circumstances. The key to reaching this goal is to expand the tax base through the creation of real, permanent and well-paying jobs in a growing economy.

People First, A Better Way To Grow

- A PC Government will immediately appoint external auditors to undertake a comprehensive audit of the province's financial situation. Part of this audit will be an assessment of the damage to the financial position of the province resulting from the emerging financial crisis at NB Power. The external auditors will also examine the projected long term costs and impacts of the current government's privatization and sourcing out decisions.
- A PC Government will adopt a fiscal plan which will balance the needs for essential services of New Brunswickers with the overall capacity of current taxpayers to pay.
- A PC Government will immediately implement a 3-year rolling business plan for each department, which will detail the policy objectives being pursued, the targets to be attained, the resources allocated, and the criteria used to measure the outcomes.
- A PC Government will institute an annual process to seek the input of New Brunswickers and various stakeholders regarding spending priorities in light of its stated goals and objectives.

Taxation

- A Progressive Conservative Government is committed to providing long awaited tax relief to the residents of this province, thus promoting growth through economic expansion and consumer spending. However, given the financial fiasco at NB Power, it would be irresponsible to promise a broad tax cut until its full impact on the province's fiscal situation has been analyzed.

- Notwithstanding this caution, given the fact that many middle or low income taxpayers in this province have been subjected to higher taxes, but have benefited from little or no wage increase in the last several years, a PC Government will roll back the last two provincial Personal Income Tax increases (2% in 1993 and 2% in 1994) for residents with an annual taxable income of less than \$30,000. A PC Government will look to further measures of tax relief in future budgets.
- A PC Government will review all nuisance fees introduced or increased by the current government to ensure that they don't exceed a level of cost recovery.
- A PC Government will immediately eliminate trout fishing license fees, reduce marriage license fees by 50%, and roll back to a more reasonable level the rental fees for hunting camps and cottages on Crown Lands.
- A PC Government will re-instate the Property Tax Rebate for all seniors, increase the level to \$250 from \$200 and adjust the eligibility rules to coincide with the federal government's Old Age Security program.
- A PC Government will implement a comprehensive review of the provincial taxation system to ensure it does not work as a disincentive to employment and that it is making maximum contribution to growth and job creation in New Brunswick.