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*Facing Reality
in
Saskatchewan*

1991 Platform

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Saskatchewan
Liberal

PREFACE

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There is a better way!

Saskatchewan's ability to emerge from the present difficult circumstances will depend in large part on a resolve to chart a course to wealth and economic prosperity in the future. Individuals, businesses, industries, institutions, communities, and governments must be thoughtful, creative, prudent, and most importantly, unified in that resolve.

I am pleased to offer this document as a culmination of two years of work spearheaded by Liberal policy developers and the team of Candidates seeking your support in this election.

We in the Liberal Party do not believe policy should become stagnant or cast in stone. Policy is the application of political philosophy to specific issues; a platform presents policies of current interest. Issues and attitudes are in constant flux, and the many changes in technology and communication offer new ways to respond.

Our Platform demonstrates the determination of the Liberal Party to bring a more effective and responsible government to the people of Saskatchewan. We realize that it may not be achieved overnight, but it can be achieved within a reasonable period of time if the government of the province is committed to achieving its goals rather than being preoccupied with politics.

This is a conceptual document. However, there are some sections that go beyond this because of their overriding importance to the electorate in this election. As Leader of the Saskatchewan Liberal Party, I will be addressing these issues throughout our Campaign.

You too can influence Liberal Policy. We use the same approach to matters within the party as we are proposing for the government - open access and respect for all.

Synda Haverstock

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FACING REALITY

A. WHAT THEY PROMISED:

In the past we have had slogans and promises from politicians and political parties which asked people to believe that:

- We will take care of you!
- The resources of the province will allow us to have the best medical care, the best education system, the best social services, and the best services to the elderly - **forever!**
- We can have lower taxes (no gasoline tax) and subsidize mortgages and renovations.
- The way to wealth is to take over the resource industries and to create crown corporations.
- The way to wealth is to be 'open for business'!
- The way to wealth is to 'privatize'!

B. WHAT WE HAVE:

Governments responsible for making those promises have produced the following results:

- A health system that is deteriorating, an education system that is not meeting today's demands, a social service system that is overwhelmed, and seniors that are increasingly worried about their future.
- A debt load that is onerous.
- Continual deficit financing.
- Exorbitant taxation.
- An economy in crisis and negligible growth in the Saskatchewan Gross Domestic Product for many years.
- A government that focuses on politics, not on governing.
- People that are alienated and cynical about their economic situation and about their governments.
- A massive exodus of people from the province.

C. WHAT LIBERALS OFFER:

The Saskatchewan Liberal Party offers the people of Saskatchewan:

- A fresh approach to the political process.
- A commitment to re-defining the role of government.
- Participation by all of us in governing.
- Legislation to ensure fiscal responsibility.
- A new approach to our public institutions.
- A realistic approach to the development of our agricultural potential.
- A stable approach to economic development which is free from patronage interference.

II

THE DILEMMA

A. THE PRESENT:

Saskatchewan is in a situation where revenues are declining while costs are increasing.

We are locked into declining revenue trends because a situation has been created in which the revenue producing portion of our population as well as the engines of economic growth are declining. Our economy is primarily resource dependent in a world where primary resources are in decreasing demand. In our trading world the engines of economic growth are services (technology and knowledge) and manufacturing. Agriculture is in crisis - we grow wheat that we cannot sell in a market which has increasing subsidy competition.

We are locked into increasing expenditures because of our population trends (increasing proportions of the population in dependent categories) and because our programs are designed to continually increase in cost (e.g. some are dependency creating programs and all have designed salary inflation). Our costs also continue to increase because we have attempted to solve our problems by developing our programs with a narrow, single-issue focus. As long as separate programs are established for each issue or problem that arises we will build ever costlier programs and never run out of problems.

Unless major changes are made in the way we in Saskatchewan think about governments and their roles, we are locked into declining revenue and expanding expenditure trends. This situation will continue the recent practice of deficit budgets and rising government debt.

The Conservatives suggest decreased expenditures and the New Democratic Party suggests eliminating wasteful expenditures. Will this help us? No!! This simply postpones the inevitable crisis by delaying the time when our expenditures will overwhelm our declining revenue sources.

The NDP and Conservatives propose that we increase revenue. Will this help us? No! This again will only postpone the inevitable crisis by increasing the tax burden in a declining economy.

If we reduce expenditures **and** increase revenue, we only postpone the crisis a little longer. **As long as the expenditure and revenue trends remain the same, the crisis is inevitable!** The solution requires a fundamental change in the direction of the trends.

This is not a cyclical problem that will disappear when the price of wheat rises. This is a major structural problem and must be openly discussed and addressed. The Conservatives and the NDP are either not recognizing the real issues or are attempting to avoid or ignore them. This approach is no longer possible. **It is time to face reality.**

B. THE REALITY:

Is there a magical, painless solution that will remove us from this dilemma?
No!

- *There is no magical solution.* The solution will take time. It will take the cooperative efforts and the full talents of every resident of Saskatchewan. No longer can we leave significant elements of our population out of the solutions (e.g. the seniors and the aboriginal people). The solutions will require a complete rethinking of our approach to government and governing. We can no longer afford divisiveness and dependence. We can no longer afford 'sacred cows' that are not open to question and review. We are all in this together and so we must all be part of the team that finds the solutions.
- *There is no solution without pain.* We can postpone the pain but we cannot eliminate or avoid it. We must be prepared to examine the way we think, the way we see the world, the way we see our place in the world, and our insecurities about our place in the world. We cannot think of ourselves in isolation from Canada, from North America and from the rest of the world. Sometimes this rethinking will be both individually and collectively painful. We cannot avoid this process. We must face it now or we will face it in the near future when we have even fewer resources to contribute to a solution and even fewer solution options.
- *There is hope.* The hope lies in our people - in our determination to succeed, in our tenacity in the face of adversity, and in our desire to leave a viable and valuable legacy to our children.

C. OUR PEOPLE:

Saskatchewan's people are our most important resource. Our people are our future and Saskatchewan is now exporting our future ideas, innovations, and productive capacity in the form of our young people. We are not using the vast wisdom, knowledge and skills of our growing population of seniors in a productive way. Our people are discouraged from years of economic stagnation, disillusioned from years of unfilled political promises, and disheartened from years of having their talents unrecognized and unrewarded. It is time that our self-reliance, initiative, innovation, and intuition are freed from the controls of big government and allowed to flourish. As we tap this potential, Saskatchewan will again be a place where people choose to live and people will not be a major export product.

D. THE COMMITMENT:

The Saskatchewan Liberal Party is making the following commitments to begin this process of rethinking, restructuring and rebuilding Saskatchewan:

• RESPONSIBILITY

The Saskatchewan Liberal Party will face these critical issues squarely and will accept the responsibility for providing appropriate leadership in developing cooperative solutions to our challenges and in building unity of effort and purpose among the great diversity of people, ideas, and resources in this province.

• RESPECT

The Saskatchewan Liberal Party will respect the dignity and intelligence of the people of Saskatchewan by making only those commitments that can be fulfilled and by not buying the voters with their own money and the money of future generations.

• TRUTH

The Saskatchewan Liberal Party will tell the people of Saskatchewan the truth about the situation in which we find ourselves and the sacrifices which will be required in order to overcome our problems to the full extent that we are aware of these issues and sacrifices. We will not participate in the cynical game of telling people only the 'nice' things that leave them with the impression that everything is the way they would like it to be.

• COOPERATION

The Saskatchewan Liberal Party will act to create mechanisms that will allow the people of Saskatchewan to cooperate in the creation of solutions to our problems and to reduce the divisions created by previous governments and approaches.



THE PLATFORM

A. GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR THE PEOPLE:

Saskatchewan Liberals believe that the reason for all government activity is to support the worth, dignity, self-reliance and integrity of each individual who resides in the province. Government activity will support the efforts of individuals in meeting their physical, social, growth, and self-worth needs. Our reason for being is our people. Every individual has inherent worth and the right to be treated with dignity and respect by governments and government services. Every individual also has the responsibility for their own welfare and the responsibility to contribute to the welfare of others through their talents, abilities, and resources. Governments should be supportive of this self-reliant but interdependent vision of Saskatchewan people.

The following are of particular priority:

1. GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE:

- **Empowering the MLA** - Reduce the divisiveness and partisan politics in the Legislature by giving all Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) a voice and making MLAs more accountable to their constituents. Liberals will introduce and support legislation to ensure:

Free Votes - Governments can only be defeated on a money bill or a specific non-confidence motion and not by the defeat of any other bill on the floor of the Legislature. This will allow MLAs to vote on all bills according to their conscience and according to the needs of their constituents.

All Party Committees - MLAs from all parties will participate in committees on issues of significant concern to the province. This will ensure full involvement in the governing process by opposition as well as government members.

Opposition Bills And Motions - A specified number of opposition bills and motions will be guaranteed consideration and vote in the legislature.

- **Less Government** - Reduce the cost and complexity of the provincial government by reducing the number of MLAs in the Legislature through reform of electoral boundaries and by reducing the number of cabinet ministers and attendant staff.
- **By-Elections** - Ensure that all constituencies in the province are represented at all times by introducing legislation limiting the period of time a constituency can be unrepresented before calling a by-election.

- **Fixed Election Dates** - Establish fixed periods for elections to prevent the incumbent government from calling elections for partisan reasons resulting in either unacceptably late or early elections.
- **MLA per diem** - Establish effective regulations to eliminate the abuse of the per diem expense.
- **New Program Reviews** - Place a 'sunset clause' in all program legislation. The sunset clause will require a detailed legislative review after an appropriate period (e.g. five 5 years for some programs). The legislative review will include a requirement for assessing program effectiveness and reporting the effectiveness publicly.
- **Municipal Powers** - Respond to the desire of the people of Saskatchewan to have a more immediate influence over the governing decisions that affect their lives by reviewing the division of powers and revenue sources between the provincial and municipal levels of government.
- **Electoral Boundaries** - Establish guidelines for the review of electoral boundaries in a non-partisan manner and at regular intervals. The guidelines will have criteria for variance in population to be represented by one MLA.
- **'Politician-Proof' Procurement** - Provide for an open tendering process that will eliminate favouritism in awarding contracts.
- **Conflict Of Interest** - Review and improve conflict of interest guidelines and establish a Code of Ethics to guide the decisions of legislators and the public service.
- **Anti-Corruption Legislation** - Introduce legislation that will hold elected representatives accountable for any misuse of power even if such misuse is discovered after their tenure in office.
- **Senior Appointments** - Institute a practise of having all senior and board member appointments subject to scrutiny by an all-party committee to ensure that these appointments are made on the basis of merit - not just political connections.
- **Independent Public Service Hiring** - Institute measures to make the hiring of all public servants below senior appointments free from political interference.
- **Decentralization** - Stop the indiscriminate distribution of government departments and agencies to rural communities as is being done in the Fair Share Program. There may be agencies that can operate effectively from rural centres but the decisions to move must be based upon openly identified economic and social criteria and should be implemented in ways that do not 'force' employees to divide their families and disrupt their lives without consultation or choice. In addition, destruction of the Regina economy will not help rural Saskatchewan. Both Regina and Saskatoon are small cities that cannot maintain an adequate level of services to rural areas if their economic base declines.

2. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

- **Taxpayer's Protection Act** - The provincial government must make fiscally responsible decisions. The level of provincial spending should be tied to the growth of our economy. Legislation will be introduced that will establish a predictable formula for taxation levels. The Act will freeze tax rates for a specified period providing businesses and consumers with the stability to make long-term plans. Also included in this legislation will be a prohibition against governments enacting any retroactive legislation.
- **Deficit Reduction Act** - Implement legislation which will put an end to ongoing operating deficits. The objective of this Act will be to provide for a four-year budget cycle in which revenues and expenditures (including debt servicing) must balance over the four-year period. The legislation will be founded on the principle that the resources of the government belong to the people and that the current government has a stewardship over those resources for which it is accountable to the people of Saskatchewan.
- **Deficit And Debt Information** - Make explicit and public the exact nature and extent of the government deficit and the government debt (accumulated deficits). Governments now talk of 'reducing the deficit' as if all will be solved at the end of the 'deficit reduction program'. This is not true. During the 'deficit reduction' period the debt will continue to increase with the result that the proportion of our taxes devoted to paying interest on the debt will continue to increase. This will further limit our ability to be flexible in the services provided to Saskatchewan people. Our children's heritage has already been damaged in a significant way. We must exercise our stewardship appropriately.
- **Provincial Sales Tax** - Immediately repeal the Provincial Sales Tax so that the rate at which money is collected is returned to the same level as before harmonization. Move to simplify the tax system.
- **Expenditure Ceilings** - Place an immediate ceiling on all government expenditures pending a complete departmental review as outlined below.
- **Existing Program Reviews** Establish a task force for each policy area to review the programs and operations. Each Task Force will be composed of MLAs from all parties, knowledgeable people from the general public, and department representatives. Departmental programs will be reviewed from the point of view of the needs being met by each program, the appropriate role of the provincial government in meeting those needs, the relevance of the programs to those needs, the effectiveness of the programs, and potential lower cost alternatives to the programs.

A second thrust of the review will be an examination of the fiscal responsibility of departments and programs which will be done through Productivity and Efficiency Audits.
- **Decision Criteria** - Make explicit and public the criteria for establishing expenditure priorities and privatization decisions. Among these criteria will be the creation of wealth not simply the transfer of wealth from the public to the private sector or vice-versa.

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Saskatchewan does not have an economy that is large enough to sustain itself. **We export or we die.** This leaves us a very narrow range of policy options for developing our economy. There are three key interlocking policy directions that will provide the foundation for economic growth in Saskatchewan into the next century. These policy directions are to create a climate which will promote and nurture the development and growth of small business, to diversify the export base of our economy, and to enhance our university research capabilities through increased support and targeted programs.

The Saskatchewan economy has traditionally been a resource-based economy and while the globally competitive market-place has dealt us some difficult economic challenges in the last decade, we remain rich in our resources. We must chart a course to wealth and economic prosperity in the future.

We have a small, open, sub-regional economy. We are small because on a world scale we have very little impact on the world economy. If our economy were to fail the world would hardly notice. We are an open economy because we are not self-sustaining - we must trade beyond our boundaries at prices over which we have almost no control. We are sub-regional because we are a small part of a larger regional (prairie) economy.

The result is that we have relatively little control over our economy. The world markets determine:

- (a) the price at which our exported products are sold,
- (b) the price of the imports required for production and consumption processes, and
- (c) the price of capital or money (interest rates).

These external factors have a direct impact on our Saskatchewan wage rates (we must be competitive), the value of Saskatchewan's fixed assets (e.g. land), and the price of domestically produced services, including government services.

Research, science and technological activities create a catalytic effect on industrial growth. Canada's research performance within the group of 10 nations in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is among the lowest with an investment in Research and Development in 1987 at 1.35% of the Gross Domestic Product. Saskatchewan's level was 0.87%! The national per capita average was \$289, with this province embarrassingly at \$146. Other jurisdictions have acknowledged that stimulation and support of research at universities are vital for growth. Through research, new knowledge is created, new ideas tested, and new products developed.

The role of government is to establish an environment wherein business, industry, and individual initiative can flourish. Another role of government in economic development is to establish the ground rules and regulations that will protect investors and the environment. Governments can also facilitate the flow of information and knowledge that support effective entrepreneurial decisions.

1. CLIMATE FOR SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:

Small business is a term that is applied to a wide array of operations in Saskatchewan from cottage industries operated from homes to high technology companies competing in world markets. There is a common element however, which binds all of these businesses together, and that element is the risk-taking, entrepreneurial spirit of their owners. Liberals recognize that small businesses create most of the foundation for employment, taxation, and economic activity in Saskatchewan. We are committed to depoliticizing economic development. Our policy on small business is based on the belief that there must be an environment in which entrepreneurs want to invest. We are anxious to create a simpler tax system that would be phased in, that would be fair, and that would accommodate social needs.

- Evaluate the tax levied on small business in the context of tax reform.
- Unbundle (break down) larger government contracts so that smaller firms can bid effectively.
- Establish an Economic Development Advisory Council. The board of the EDA will include members from provincial and municipal governments, business, and finance and will report to the Executive Council. The EDA will be mandated to:
 - Facilitate the creation of a private capital fund which will attract the private capital available in Saskatchewan and funnel it into small business financing. This has proven effective in other provinces.
 - Review the mandate and structure of SEDCO to determine its effectiveness and recommend a restructuring that will ensure it is depoliticized, that it is market driven, and that it does not distort capital markets.
 - Review existing programs, such as Community Bonds, and advise on their validity and potential viability.
 - Examine ways to ensure that government supported development projects are based on merit not on patronage.
 - Determine methods of expanding global trading contacts and information linkages for Saskatchewan businesses and actively seek world markets for Saskatchewan products.
- Continue support for our Community Bond proposal of 1986.
- Support the development of entrepreneurial skills and small businesses among all people in Saskatchewan. [see Education]
- Encourage the attitudes of innovation and entrepreneurship within the school system. [see Education]
- Maintain and develop the essential transportation infra-structure.

2. DIVERSIFICATION:

- Develop a 'critical mass' in intellectual capital by:
 - Strengthening the research components in universities with emphasis on agricultural, environmental, energy, and information technology research by exploring tax incentives or matching funding from the private sector.
 - Negotiating with the federal government for another national research laboratory, possibly in the telecommunications/information science area, to be located in Regina. This will provide a balance to the provincial agriculture and federal bio-technology laboratories in Saskatoon.
 - Develop the market potential of our existing strengths such as telecommunications, fibre optics, aerospace, health records systems, mining, and oil & gas.
 - Develop and market the engineering and management technologies in Saskatchewan (e.g. the technologies in mining, oil and gas, the Wheat Pool and grain services sector).
 - Develop the potential industrial products of agriculture such as pulp production from straw, ethanol production, and biomass energy potential such as methanol to keep the value-added potential in Saskatchewan.
 - Continue to build on the resource base by such actions as the development of safe and efficient technologies for production, use, and disposal of uranium.
 - Market agricultural organization technologies at the individual farm level and at the regional level. The place to begin this process is in the USSR and, more generally, Eastern Europe.
 - Encourage large private sector employers and Crown Corporations to examine their operations for opportunities to 'spin off' small businesses that may have the opportunity to provide services to a wider range of clients, especially out-of-province clients.

3. LABOUR RELATIONS

Both business and labour have a significant role in bringing the economy of Saskatchewan back to a position of growth and stability. They must adapt to the new conditions of a world economy and increasing movements toward freer trade and be able to work together on a common strategy that will bring us a viable role in the world business environment. This will require major new initiatives on the part of all those involved in the Saskatchewan economy.

- **A Joint Business/Labour Council** - Saskatchewan faces challenges such as the proposed North American Trade Agreement that will have a heavy impact on both our labour and business sectors. A joint Business/Labour Council will be established to act as an advisory body to the provincial government in the areas of labour legislation, workers' compensation, job creation, employment equity and other employment related issues. The Council will also anticipate and discuss problems that may become detrimental to the economic welfare of the province and convey their suggestions to the government.
- **Minimum Wage** - An increase in the minimum wage must be tied to an improved provincial economy. There is a real concern that raising the minimum wage before stabilizing the economy would result in a net loss of jobs. The minimum wage will be increased as the economy improves.
- **Workers' Compensation** - Review the Workers' Compensation legislation to immediately ensure that benefits are provided appropriately at equitable rates and assess the Act itself with a view to updating the legislation and ensuring its fairness.

C. AGRICULTURE

1. COST OF THE CURRENT APPROACH TO AGRICULTURE

Rural living has never been free of transition and adjustment. Until recently, most changes have occurred over generations which allowed for adjustment with a minimum of trauma. Saskatchewan farmers, however, have been catapulted into the information age at a rate much faster than previous generations. To illustrate, farmers who have recently reached retirement age began their farming careers using horse-drawn mowers, hand-milking cows, skimming milk, grinding grain, slopping hogs, and raising dual-purpose hens that laid eggs for one season before they were popped into the pot. The changes in one generation have been greater than since farming began.

A farmer may now have the farm enterprise vertically integrated with a service industry, be running a pork factory, driving a \$100,000 tractor, and planning with the assistance of an accountant, a tax lawyer, and production specialists. As a result of increasing food production demands, farmers' sons and daughters will have to continue the application of intensive farming practises, despite opposition from several areas. They will have to continue to accommodate the food trade war and adapt their lentil production to compete with the Turkish producer. They will have to continue to inject dairy cows with somatotropin to increase milk production by 25 percent, despite protests from consumers and animal rights activists.

As Canada has no National Agricultural Policy, the agricultural industry is placed at risk because farmers are continually caught in a cost-price squeeze and are increasingly unable to remain economically viable. This situation is exploited by politicians who propose ad hoc non-solutions at election time. This 'ad hockery' has led to the demoralization of proud rural people, the instability of the industry as a whole, and the erosion of rural communities.

There are several issues that must be addressed if agriculture is to become a competitive, viable industry. Policies must lead toward the rebuilding of independence from government for farm people. They must also be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of the world. Saskatchewan must become anticipatory and responsive.

2. A LONG-TERM STRATEGY

What is required to reach our full potential in agriculture is a long-term strategy. This long-term strategy must be based on the following four pillars:

- It must be national in scope while recognizing regional diversity.
- It must be market-responsive.
- It must encourage self-reliance in every aspect of the agricultural industry.
- It must promote agriculture that is environmentally sustainable.

Since the strategy must be national in scope it must be developed by the federal government in conjunction with the provinces. A Liberal gov't will vigorously press the federal gov't to take the lead in developing a long-term **National Agricultural Development Strategy** based on the above principles.

A long-term development strategy must contain elements which deal effectively with the existing debt level of farmers. A large part of farm debt is related to land. Both levels of government, the lending institutions, and our agricultural sector must work together in developing a creative answer to the problem.

Research is another element required in the agricultural development strategy. We must maintain an adequate level of funding for agricultural research at the universities and other research centres if our agricultural industry is to survive in the competitive international marketplace. [see Economic Development - Diversification]

A truly national agricultural development strategy should be structured in a manner that promotes the most appropriate use of land. We are now promoting a type of agriculture that pushes farmers to bring marginal land into agricultural uses that are sometimes not appropriate (e.g. we are growing wheat on land that is most appropriate for forage and livestock production). We must develop an approach which will assist farmers in making decisions which ensure that agricultural land is put to its most appropriate use.

In order to be environmentally sustainable, our agriculture must not only pay attention to the most appropriate cropping use of land but also to the way in which we use the land - our farming methods. The Department of Agriculture of a Liberal government will work closely with the agricultural researchers at our universities to identify specific applications of reduced chemical, herbicide and pesticide dependency; to educate and encourage the use of this knowledge by our farmers and livestock growers; and to use this type of production as a marketing tool for increased world sales.

3. GRIP AND NISA

The existing GRIP and NISA programs were intended to provide long-term income support for farmers. These programs do not measure up very well against the criteria for a long-term Agricultural Development Strategy. The programs are national in scope with regional (i.e. provincial) variations.

GRIP has been negotiated quite differently in each province with Saskatchewan negotiating a deal where there is a cap on federal costs but no cap on provincial costs.

GRIP is a program that relies on average yields and a 15 year moving average in price. This results in serious distortions in production decisions because decisions are based on the GRIP guarantee, not on the market. The program is not market responsive. The fact that farmers are making production decisions on the basis of the GRIP program and not on the basis of the market is creating a system in which farmers are becoming less self-reliant. They are beginning to 'farm the programs'. GRIP is an acreage based program and therefore does not encourage alternative or conservation farming practices. The maintenance or expansion of cultivated acres is more attractive than appropriate land use or conservation alternatives.

NISA has not been well received in many provinces because it has been perceived as a cost sharing program to subsidize the retirement income of farmers.

GRIP and NISA do not meet the criteria for a successful Agricultural Development Strategy. A Liberal government will immediately press for changes in national programs.

4. DIVERSIFICATION

We must address the long-term farm issues through diversification. The diversification required will have five major thrusts:

- Crop or product diversification
- Livestock and livestock product diversification
- Land use diversification with a conservation approach
- Value-added production - e.g. food processing, ethanol, pulp
- Marketing the practical agricultural expertise of our farmers to areas of the world requiring assistance in developing their own agricultural potential.

5. MARKETING

We must support agricultural organizations and agri-business in developing market research, market information, and market strategies for existing Saskatchewan products and markets for potential new Saskatchewan agricultural products. **Our long-term Agricultural Development Strategy must be market driven, not just production driven.**

6. OUR FULL POTENTIAL

We must recognize that a significant part of the future of Saskatchewan is in its agricultural industry; but the debate regarding agriculture must shift from preserving or defending what we have to developing our full potential within a world market context. Our full potential can only be achieved if we fully recognize the interdependence among research, diversification, and marketing.

7. RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We must recognize that while change is inevitable, the total destruction of the rural community must not be seen as a foregone conclusion. The combining of all available resources (ideas, funds, labour, etc.) can enhance existing industry as well as create new industry. The funds that have been devoted to regional development from the "top down" would be better spent seeding projects initiated at the local level. Government should not create industry in competition with local initiatives. Local initiatives are less expensive and more successful. The Liberal Party is committed to exploring ways to promote 'bottom up' development while not putting taxpayers' monies at risk. [see also Economic Development]

8. FARM FAMILIES

There are times when some farm families will choose to leave agriculture, just as they have done for generations. However, when they are forced to out-migrate, the family is vulnerable to family breakdown and becoming an expense rather than an asset to society. The ongoing cost of these tragedies is much greater than the cost of timely assistance to help them stay on the farm. Government programs must be directed to act quickly and positively when a farm family is identified as being in difficulty. Farms will always survive. It is the individual farm family that becomes a tragic statistic as they face the stress of too rapid a rural transfer. That stress creates an increased need for Social Services [see concept of 'network' under Health in Families section] and child care [see Child Care in Families section].

Each farm is one small economic unit that provides the livelihood for a family. Farming has attracted men and women who have been extraordinary in their love of the land, their determination to fight the elements, their commitment to a rural way of life — proud, independent people who, family by family, must compete in an international marketplace. They have earned our respect and have the right to our understanding.

D. ENVIRONMENT

The Liberal Party has committed itself to the application of environmental impact questions in every policy developed by the Party. Doing so, however, does not address the existing environmental problems or legislative/procedural inadequacies.

'Environment' is no longer a revolutionary buzz-word. If we do not address the problems and ensure the future safety of the planet, our children will inherit disease and economic disaster. We now recognize that every one of us must contribute to the solution and it is the role of government to facilitate and explain how that can be done. It is also the responsibility of government to lead by example. No government can hold the respect of the electorate when legislative process is ignored or evaded to serve partisan political purposes at the expense of the environment.

There is every evidence that sound environmental planning will also bring about economic rewards. We know that controls and the development of environmental industries are not drains upon our economy but quite the reverse. No longer will we accept that clean-up programs or regulated controls create a financial hardship on industry or damage the province economically. The Liberal Party is committed to:

- **Environmental Legislation** - Establishing environmental impact assessment legislation that makes such assessments compulsory for all major projects. Government departments and projects would be subject to such legislation. Strengthened environmental assessment legislation would include a clearer definition of terms.
- **Appeal Process** - Clearly defining and articulating the appeal process.
- **Job Creation** - Implementing new initiatives in job creation and conservation in forest renewal; shelter belts; restoration of rivers, lakes and streams; wildlife habitat and parks development.
- **Conservation Incentives** - Creating government incentives to reward improvement and conservation with deterrents for offenders
- **Water Resources** - Acting in a more proactive way to protect and conserve our water resources in the face of increasing demands both within and outside our borders.
- **Recycling** - Strengthening and expanding the recycling opportunities and programs at the municipal and provincial levels.
- **Business Opportunities** - Encouraging the business community to become involved in environmental opportunities. The Liberal Party views solving our environmental problems as an area of economic growth.

E. SASKATCHEWAN'S FIRST PEOPLE

Aboriginal people are the fastest growing segment of the Saskatchewan population and the future of the province can be measured largely by the future of aboriginal people. The Liberal Party identifies the following issues as requiring action in order to ensure the full participation of the aboriginal people in determining Saskatchewan's future:

- **Participation In Governing** - Examine and implement ways of more effectively incorporating aboriginal participation in the general decision-making structures of the province such as education systems, social welfare systems, legislative systems, law enforcement, corrections, economic development, municipal governments, and environmental policy.
- **Land Entitlements** - Support the rapid settlement of outstanding land entitlement issues in a fair and equitable manner.
- **Self-Government** - Support in principle the right of aboriginal people to 'self-government.' This is done recognizing that there are different concepts of the principle of self-government. The principle of self-government must include specifics of obligations, rights, and accountabilities (stewardship). Self-government must be accountable and responsible and not 'sponsored' government. Appropriate financing mechanisms must also be developed.
- **Support For National Recognition** - Provide support to Saskatchewan aboriginal people in their attempts to influence the Federal Task Force on Aboriginal Issues. It is essential that the federal government recognize and maintain its constitutional responsibilities for all aboriginal groups that are recognized under the Constitution.
- **Aboriginal Justice** - The Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry has prepared a report that contains principles that can govern changes in the aboriginal justice systems across Canada, not just in Manitoba. The Saskatchewan Liberal Party is committed to a new approach toward aboriginal justice in Saskatchewan with consideration given to these principles.

F. FAMILIES

Families in Saskatchewan face an uncertain future. Families are not only faced with major economic challenges but they are also encountering increasing levels of poverty, disintegration, neglect and abuse. The challenge is two-fold. Attitudes and values which contribute to racism, sexism, abuse, neglect and dependence must be addressed and not hidden or ignored. Further, families and individuals who need support to bring them to a point where they are able to be self-reliant and independent should receive adequate and effective help. Life-long support systems that keep large groups of our people in a dependent role are not a solution.

If families and individuals are to become self-reliant and independent in meeting their own needs in this rapidly changing world, they must have skills and abilities in the five areas: education and literacy; health; employment; personal resource management; and social, emotional and spiritual strength.

1. EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Saskatchewan is a province with well-established educational delivery systems, but it is also a province which faces great demographic shifts and economic challenges.

Saskatchewan is estimated to have the largest number of adults who cannot read and write with ease. For example, in our northern aboriginal community it has been estimated that 45% of the people are in need of literacy programs.

In the next few years approximately 50% of all **new** jobs will require more than 17 years of education and training. In order to function effectively in most jobs, every individual must be able to communicate effectively (read, write, speak) in English. An increasing number of young people must be able to communicate effectively in at least one other major world language, with some special emphasis on the languages of our present and potential trading partners. Effective communication also includes an appreciation of the geography and culture of the people associated with the language. Every individual should also have the basic analytical skills in the maths, sciences and philosophy. The following activities will strengthen our education system:

- Institute an evaluation of the entire education system by comparing the performance of our institutions against other systems in the industrial world.
- Examine the total funding for education to determine if there is a systemic bias against rural schools.
- Address the issue of rural school closures by assisting educators, local school boards, and rural residents to find innovative approaches to delivering effective educational services to a declining and geographically dispersed population.

- Assign the responsibility for adult basic education to the K-12 system so that every adult has access to the opportunity to upgrade their education to the grade 12 level near their place of residence and at a minimal additional cost.
- Encourage the use of school facilities for other educational and community purposes such as adult education and community recreation.
- Promote life-long learning attitudes and strengthen our distance education by facilitating an adult volunteer and fee-for-service tutoring system that can provide an accredited alternative to attendance at institutions for adults who are interested in continuing their education while working or parenting.
- Encourage the attainment of higher levels of education and training by those in the work-force by working on cooperative arrangements with employers and by including self-reliance and 'creating your own job' components at appropriate levels throughout the entire education system.
- Support the growth of educational services for aboriginal people through institutes such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.
- Include basic living skills in the K-12 curriculum and providing similar opportunities to adults by encouraging regional colleges, SIAST, and University Extension programs to expand into similar areas.
- Place additional emphasis on the teaching of languages at all levels of the system so that graduates, and therefore business, can function effectively in the world market environment.
- Stop the off-loading of educational costs from the provincial level of government to the municipal level of government and return to a more equitable level of sharing of these costs. Also, oppose the off-loading of education costs from the federal to the provincial government that is occurring under Bill C-69 which alters the Established Programs Financing arrangement. [See Federal-Provincial Relations].
- Encourage universities and technical institutes to engage further in their own fund-development programs to create some independence from government funding. [see University research discussed under Economic Development].
- Develop a formula that will ensure the adequate long-term funding of Universities in the province.

2. HEALTH

A Liberal government will focus on effective delivery of services rather than construction of new facilities. Individuals and families must become more responsible and self-reliant in providing for their own health. Health services are now very costly, partly because individuals and families have turned the responsibility for their health over to health professionals. A part of this responsibility for health is now being re-assumed in terms of healthier lifestyles (more exercise and better diet) and this trend must be continued and promoted. Increased self-reliance in health areas will be facilitated by:

- Establishing an all-party committee to review the funding of the health care system to suggest ways to provide additional incentives for prevention rather than cure.
- Developing a **network** of health care and social services that is community and regionally-based. Each region should have a full range of health care and social services, with each community having services tailored to their specific needs and capacities.
- Promoting and expanding the cost-effective option of Home Care so that more people will have the option to remain in their own homes for medical treatment rather than being placed in a hospital.
- Encouraging communities to explore the comprehensive community clinic approach to service delivery.
- Placing a moratorium on capital construction until the community/regional network is designed and the all-party committee review completed.

3. CHILD CARE

The Liberal Party believes that the development of a range of child care services is possible with the encouragement and leadership of a committed government. We are confident that the private sector can supply this desperately needed service with government playing a regulatory role. However, our responsibility to the children of Saskatchewan will not be ignored if the private sector does not meet these needs. We are prepared to:

- Subsidize child care for qualified families when it is both economically and socially sound.
- Discuss models for rural child care with local needs groups and ensure government assistance in organization.
- Develop school age child care to ensure the health and safety of our children.

4. EMPLOYMENT

Everyone of working age in Saskatchewan should have the opportunity to work at an equitable wage in a safe environment. There must be sufficient opportunities for employment and there must be fewer barriers to Saskatchewan residents wishing to take advantage of Saskatchewan opportunities and those available around the world. Employment possibilities will be enhanced by:

- Diversifying the Saskatchewan economy as outlined in the economic development and agriculture sections.
- Broadening the career planning and retraining support to effectively assist Saskatchewan people in planning for and making career transitions [See Education].
- Establishing youth employment programs in environmental conservation and renewal [See Environment].
- De-politicizing the public service [see Government Infra-structure].

5. SENIORS

Seniors are one of our major assets in learning the attitudes, values, and skills of self-reliance. They grew up and lived with those attitudes. Seniors built this province on the basic self-reliance principles of integrity, service, frugality, innovation, sharing, and justice. The institutions and services initiated by seniors are now threatened by the practices of patronage, protection of narrow self-interest, and extravagant living. It is now time to bring seniors into the forefront with their values and creativity to assist us in building on what they initiated. We need their continued vision and contribution of ideas, talent and skills. Long-term planning which incorporates the voice of seniors is required in order to bring the wisdom, values, vision, and attitudes of self-reliance into all the programs of government, not just the 'seniors' programs. A Liberal government will encourage the inclusion of seniors on provincial boards and committees.

6. SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Family violence, stress, and addictions that are widespread in our rapidly changing society are often rooted in individual low self-worth and in the widespread attitude that our worth can be found in external 'things.' When 'things' change, worth is threatened. People can only grow, thrive, and flourish in periods of rapid and significant change if they have a firm sense of their own worth. Self-reliance in our social, emotional, and spiritual life will be fostered by:

- Supporting the development of a province-wide **network** of professional family services and self-help groups which will provide access to family support services for the residents of our province.
- Supporting a broadly based family life education program for families throughout the province which will combine the best efforts of churches, family service organizations, employee assistance programs, and education institutions.
- Reducing the level of unintended pregnancies and consequently the number of abortions performed. Much of the debate is presently centred around the issue of abortion but the underlying issue is unintended pregnancy. By changing the focus of this issue, the real problem can be addressed in a more cooperative manner. When specific legislative change in this area is required, Liberal members of the legislature will vote as their conscience requires [See Free Votes].
- Addressing the special needs of single parent families by removing impediments in the existing social and educational programs which hinder participation by single parents. Such issues include child care, employment, volunteerism and child education which all tend to assume that families have two parents with one parent at home and one parent working [See Education and Child Care for some specific ideas in this area.]
- Developing an effective approach within the school system and the community to build on the inherent sense of worth possessed by every young person by rewarding individual growth and achievement in a wide range of talents and abilities.
- Maintaining an adequate level of funding for arts and cultural programs to ensure the continuation of the significant contribution which the arts make to the quality of life in Saskatchewan. This funding should be administered at arms length from the government and should be free of political interference.

- Working towards the development of innovative programs for seniors. Saskatchewan has the largest number of seniors per capita in the country. Our province should be outstanding in inovations which we could export as model programs. We recognize that current solutions to elder-care are isolating the elderly and/or are expensive. Community-based resolutions must be found.
- Explore the electronic transfer of social assistance payments to the bank accounts of qualified recipients in order to reduce some of the administrative costs of social welfare and to foster independence in social assistance recipients.

G. FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

Saskatchewan has been too long without true independence in dealing with the Federal Government. Whatever the political stripe of the governments involved, and whether they are the same or not, no provincial government should mortgage the future standing of this province within the Canadian Confederation for partisan political reasons. A Saskatchewan Liberal Government will stand firm for the best interests of this province.

- **National Unity** -Saskatchewan will flourish best within a system with a strong central government. For example, we need a strong, national agricultural policy, a strong set of national standards for medical care, pensions, unemployment insurance, and so forth. Saskatchewan Liberals support a constitution that gives recognition to the uniqueness of our founding nations, including our 'First Nations'.
- **Established Programs Financing** - Saskatchewan does not have the capacity to raise adequate revenues through taxation as do some of the more populous provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario. Saskatchewan Liberals do not support the existing federal position of withdrawing from fiscal transfers in favour of tax points. These changes, as reflected in Bill C-69, threaten funding for our health care and post-secondary education programs.
- **Senate Reform** -Reform of the Canadian Senate is recognized as necessary for the fair representation of Saskatchewan in the Parliament of Canada. A variety of proposals will be debated. The Saskatchewan Liberal Party will stand firm for an elected, effective, and equal Senate.

THE CRITERIA

In establishing approaches to responsible government, the Saskatchewan Liberals have developed and used a set of principles, values, or standards which every proposal for action must meet. Each policy proposal is measured against all of the following four principles, not just in relation to the principle to which it appears most closely associated. This is done to ensure that policy is not single-issue policy, but is integrated with all other policy issues, and is consistent with our overall vision of Saskatchewan's future.

The principles that have been identified are:

A. CARING AND SOCIAL CONSCIENCE – Does it meet the real needs of Saskatchewan people in a nurturing way? People have needs in four basic categories: the need to live; the need to love and be loved; the need for growth and variety; and the need to feel important. Does the proposal contribute to assisting Saskatchewan people to grow so that they can better meet these needs?

B. WEALTH CREATION AND STABILITY – Does it contribute to, or dissipate the wealth of Sask.? Wealth is not simply narrow 'profit' but refers to a broader view better illustrated by the concepts 'asset value' or 'net worth'. Profit can be achieved in the short-term, for example, by neglecting maintenance but in the long-term this neglect detracts from the wealth of the province.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY – What are the environmental implications? What aspects of the environment are affected? Does it enhance or detract from the quality of the environment? In the short-term? Long-term? If we do it, will it affect people outside Saskatchewan? Who will pay the price of maintaining the environment?

D. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND POLITICAL INTEGRITY – Is it honest? Is it responsible? Who pays? Who has stewardship? Who receives the benefits? The government of the day does not 'own' the resources over which it exercises its authority. It simply manages them. It must do so responsibly and wisely. Earlier governments didn't manage appropriately and simply left future generations and future gov'ts to pay for the excesses of the day. Not to manage today's resources responsibly is to mortgage the resources of tomorrow.

With this approach, Liberals in Saskatchewan have entered a new era of policy development. If you agree with these principles, we urge you to use them to evaluate our platform and the policy proposals of all other parties in Saskatchewan.

Together we will build a Saskatchewan where we and our children can face the future with confidence.

There is a better way!

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SASKATCHEWAN
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