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# PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

Our Priorities for Nova Scotia

Provincial Election 1998

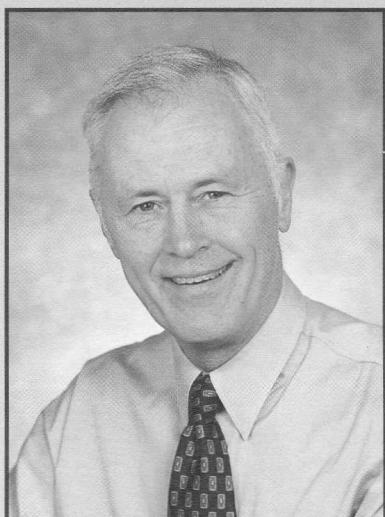
Progressive  
Conservative



NOVA SCOTIA

JKR

February 23, 1998



*"...always putting Nova Scotia  
first."*

To the people of Nova Scotia:

I believe it is time to start putting people first in Nova Scotia.

For five years, the Liberals have governed solely for the sake of the "bottom line", treating the serious concerns of ordinary people as a mere afterthought. The Liberal Government has lost touch with us. In their zeal to increase government revenues, the Liberals have imposed undue tax burdens on working Nova Scotians. In their haste to cut spending, the Liberals have forsaken hospitals, schools, and highways. Making one bad deal after another, the Liberals have wasted our hard-earned tax dollars.

I am convinced there is a better way to govern Nova Scotia. It starts with setting priorities and making choices that put people first. It means consulting with people, and considering the human impact of every move government makes.

It involves spending responsibly, and effectively, so that Nova Scotians get the best possible value for every dollar we pay in taxes.

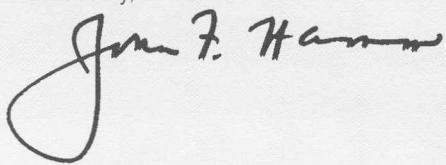
This book is about the priorities which will guide a PC Government in Nova Scotia. First and foremost, a PC Government will be committed to:

- rebuilding our devastated health care system, always putting the patient first;
- strengthening our schools, colleges and universities, always putting the student first;
- growing our economy, with jobs for today and the future, always putting Nova Scotia first.

We will not spend more money than the Liberals – but we will spend it better, focusing on programs and services that meet the day-to-day needs of all Nova Scotians.

Thank you for taking the time to read about our priorities for Nova Scotia. Together, we can build a better future for ourselves and our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Hamm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'J' at the beginning.

John Hamm

# Table of Contents

Health Care .....	1
Jobs and the Economy .....	4
Education .....	7
Finance .....	9
Energy .....	10
Environment .....	11
Local Government .....	12
Justice .....	13
Social Concerns .....	14
Tourism .....	16
transportation .....	17
Agriculture .....	18
fisheries .....	19
forestry .....	20
on programming .....	21
responsible Government .....	22

# Health Care



Nova Scotians want to know their health care system will be there for them when they need it. They want and deserve guaranteed access to essential health care services, regardless of where they live. We believe there has been too much focus on the structure of the health care system, and not enough focus on those who provide and receive care. We are committed to the five principles of the *Canada Health Act*: a single-tiered, universal, portable, accessible, and comprehensive system. We are committed to a health care system that puts people first, and we will ensure meaningful involvement for providers, consumers, and communities in shaping the future direction of health care in Nova Scotia.

Liberal health reform was supposed to redirect health care dollars to improve service delivery and to achieve better health outcomes. This hasn't happened -- in fact, the opposite has occurred. We are spending \$100 million more on health care today than we were five years ago, but we have much less to show for it. We have fewer doctors, fewer nurses, fewer ambulances, fewer insured services, fewer hospital beds, and fewer hospitals. By shutting out consumers, providers and communities, Liberal health reform created fear, anxiety, distrust and instability in the health care system. They had no plan, no consultation, no vision and no commitment to meaningful community involvement.

This election is our opportunity to put our health care system on the road to recovery.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will address the critical shortage of nurses by:

- undertaking, in consultation with Nova Scotia nursing unions, the *Registered Nurses Association of Nova Scotia*, the *Nova Scotia Medical Society*, the long-term care sector and hospital administrators, a comprehensive review of all Nova Scotia hospitals and Homes for Special Care to identify the need for additional nursing staff; the results of the review will be made public and all shortages immediately addressed by re-allocating existing resources to increase the percentage of current funding spent on nursing, while decreasing the percentage of funding spent on administration.

*"Nova Scotians want to know their health care system will be there for them when they need it."*

*"Liberal health reform created fear, anxiety, distrust and instability."*

*"A PC Government will address the critical shortage of nurses, doctors, and hospital beds ."*

During its first mandate, a PC Government will address the critical shortage of doctors by:

- providing tuition bursaries for medical students in exchange for their agreement to practise in under-serviced areas of Nova Scotia;
- working with the *Nova Scotia Medical Society* and *Dalhousie Medical School* to expand the re-entry program to educate more family doctors;
- ensuring that doctors, along with other health care providers, have a real voice in shaping the future direction of health care.

# Health Care

continued...

During its first mandate, a PC Government will address the critical shortage of hospital and nursing home beds by:

- working with the *Nova Scotia Medical Society*, the Nova Scotia nursing unions, the *Registered Nurses' Association of Nova Scotia*, hospital administrators, and *long-term care providers*, establish the criteria for determining the number of beds necessary to provide an adequate level of hospital and nursing home care in each community;
- using criteria generated by this process, identify the areas where additional beds are most urgently needed, and provide the nursing and staff resources necessary to re-open beds in these areas.

*"A PC Government will re-establish and strengthen the Provincial Health Council."*

*"A PC Government will legislate the authority of community health boards."*

*"A PC Government will transfer responsibility for overseeing the operation of health care facilities from Regional Health Boards to communities of interest."*

In addition to these commitments, during its first mandate, a PC Government will also:

- immediately request the *Auditor General* to provide a detailed analysis of health care spending;
- re-establish and strengthen the *Provincial Health Council* as Nova Scotia's arms-length watchdog over public health policy;
- within the *Provincial Health Council*, establish a Health Care Advocate for Nova Scotians with exceptional medical needs;
- mandate the *Provincial Health Council* to hold province-wide public consultations to develop a list of core services that must be provided at the community, regional and provincial levels;
- mandate the *Provincial Health Council* to review standards for the delivery of services and to report its findings publicly;
- legislate the authority of *Community Health Boards* to identify and plan programs to meet local priorities;
- de-centralize the Department of Health to minimize the administrative costs of conferring primary health care authority to Community Health Boards;
- transfer responsibility for overseeing the operation of health care facilities from Regional Health Boards to communities of interest;
- establish a core committee of government and non-government representatives covering aspects of the health care system (e.g. acute care, home care, long-term care, mental health, addiction services) to regularly review and comment on the anticipated impact of the system as a result of proposed policy and program changes;
- require that home care be coordinated through hospitals, with staff dedicated to ensuring an *authorized home recovery plan* is in place for all Nova Scotian patients who need care following hospital discharge; no one will be forced to leave hospital without a Home Recovery Plan which has been authorized by their doctor;

# Health Care

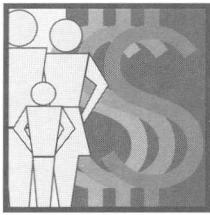
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- provide and fully fund all medically-necessary services, including prescription drugs, identified in the authorized Home Recovery Plan;
- establish an appeal process for Nova Scotians who have concerns with the level of home care they are receiving;
- establish the *Self-managed Attendant Care Program* on a province-wide basis;
- commit \$1 million to the expansion of respite services;
- commit \$5 million to pilot new disease prevention and wellness promotion programs, in partnership with non-government organizations;
- commit \$2 million towards efforts to reduce assessment wait-times and to provide early treatment for children believed to have Autism or Pervasive Developmental Delay;
- fully restore the Children's Dental Care Program to all children aged 12 and under;
- in consultation with seniors, restructure seniors' Pharmacare to eliminate premiums and ensure private insurance plans pay first, and taxpayer-funded plans pay second;
- consult medical experts in approving medications under the provincial formulary;
- cooperate with the Government of Canada in pursuing a fair and just settlement for Nova Scotians who have contracted Hepatitis-C through tainted blood;
- establish a Medical Technology Advisory Committee to ensure technology dollars are spent fairly across the province and to promote the use of new technologies;
- provide ongoing support for the Environmental Health Clinic, placing a renewed emphasis on treatment;
- support greater consumer choice, including greater access to regulated non-traditional forms of health care;
- not force volunteer fire departments to be first responders.

*“...no one will be forced to leave hospital without a Home Recovery Plan which has been authorized by their doctor.”*

*“A PC Government will commit \$5 million to pilot new disease prevention and wellness promotion programs.”*

*“A PC Government will fully restore the Children’s Dental Care Program.”*



# Jobs & the Economy

*"The Liberals promised us a 30-60-90 economic policy which, in the final analysis, added up to zero."*

*"A PC Government will establish a Buy Nova Scotia First program."*

*"A PC Government will open up the market place to competition among electrical utilities and suppliers."*

Government's role is to create economic opportunities, and ensure people are prepared to benefit from them. We believe it is totally unacceptable that 11.2% of Nova Scotians -- fully 51,000 people -- cannot find a job. The youth unemployment crisis is even more severe, with 22.7% of Nova Scotians aged 16-24 out of work. What's worse, the real unemployment rate in many areas of Nova Scotia is far above these "official" figures. Too many people have given up hope of finding work and are not counted among the government's unemployment statistics. We are committed to a comprehensive plan to provide Nova Scotians with both the opportunity and the ability to be part of a growing economy.

The Liberals promised us a 30-60-90 economic policy which, in the final analysis, added up to zero. Since then, the Liberal Government's economic policy has been adrift. Their major economic initiative was the introduction of casinos to Nova Scotia, with no regard to the human cost of gaming. Instead of building infrastructure to enhance our ability to get our goods to market, the Liberals have imposed tolls on our only highway out of the province. They have severed commercial ferry links to our traditional New England markets, and have failed to secure adequate funding to upgrade and maintain our airports and seaports. Even the Sable Gas deal fails to ensure that the Nova Scotia economy will be the principal beneficiary of natural gas development. For five years, the Liberals have handed Nova Scotians one bad deal after another.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will promote consumption of Nova Scotian products and services by:

- establishing a Buy Nova Scotia First program, an aggressive and sustained multi-media marketing campaign to increase consumer awareness of Nova Scotian products and services;
- showing leadership in the Buy Nova Scotia First program by ensuring government tendering policies allow Nova Scotian companies to compete fairly for government business, by moving away from current tendering policies which favour large tenders;
- covering a multitude of products which effectively preclude smaller local businesses from submitting competitive bids;
- hosting a Nova Scotia Exposition, to showcase Nova Scotian businesses and consumers the wide diversity of products and services produced and available in our province;
- opening up the market place to competition among electrical utilities and suppliers, while assuring power rates remain subject to review and approval by the *Utility and Review Board*, with a full-time *Consumer Advocate* appointed to represent the public interest at power rate hearings;
- ensuring that the marketing divisions in the Departments of Fisheries and Agriculture have the necessary resources and focus to aggressively market Nova Scotia products abroad;
- including our cultural sector as an integral part of the Buy Nova Scotia First program.

# Jobs & the Economy

continued...

During its first mandate, a PC Government will enhance employment opportunities by:

- aggressively marketing Nova Scotia as a location with a well-trained workforce to encourage out-of-province employers to develop new manufacturing and service facilities here;
- expanding and promoting co-operative education and school-to-work opportunities;
- reducing job-killing red tape by appointing a full-time Regulatory Review Officer with a mandate to report annually to the Legislature with recommendations to reduce bureaucratic obstacles to business;
- convening public Economic Round Table sessions with cabinet, business, labour, municipal, community and educational leaders to identify priority issues and develop co-operative strategies to achieve sustained economic growth;
- aggressively pursuing a federal commitment to upgrade the Port of Halifax to accommodate "Post-Panamax" shipping, modernize the Halifax International Airport and ensure year-round commercial ferry links are available to move our products to market;
- working with communities to ensure highways and secondary roads are planned and designed to optimize economic growth;
- vigorously promoting Nova Scotia as a film and video production location, with tax credits comparable to other jurisdictions.

"A PC Government will aggressively market Nova Scotia as a location with a well-trained workforce."

"A PC Government will work with communities to ensure highways and secondary roads... optimize economic growth."

During its first mandate, a PC Government will improve employment opportunities for young Nova Scotians by:

- through Voluntary Planning, establishing the Jobs Opportunity Bureau with membership from government, business, labour, universities, community colleges and the public school system, with a mandate to measure the effectiveness of youth strategies, forecast future labour market requirements, and maintain an interactive web site to keep young Nova Scotians apprised of the latest training and employment opportunities;
- establish a *Council on Technology, Productivity and Quality* with membership from business, labour, post-secondary institutions to promote technological change, improve the productivity of Nova Scotia business and ensure world-class quality standards;
- initiating change in the public school system to encourage young people to complete grade 12, including better career, personal and family counselling;
- modifying the community college system to improve opportunities for students who wish to bridge from the public school system into trades and skills training;
- adapting community college timetables to attract students who work during the day or whose jobs involve shift work;

"A PC Government will modify the community college system to improve opportunities for students."

# Jobs & the Economy

continued...

- working with business and labour to modernize apprenticeship programs, ensuring young Nova Scotians who take trades training have the opportunity to complete apprenticeships and move into the workforce;
- encouraging all companies doing business with government to participate in cooperative education and school-to-work programs;
- ensuring that any business receiving assistance for training agrees to give Nova Scotians first opportunity for employment with that business.

*"A PC Government will actively work to ensure all parts of Nova Scotia benefit from Sable Gas."*

*"A PC Government will transfer a portion of funds... to Regional Development Authorities."*

*"A PC Government will allow Regional Development Authorities the option of owning provincial industrial parks, malls and associated infrastructure."*

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During its first mandate, a PC Government will maximize the economic benefit of Sable Gas by:

- actively working to ensure all parts of Nova Scotia benefit from Sable Gas, by immediately establishing an Energy Council to advise Cabinet on development of Nova Scotia's natural gas sector;
- requiring that developers of the Sable Gas project advertise all offshore and onshore job and contract opportunities throughout Nova Scotia; wherever possible, qualified Nova Scotians should always have the first opportunity for employment in the natural gas sector;
- actively seeking private investors to develop a petrochemical industry based on natural gas byproducts;
- initiating a legal challenge to the Liberal Government's surrender of Nova Scotia's 50% ownership right in the offshore pipeline.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will encourage community economic development by:

- transferring a portion of funds currently controlled by the central Department of Economic Development and Tourism to Regional Development Authorities, thus providing the necessary resources to implement local economic priorities;
- establishing criteria for the Nova Scotia Community Economic Development fund, including funding levels from the economic development budget, and initiating Community Development Bonds;
- mandating Regional Development Authorities with primary responsibility for community economic development, and enhancing their effectiveness by ensuring solid representation from the business community;
- allowing Regional Development Authorities the option of owning provincial industrial parks, malls and associated infrastructure.

# Jobs & the Economy

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During its first mandate, a PC Government will remove employment disincentives in the Workers' Compensation System by:

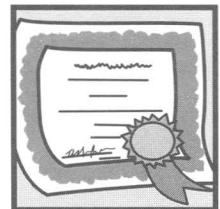
- changing Workers' Compensation policy to allow businesses the option of paying premiums monthly, quarterly, or annually, thereby avoiding the need to charge financial penalties against businesses who underestimate employee numbers;
- improving coordination between the Workers' Compensation Board and the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Labour, pro-actively targeting industry and businesses with high accident rates to reduce injuries, leading to lower business costs and lower WCB premiums;
- eliminating the lengthy waiting period for Workers' Compensation Appeals by establishing temporary regional appeal tribunals throughout the province, until the backlog of appeals has been resolved;
- reviewing the flawed process for dealing with Workers' Compensation Claims during the transition from the former legislation to the new Act, and examine proposals for addressing the problems of WCB recipients who have had their benefits reduced as a result;
- examining experiences of other jurisdictions on the issue of Chronic Pain Syndrome, with a view to adjusting current policy.

*"A PC Government will eliminate the lengthy waiting period for WCB appeals..."*

# Education

A strong education system is the foundation of an economy of sustained job growth. A PC Government will dedicate itself to an education system which is adequately funded, fully focussed on the student and the classroom, and prepare young Nova Scotians to compete in the job markets of today and tomorrow. We are committed to rewarding effort and excellence in our schools. We believe the pursuit of education should not leave Nova Scotians mired in debt, and that government and business have a responsibility to work together to ensure a smooth, workable transition from the classroom to the workplace.

The Liberal Government has failed to give education the priority it deserves. Too many young Nova Scotians are learning from outdated photocopies instead of current textbooks. Too many teachers are faced with overpopulated classrooms and scarce resources. The Liberals' bad planning has led to a series of bad deals for school construction -- bad deals that will cost our education system far too much in the long run. We must refocus our education system on its most important priorities -- students and teachers.



*"A strong education system is the foundation of an economy of sustained job growth."*

# *Education*

continued...

During its first mandate, a PC Government will improve secondary education by:

- establishing a P-12 Provincial Education Council, including arms-length volunteers nominated by representative groups, modeled after the Provincial Health Council with a mandate to report directly to the Legislature as the public's education watchdog, recommending changes to Nova Scotia's education system;
- establishing a visible, consistent and functional education system based on the most appropriate international standards, using these standards to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workplace;
- making our schools safe places to learn, by working closely with all people who have contact with our education system;
- ensuring allocation of resources is done equitably, so that students across Nova Scotia have equal access to comparable equipment, supplies and learning aids;
- ensuring all teachers are given the professional development opportunities they need to implement curriculum changes effectively;
- guaranteeing that Acadian parents are able to choose the kind of education they believe is best for their children;
- ensuring our education system reflects the diverse nature of Nova Scotia's communities;
- ensuring adequate access to youth support services, such as social workers, public and mental health professionals;
- through Voluntary Planning, tracking employment opportunities and providing information guidance and career counsellors in a timely way;
- consulting Nova Scotians on current School Board boundaries to ensure they properly define communities of interest;
- conducting a cost-benefit analysis and adopt the best approach, whether 3P or traditional when we build new schools;
- establishing a special Capital Improvement Fund, administered by the Capital Construction Committee, to respond to emergency health problems in our schools.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will improve post-secondary education by:

- establishing a University Student Employment Program similar to that offered by Memorial University of Newfoundland, which provides university students with part-time campus work in such areas as research and accounting, providing practical on-the-job skills and helping students pay for their education;
- implementing a similar program for part-time students within the Provincial Civil Service;

*"A PC Government will establish a P-12 Provincial Education Council."*

*"A PC Government will ensure resource allocation is equitable."*

*"A PC Government will establish a provincial income tax relief program for graduating students with high debt loads."*

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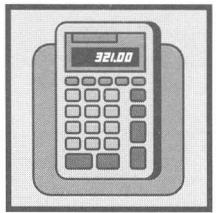
# Education

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- establishing a provincial Income Tax Relief program for graduating students with high debt loads, allowing students to re-direct a portion of their provincial tax payment (to a maximum of 30%) to retire their student debt;
- creating a comprehensive job search and support program for students who have successfully completed university, are nearing the end of their interest-free loan repayment period, and have not yet found work; the program will provide practical job search and interview assistance, together with information on employment opportunities; the interest-free period will be extended for all students actively participating in the program;
- aggressively pursuing the Government of Canada to adopt tax relief and debt forgiveness programs similar to these;
- urging the federal government to change the regulations that discourage students from part-time work by forcing them to remit 80% of every dollar earned after the first \$600;
- working with universities, community colleges and the private sector to develop co-operative work experience programs;
- ensuring community colleges provide opportunities to enable transition for pre-graduation high school students who wish to pursue vocational trades in the community college system;
- establishing, in consultation with business and labour, a comprehensive and modern apprenticeship program;
- demanding that the Government of Canada adopt the fair and equitable policy of having federal funding follow the student to the province in which the student chooses to study.

*“A PC Government will urge the federal government to change regulations forcing part-time students to remit 80% of every dollar earned after the first \$600.00.”*

*“A PC Government will establish... a comprehensive and modern apprenticeship program.”*



# Finance

A PC Government will live within its means. By spending responsibly, we will protect our ability to guarantee priorities like health care and education for the future. We are committed to a long-term plan for reducing the provincial debt to a manageable percentage of GPP, enabling us to reduce taxation and promote a healthy, job-producing economy.

The Liberal Government has failed to balance Nova Scotia's budget. By calling an election without first tabling a budget in the Legislature, the Liberals have admitted their failure to eliminate the deficit. Their inability to produce a surplus is an obstacle to restoring much-needed funding to health care and education, and makes it impossible to begin paying down the provincial debt. For five years the Liberals ignored the pressing needs of people in favour of an all-out assault on the “bottom line”, and they still came up short. We need a fiscal policy that “puts people first”, while making responsible use of tax revenues.

# Finance

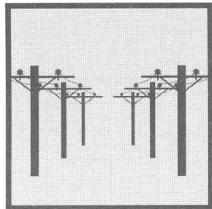
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During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- adhere to balanced budget legislation, introducing amendments based on the Manitoba Model which cuts the salaries of Cabinet Ministers who fail to live within their departmental budgets;
- establish practical targets for reducing the provincial debt which has increased by over \$3 billion during five years of Liberal Government; our debt reduction plan will be tied to a percentage of Nova Scotia's GPP;
- work to repatriate the debts we owe to foreign lenders;
- immediately notify the Government of Canada that we intend to withdraw from the HST agreement, and regain control of our provincial taxation system;
- immediately provide a \$50 HST home-heating rebate for all Nova Scotian households;
- establish an all-party committee of the Legislature to conduct province-wide hearings to determine what provincial taxation measures should replace the current HST agreement;
- work with Voluntary Planning to identify opportunities for reducing job-killing payroll taxes;
- immediately introduce legislation to appoint the Auditor General as Nova Scotia's auditor of record;
- together with volunteer fire departments and other non-profit community organizations, review the impact of the Gaming Control Act Regulations on community groups and make any necessary amendments.

*"A PC Government will immediately notify Ottawa that we intend to withdraw from the HST agreement."*

*"A PC Government will immediately provide a \$50 HST Home-Heating rebate for all Nova Scotia households."*



# Energy

**N**ova Scotians are fortunate to have a variety of domestic energy sources: coal, natural gas, wood, and even the emerging technology of tidal power. We must capitalize on these opportunities to ensure energy self-sufficiency now and for the future. Equally, we must ensure that Nova Scotians are the primary beneficiaries of our energy resources.

The Liberal Government has no energy policy. The Liberals have squandered our offshore gas opportunity, and have left the future of the coal industry in question. Simply put, their Sable Gas agreement is a bad deal. For example, the Liberal Sable Gas deal provides for only 34% of economic benefits to Nova Scotians. By contrast, the Hibernia project guarantees that Newfoundland will receive 48% of the benefits. The Liberals have failed to ensure the development of a natural gas industry that will provide clean, inexpensive energy throughout Nova Scotia, and jobs for Nova Scotians first.

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# Energy

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During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- establish a comprehensive energy policy that includes all domestic energy sources, and reduces our dependence on imported oil; our energy policy's central priority will be to ensure province-wide economic development, the lowest possible cost to consumers and businesses;
- renegotiate the Sable Gas agreement to ensure Nova Scotians receive no less than 50% of employment and economic spin-offs from the development;
- ensure natural gas byproducts from Sable Gas are used first to support opportunities for a new petrochemical industry in Nova Scotia;
- allow competition in the supply of electricity to Nova Scotian homes and businesses;
- work to ensure local natural gas companies are free to compete with other energy providers;
- ensure appointments to the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board are subject to an open, accountable selection process similar to that which governs judicial appointments.

*"A PC Government will establish a comprehensive energy policy... to ensure province-wide economic development and the lowest possible cost to consumers and businesses."*

# Environment

Nova Scotia has a rich diversity of landscape and resources. We are committed to meeting the challenge of using our resources in a sustainable, responsible manner. We believe preservation of our environment is essential to ensuring the future of our economy. We believe "putting people first" means ensuring people have a clean, safe environment in which to live, and that our resources are used for the benefit of Nova Scotians first.

Nova Scotians watched with dismay as the Liberal Government attempted to renege on its commitment to protect our province's protected areas. Then they capitulated to Ottawa's demand to weaken targets for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. They put expediency ahead of people by amending the Cape Breton incinerator permit without any public consultation. We cannot trust our environment to Liberal indecision.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- refocus resources within the Department of the Environment to ensure it meets its primary responsibilities, especially inspection services;
- work with Voluntary Planning to ensure environmental legislation meets the public interest, while not stifling economic growth;

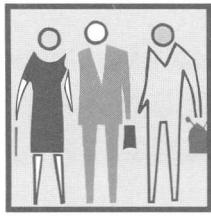


*"A PC Government will promote the use of the most modern environmental technologies to meet our goal of sustainable, responsible resource use."*

# Environment

continued...

- promote use of the most modern environmental technologies to meet our goal of sustainable, responsible resource use;
- work with municipal governments to find cost-effective, environmentally responsible ways of handling solid waste;
- require public consultation before any municipality imports waste for incineration;
- enact legislation which ensures preservation of endangered spaces and species.



# Local Government

*"Our economic and social well-being depends on strong local governments with a true sense of community among the people they serve."*

*"A PC Government will assume the full cost of social assistance which currently burdens most municipalities and their taxpayers."*

We believe municipal government is the cornerstone of democracy, because it is the level of government that is closest to the people. Our economic and social well-being depends on strong local governments with a true sense of community among the people they serve. A Progressive Conservative Government will be committed to communities, working in true partnership with municipal government.

Liberal policies have caused Nova Scotians to lose their sense of community. Through forced and ill-conceived amalgamations, the Liberal Government has robbed communities of their unique identities, without achieving the promised savings and efficiencies. By downloading responsibilities on municipalities, the Liberals have burdened this critical level of government with expenses it cannot possibly support. We must find new ways to rekindle community identity and spirit.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- in consultation with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, legislate a Municipal Charter which will -- for the first time -- establish in law the role, responsibility and authority of municipal government in Nova Scotia;
- assume the full cost of social assistance which currently burdens most municipalities and their taxpayers;
- stop the unilateral downloading which has characterized municipal / provincial relations in Nova Scotia for the last five years;
- in areas where there has already been forced amalgamation, work with communities to find imaginative ways to rekindle their sense of identity;
- pursue amalgamation only in areas where affected communities agree that they wish to amalgamate;
- work with municipalities and the federal government to fund essential infrastructure projects such as water and sewer services.



# Justice

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We believe the justice system and the rule of law must be relevant to all people, and applied equally to them. We believe our justice system is there to protect all Nova Scotians. We believe justice must be administered in a timely way. We are committed to a justice system in which all Nova Scotians can place their trust and confidence.

As a member of the Federal Liberal Government and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, Russell MacLellan ignored calls to fix the *Young Offenders Act*. As a Federal Liberal, Russell MacLellan helped devise the costly and ineffective long-gun registry system that treats law-abiding gun owners as criminals, increases bureaucracy, and does nothing to reduce violent crime in Canada. The Provincial Liberals have stood idly by in the face of these serious justice issues.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- immediately request Ministers of Justice from all provinces, territories and the Government of Canada to undertake a thorough review of the *Young Offenders Act* based on the ten-point plan put forward by Alberta, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba;
- demand that parents ensure their children have an adequate level of supervision, and where it is shown that lack of proper parental supervision has caused a young person to commit a crime, require parents to make restitution to the victim;
- work with the legal community to create a process whereby an offender under the age of 12 can be remanded for assessment and treatment;
- provide annual core funding for organizations which deliver preventative and rehabilitative programs in areas such as prevention of family violence and substance abuse;
- refuse to fund the long-gun registration system established by the Federal Liberals such as Minister Allan Rock and his then Parliamentary Secretary, Russell MacLellan;
- commence discussions with the judiciary, Director of Public Prosecutions and Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and interested citizens' groups to develop performance objectives and standards to ensure all Nova Scotians have equal and fair access to our justice system;
- in keeping with our belief that "justice delayed is justice denied", work to streamline our justice system;
- in consultation with the legal profession, victims' groups and appropriate social agencies, develop a program and plan of action to place greater emphasis on the rights of victims of crime;
- stop wasting tax dollars on incarceration of non-violent criminals, and work with the judiciary, Public Prosecution Service, the legal profession and interested groups to institute an appropriate system of house arrest for non-violent offenders;

"A PC Government will immediately request Ministers of Justice from all provinces, territories and the Government of Canada to undertake a thorough review of the *Young Offenders Act*."

"A PC Government will refuse to fund the long-gun registration system."

"A PC Government will institute an appropriate system of house arrest for non-violent offenders."



# Social Concerns

**Nova Scotians are a compassionate people who firmly believe their government must work to enhance the quality of life of people with physical or mental disabilities, the aged and -- most importantly -- children. The generosity of Nova Scotians' compassion is seen in the efforts of thousands of volunteer and committed advocates who work in non-profit agencies to support government efforts in dealing with urgent social issues.**

*"The Liberals are "reforming" social services in the same way they "reformed" health care - without any meaningful public input. The result will be another Liberal mess to unravel."*

*"A PC Government will immediately commit to releasing for public input any discussion papers on social service reform."*

We believe community-based agencies and non-profit groups that are on the front lines of service delivery, have the closest view of the needs of Nova Scotians, and the greatest appreciation for the need to make every dollar an investment in "quality of life", must be properly supported in their efforts.

We further believe that we must focus on addressing the growing problem of child poverty and improving the quality of life of Nova Scotians with disabilities.

The Liberals have demoralized volunteers -- and Nova Scotians who need their services -- by cutting services and freezing or reducing program funding. The Liberals have cut accessible transportation for Nova Scotians with disabilities. They have refused to retroactively re-instate the Shelter Allowance for Nova Scotians with mental and physical disabilities and single parents even though the courts have ruled it is a violation of government's own laws. They have moved full-speed ahead with de-institutionalization without adequate community supports. And, on top of this, they have refused to honour their promise to listen to Nova Scotians before proceeding with social service "reform".

The Liberals are "reforming" social services in the same way they "reformed" health care - without any meaningful public input. The result will be another Liberal mess to unravel.

During its first mandate, A PC Government will:

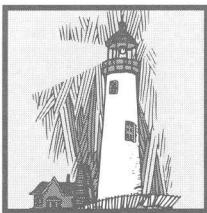
- dedicate the first two years of Sable Gas Royalties (\$12M) to establish core funding for community-based, non-profit agencies that provide services to children and Nova Scotians with disabilities;
- establish an All-Party Committee of the Legislature to hold province-wide hearings on the growing problem of child poverty and make recommendations to the federal government on how the *Child Benefit* can be best used to reduce child poverty;
- instruct the Department of Community Services to work with the Nova Scotia Community College System and School Boards to co-ordinate meaningful skills training for unemployed single parents;
- enhance training allowances and income forgiveness to provide greater incentives for Nova Scotians on Family Benefits to seek employment;
- instruct the All-Party Committee on taxation (See Finance) to examine and make recommendations on changes required to make the tax system fairer for families where one

# Social Concerns

continued...

parent stays home to care for their children. The committee's recommendations will be vigorously pursued at the national level;

- work with the Taxing Child Care Committee and the UNSM to review and, where necessary, amend existing tax laws which impact on the number of child care spaces and erode the quality of programs;
- immediately commit to release for public input any discussion papers prepared on social service reform before any changes are made;
- provide the Co-operative Housing Federation with the authority to manage their own co-operatives;
- place an immediate moratorium on new VLTs, conduct a socio-economic study on the impact of gaming, and make no further concessions to casino operators.



# Tourism

Nova Scotia's beautiful landscape, rich history and cultural diversity position us to be a world-class destination for Canadian and international travellers. Our parks, museums, historic homes, and community events offer a broad range of choices for visitors to our province. We believe that an intensive, sustained effort to promote tourism in Nova Scotia will benefit our economy many times over. We believe Nova Scotia's beauty should no longer be a well-kept secret, and must be enthusiastically promoted.

*"The Liberals have failed to seize the great opportunity our tourism sector offers for job creation and economic development."*

*"A PC Government will re-establish the Department of Tourism as a separate department of government, whose mandate includes promotion of museums, parks and historic homes."*

*"A PC Government will not tax small Bed-and-Breakfast operations at the commercial rate."*

The Liberal Government has put tourism on the back-burner. The Liberals reduced the Department of Tourism into a mere division of the Department of Economic Development. This division is detached from our network of museums, parks and historic homes, which the Liberals have placed under the control of other government departments. Their policies are eroding the niche market of Bed-and-Breakfast accommodation which is a vital part of tourism in small communities. Their unrealistic measurement of tourism travel within Nova Scotia has led to inaccurate, unreliable data on tourist travel and spending in our province. The Liberals have failed to seize the great opportunity our tourism sector offers for job creation and economic development.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- re-establish the Department of Tourism as a separate department of government, whose mandate includes promotion of museums, parks and historic homes;
- strengthen the Nova Scotia Tourism Partnership Council to ensure it includes the key participants in our tourism sector;
- develop -- in partnership with the tourism sector -- themes and programs for marketing Nova Scotia as a year-round tourist destination;
- not tax small Bed-and-Breakfast operations at the commercial rate;
- work with the tourism sector to establish realistic criteria for determining the true value of tourism in Nova Scotia.



# Transportation

We believe a first-class transportation system is an essential key to economic growth. All modes of transportation are inextricably linked: if one is weak, all are less effective. We believe taxes raised through transportation should be earmarked solely for maintenance and improvement of our transportation system. We believe good roads are essential to the well-being of people who live in our rural communities.

The Liberal Government has weakened our transportation system, and all Nova Scotians are paying the price. The Liberal toll-highway policy creates an economic hurdle for any Nova Scotian whose job depends on moving people and products in or out of our province. The Liberals' neglect of our secondary roads has placed hundreds of thousands of rural Nova Scotians in the position of second-class citizens. Their failure to stand up to their federal cousins means Nova Scotia may not get as good a deal as other provinces when our airports and seaports are transferred to local authorities. And their abandonment of commercial ferry links has decreased access to our traditional New England markets.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- not build any more toll roads;
- develop a ten-year plan for completion of 100 series highways, upgrading and twinning;
- establish a comprehensive multi-year plan for maintenance and upgrading of secondary roads;
- dedicate all taxes raised through motor vehicle licensing and fuel sales to highway construction and maintenance, totalling approximately \$253 million annually, and provide a solid base for highway spending which may be increased depending on public need and available revenues;
- demand that the Liberal Government in Ottawa return a significant portion of the roughly \$125 million in fuel taxes it collects annually in Nova Scotia as a contribution to our highway strategy;
- work with communities to ensure highways and secondary roads are planned and designed to optimize economic growth;
- create a government / industry team to develop a plan and access funding for the Port of Halifax as the "Post-Panamax" port for northeastern North America;
- work with railway companies to upgrade rail links to North American markets and extend private short lines in Nova Scotia;
- support the Halifax Airport Authority in its efforts to secure funds for a complete modernization of Halifax International Airport, in parity with funding already given to other Canadian airports;

*"We believe good roads are essential to the well-being of people who live in our rural communities."*

*"A PC Government will not build any more toll roads."*

*"A PC Government will dedicate all taxes raised through motor vehicle licensing and fuel sales to highway construction and maintenance."*

# Transportation

continued...

- work with local authorities including Sydney and Yarmouth to develop an integrated airport marketing plan using an upgraded, world-class Halifax International Airport as the hub;
- work with business and community leaders to renew and enhance commercial ferry link opportunities for Nova Scotia, especially to key markets in the northeastern United States.



# Agriculture

**A**griculture has always been a way of life for thousands of Nova Scotia families. Today, that way of life is threatened by pressure to use farmland for other purposes, such as industrial and urban development. We believe it is better to protect agricultural land today, than to try and reclaim it in the future. Agriculture directly contributes over \$300 million to the Nova Scotian economy and employs 14,000 people. It also represents a way of life that enhances the cultural fabric of our province.

Liberal Government policies have ignored the importance of farming. The Liberals eliminated the Farm Land Municipal Tax Rebate, threatened the independence of the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board, have not provided the support necessary for young Nova Scotians to continue their family tradition of farming, and have failed to make any real effort to market Nova Scotian produce here and abroad.

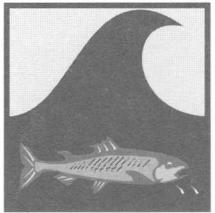
During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- establish an aggressive "Buy Nova Scotia First" policy, with a key focus on supporting and promoting our agricultural products to Nova Scotian consumers;
- establish a Young Farmers Program, to encourage young Nova Scotians to continue the tradition of family farming in Nova Scotia, through low interest loans;
- maintain the Nova Scotia Farm Loan Board as a separate entity;
- restore the Farm Land Municipal Tax Rebate;
- insist that the Government of Canada provide the same drought assistance to Nova Scotia farmers as is provided to western farmers;
- strengthen the partnership between the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and Marketing and together develop programs to ensure the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

*"A PC Government will establish a Young Farmers Program, to encourage young Nova Scotians to continue the tradition of family farming in Nova Scotia, through low interest loans."*

*"A PC Government will restore the Farm Land Municipal Tax Rebate."*

# Fisheries



Nova Scotians have always depended on the sea. It offers a vital transportation link, spectacular scenery, and -- most importantly -- sustains thousands of Nova Scotia families who work in the fishery. We are committed to maintaining the delicate balance between harvesting and conservation which ensures the fishery will continue to be an integral part of Nova Scotian life.

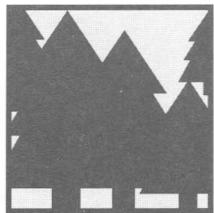
The Liberal Government has failed to play an effective role in the fishery. For five years, the Liberals have taken direction from their federal cousins in Ottawa, instead of putting Nova Scotians first. They have ignored the voices of Nova Scotians who know the fishery best -- the people who make their living from it. The Liberals have failed to see that the fishery is Nova Scotia's resource, and we have a right to a voice in its management.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- immediately meet with representatives of Nova Scotia's fishing sector to determine the viability of pursuing a joint fisheries management agreement with the Government of Canada;
- aggressively represent Nova Scotian fishing interests to Ottawa;
- support policies which recognize that the traditional strength of the fishery in Nova Scotia has been diversification of plant, vessel and gear type;
- promote research and development of new seafood products, especially "value added" products;
- place real emphasis on marketing Nova Scotian seafood products, as an integral part of our "Buy Nova Scotia First" program;
- allow licenses, ITQs and EAs to be considered as valued assets for the purpose of determining loan arrangements through the Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board.

*"A PC Government will immediately meet with representatives of Nova Scotia's fishing sector to determine the viability of pursuing a joint fisheries management agreement with the Government of Canada."*

*"A PC Government will promote research and development of new seafood products, especially "value added" products."*



# Forestry

Our forests support an economic and cultural way of life for many thousands of Nova Scotians. A healthy forest is essential to sustaining our rich wildlife, beautiful scenery, quality of life and economy. Currently the forestry sector contributes \$1.3 billion to our economy, employing 28,000 people. We must ensure that, through responsible use today, this resource remains available to us tomorrow.

*"A healthy forest is essential to sustaining our rich wildlife, beautiful scenery, quality of life and economy."*

*"A PC Government will immediately review the Nova Scotia Forestry and Wildlife Guidelines and establish them as law."*

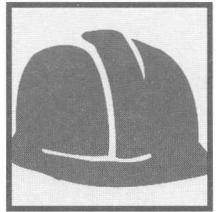
*"A PC Government will urge the Government of Canada to amend federal tax law so those who pursue good forestry practices will be rewarded for their commitment to conservation."*

The Liberal Government has ignored concerns from the forestry sector and others about the extent of harvesting. Many feel our forests are being over-harvested, and that the future of our forests is in jeopardy. The Liberals have allowed our federal/provincial Forestry Development Agreement to expire, and have put the forestry sector at risk by failing to negotiate a new agreement with Ottawa.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- undertake a comprehensive review of the current state of our forests, to ensure we have a reliable understanding of the impact of recent harvesting practices on the future sustainability of our forests;
- immediately review the *Nova Scotia Forestry and Wildlife Guidelines* and establish them as law;
- immediately enter negotiations with the Government of Canada towards a new federal/provincial Forestry Development Agreement;
- develop a *Forest Practice Code* for buyers of wood fibre;
- use the *Buyer Registry* to determine the sustainability of our forests, with a commitment to publish buyer registration information annually;
- urge the Government of Canada to amend federal tax law so those who pursue good forestry practices will be rewarded for their commitment to conservation;
- work to ensure the natural ratio of softwood to hardwood is maintained in Nova Scotia;
- support and promote our valuable Christmas tree industry;
- work with, support and promote private woodlot owner associations.

# Mining



For centuries, mining has been the mainstay of many Nova Scotian communities. We are determined to ensure that the mining sector is not abandoned in our pursuit of other energy and mineral resources. We are committed to ensuring that the safety of workers is the overriding concern in the approval of new mining projects, and the management of existing mines. We believe a responsible and practical approach to mining will ensure that mining remains an integral part of our economy.

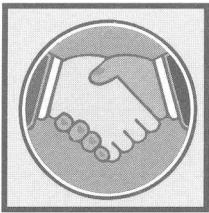
The Liberal Government has no energy policy. They have placed the fate of Cape Breton's coal mining industry in the hands of Ottawa, with the livelihoods of thousands of Nova Scotians left hanging in the balance.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- immediately adopt and put into full force the recommendations of the Westray Inquiry;
- immediately provide severance for union *and* non-union Westray workers in advance of the sale of mine assets;
- ensure all mining regulations are clear, efficient and effective regarding safety and environmental practices, monitoring, assessments, permitting, inspection and enforcement;
- immediately initiate formal discussions with the Government of Canada, Devco and labour to develop a Three-Mine Plan for the Cape Breton Coal Field;
- require mining companies to provide communities with timely, independent information on the environmental impact and economic potential of mining developments.

*"We are committed to ensuring that the safety of workers is the overriding concern..."*

*"A PC Government will immediately provide severance for union **and** non-union Westray workers in advance of the sale of mine assets."*



# Responsible Government

Nova Scotians expect their government to conduct the people's business in the open and to provide the public with meaningful opportunities for input. We expect our elected officials will be accountable to their constituents, ensuring that decisions are always made in the best public interest. We believe Nova Scotians are right to demand greater openness, accountability and involvement. We are committed to putting our house in order to see that this is done.

*"The Liberals have jumped from one bad deal to the next and have tried to hide the details from Nova Scotians."*

*"A PC Government will establish the office of Auditor General as auditor for the province's financial statements."*

*"A PC Government will require any public-private partnering agreement to be tabled in the Legislature within 30 days of signing."*

The Liberal Government has been accountable to no one. In the 1993 election, the Liberals promised to establish a Code of Conduct for cabinet ministers -- and we are still waiting for them to keep this promise.

The Liberals have jumped from one bad deal to the next and have tried to hide the details from Nova Scotians. The diversion of highway funds and the toll highway agreement. The ITT Sheraton casino deal. The Sable Gas deal. The incomplete deal with the private sector to build and operate Nova Scotia's public schools. The transfer of \$11 million worth of infrastructure at Sheet Harbour to the exclusive control of CeresCorp. The new agreement with Maritime Medical Care that gives it exclusive control over ambulance service within the province. The contract with Rothchild for the sale of Nova Scotia Resources Limited.

These deals -- and others -- were made without public input and the details hidden from public scrutiny.

During its first mandate, a PC Government will:

- establish a Code of Conduct for cabinet ministers and senior public servants;
- establish the office of Auditor General as auditor for the province's financial statements;
- establish a Public Consumer Advocate Office to represent the public interest at Utility and Review Board hearings and in matters respecting energy;
- in consultation with local government leaders, legislate a Municipal Charter which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of provincial and municipal governments;
- amend the *Freedom of Information Act* to require full disclosure of public-private partnering agreements;
- honour the commitment it has signed with the NSGEU respecting public-private partnering;
- establish a permanent Regulatory Review Office which will conduct ongoing reviews of all regulatory regimes, reporting directly to Cabinet and the Legislature on recommended improvements;
- require any public-private partnering agreement to be tabled in the Legislature within 30 days of signing;
- work with all parties to find ways to give Members of the Legislature greater freedom to represent the views of the people they represent, including more free votes.

## **John Hamm... Putting People First!**

"Nova Scotians want to know that if they need the health care system it will be there for them. And I want them to know that under a John Hamm government – it will be!"

Sydney, February 18, 1998

"We are committed to fixing the mess in health care. We won't do it, as the Liberals have done, by shutting out consumers, providers and communities. We will do it with them and we will do it right!"

Halifax, February 13, 1998

"Our bottom line will never get better if we continue to deny Nova Scotians access to quality care and if we continue to deny our children a first-rate education system that focuses on the student and that prepares them for meaningful opportunities here at home. My message is simple: we have to put people first!"

Stellarton, February 14, 1998

"A PC Government will work with communities and business groups to develop a ten-year plan for our 100-series highways, and a comprehensive multi-year plan for maintenance and upgrading of our secondary roads."

Newton Mills, February 16, 1998

"Our plan to encourage investment, to grow the economy and to create opportunities for lasting jobs is based on the understanding that it pays to reward initiative and success... and that high taxes kill jobs."

Halifax, February 6, 1998

# **Progressive Conservative**



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