

**NEWFOUNDLAND**



**& LABRADOR**

**The Right Agenda...  
for the People**

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# Message from Lynn Verge

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## The Right Agenda... for the People.

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador will soon have the opportunity to make a decision with profound implications for our province. In the privacy of a voting booth, they will put aside all the high-sounding rhetoric and make a choice about the future of their communities and their children. They will ask themselves: *Am I really better off than I was when the Liberals came to office?*

The absence of hope and optimism for the future that Mr. Tobin so frequently mentions is the product of the Liberal approach to government in Ottawa and in St. John's. It is the product of a Liberal agenda that focused on deficit reduction without understanding or caring about the hardship and worry inflicted on thousands of people in Newfoundland and Labrador; a Liberal agenda that's given our province record social assistance, record dependence on food banks, record out-migration.

That is the Liberal legacy people will carry with them when they step into the voting booth.

The Liberals have failed to understand that you can't balance the budget by making the economy worse. You can't improve revenues by laying people off. You can't support health and education with a shrinking revenue base.

Until just recently, Brian Tobin was a minister in the Chrétien cabinet. He sat at the table when the federal cabinet decided to slash funding for health, social services, and post-secondary education. He voted yes to gutting our Unemployment Insurance system at the expense of seasonal workers. He was there when they towed the jobs out of Marystown and moved our forestry research expertise to New Brunswick. And he was the fisheries minister in charge of cutting fisheries compensation, imposing license fees on fishermen, closing our lighthouses, giving away turbot to the Spaniards, and preventing people in this province — and only this province — from engaging in a food fishery.

That is Brian Tobin's legacy as Newfoundland and Labrador's minister in Ottawa.

Progressive Conservatives understand there must be an approach to government that balances economic and social policy. PCs understand you must have a strong and growing economy in order to pay for health care, education, and other social services that people need and that only government can provide.

We understand Newfoundland and Labrador is a rural province; that we have a resource-based rural economy; and that, if we fail to enhance rural communities and rural life, no one will prosper. We will continue to lose people and we will stand in danger of losing our way of life and our culture.

The government I lead will take a balanced, responsible approach to governing that will stimulate the economy, protect essential services, re-order spending priorities, and balance the budget over the term of our mandate.

We will help stimulate the economy of this province through programs such as the **Fishery Revival Plan** that will create stability in our rural areas and have positive effects on our larger centres.

A PC Government will encourage private-sector investment and enterprise as the basis of economic growth.

We will use tax policy to stimulate new investment and economic growth.

In our resource industries, we will foster value-added secondary processing and promote the use of local goods and services in industrial processes.

We will invest in our cultural industries, especially now as we prepare for major tourism opportunities in the next five years. Investing in the arts means investing in talented people to enable them to produce works of art, generate income, create jobs, and contribute to the economy.

The government I lead will redirect resources in health care away from wasteful administration and operation of facilities, and into patient care and consumer services. By spending smarter, we will protect, preserve and enhance the delivery of health care to those who need it.

We will be committed to providing excellence in education at the K-12 and post-secondary levels. We will spend our education dollar smarter, taking the savings we achieve by trimming administrative waste and duplication, and reinvesting that money in education through classroom-based budgeting aimed at excellence in teaching and learning.

A PC government will recognize the expertise, talent, and commitment of those involved in municipal government, and will support municipalities by allowing them more autonomy.

We will restore stability and confidence to our public service. We will demand accountability and, in all things, ensure government provides high standards of service to the people of the Province.

We will reduce the size of government by cutting down the number of Members of the House of Assembly from 48 to 40. The Liberal Government refused to abide by the recommendation of the independent commission. They tinkered with the number of seats, refusing to take serious action. We will do it right.

The PC Party in this campaign will offer the people of Newfoundland and Labrador a plan for the future - a plan to enhance our rural communities and the larger centres that depend on our rural economies. **It is the *right* plan, the *right* agenda - an agenda for the people.**

And it is on the strength of this plan that we offer people hope for a better future as we work toward prosperity. In place of the one-man leadership of the past, we offer sound decision-making based on legitimate consultation and teamwork.

I will be reminding people of the Liberal record, and offering a clear and sound alternative. I will be offering policies that work, and a plan that will revive our economy, protect essential services, restore our pride, and put people back to work.

I am issuing an invitation to all those who want to participate in building our province - young and old alike. Ours is an open Party. Work with us, and help make Newfoundland and Labrador secure and strong.

# The Right Agenda... for the People.

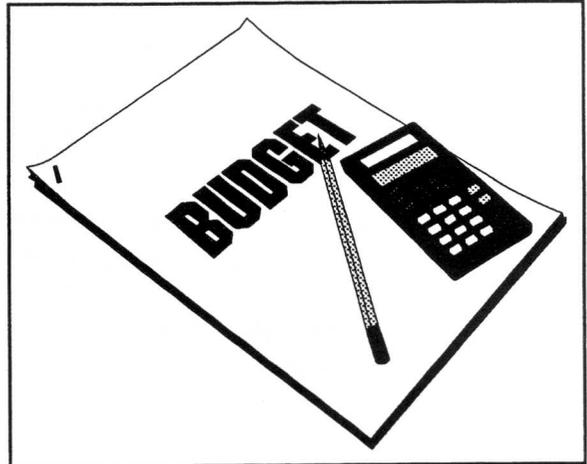
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The PC Party of Newfoundland and Labrador has **The Right Agenda... for the People.**

## 1. Fiscal Responsibility

Newfoundland and Labrador has a small population and a large debt. Transfer payments to the Province from the Federal Government are being reduced, as the Federal Government attempts to trim its own deficit. Transfers to individuals in the form of Unemployment Insurance and income support under TAGS are also being reduced, taking more money out of our economy. Our tax rates are among the highest in Canada. Because of the

Province's precarious financial position, it is important that government be fiscally responsible.



**A PC Government will balance the budget over four years.** The next two years will be difficult ones for this Province. However, there is a lot to be optimistic about for the future. Oil, minerals, and forest products have been contributing well to our economy and hold promise for even more development in the future. Although groundfish landings were very low in 1995, the overall value of landings by our fishing industry was at record high levels. We can expect a resumption of commercial fishing for groundfish in some areas in the foreseeable future. Because of these good prospects, we believe there is room to incur modest deficits in the lean years, to protect essential services, as long as they are offset by planned surpluses in the following years of economic growth.

**Fiscal responsibility starts at the top.** A PC government will cut the number of seats in the House of Assembly to 40, as was proposed by the Electoral Boundaries Commission. We will reform the MHA pension plan.

**Governing involves making choices.** Often, these choices are difficult. The choices made reflect the priorities of the government of the day. A PC Government will be prepared to make difficult choices. In doing so, however, we will put our priorities on people - delivering services where the need is the greatest and reducing expenditures in areas that affect service delivery the least.

**People given the trust of the public to govern the Province must maintain high ethical standards.** We will follow rigorous standards to avoid conflict of interest, comply with the *Public Tender Act* in spending public funds, and adhere to the merit principle in hiring for the public service.

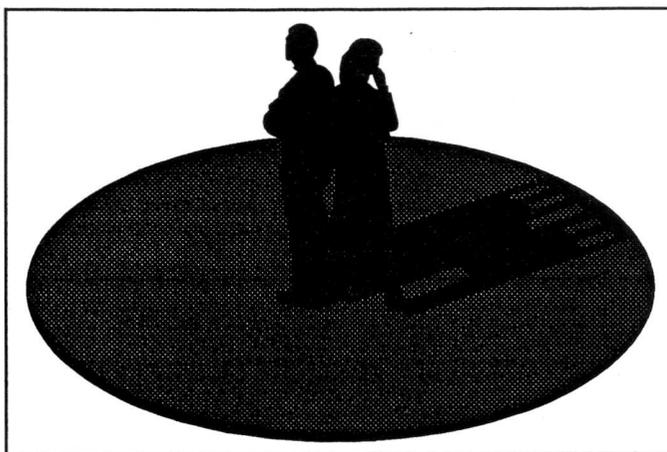
**We will reduce the size of Government and improve efficiency in Government operations.** Part of being fiscally responsible is to ensure good value is received for money spent. A PC Government will identify clear priorities and reduce spending in areas considered to be less important. We will also identify inefficiencies and take action to eliminate them. Because people on the front lines typically know the problems and opportunities, we will involve both the public and public employees in the process.

**We recognize that improving the Province's fiscal position ultimately depends on improving the economy.** We will ensure that Government receives a fair return of revenue from development of our natural resources.

## 2. A Renewed Effort to Reduce Unemployment

Government's fiscal problems are very much related to the problems facing many people in Newfoundland and Labrador: loss of income and lack of employment opportunities. As the Liberal record shows, we cannot solve the deficit problem by making the economy worse or tax ourselves rich. When jobs

are eliminated, the money flowing through the economy is reduced and Government's revenues decrease, while costs for Social Assistance and other programs increase.



**It is time for a new approach to economic development!** The Economic Recovery Commission, Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Department of Industry, Trade & Technology have not delivered results that justify the amounts spent on them.

**We recognize that our economy is mainly resource-based.** While we must encourage development of other sectors and take full advantage of the opportunities they present, a large number of our people will continue to depend largely on resource extraction and processing for employment in the foreseeable future. Although we have not been good stewards in all cases, we continue to have an abundance of natural resources that offer opportunities for development.

**Many resource-based activities are seasonal.** We will oppose the attack on seasonal workers by the Federal Government, which makes seasonal activities less viable. The reforms proposed for the Unemployment Insurance system will be devastating to many people.

**We will create linkages to other parts of the world.** The health of our economy depends heavily on exporting products and attracting investment from outside the Province. To expand markets for existing products, develop markets for new ones, and attract new investment to help develop our resources, it is essential that we be plugged into what is happening in the world at large.

### 3. A Commitment to the Rural Character of Our Province

Loss of income and lack of employment opportunities are particularly difficult problems in our Province's rural areas. People in rural communities have been given a difficult choice by the Liberal



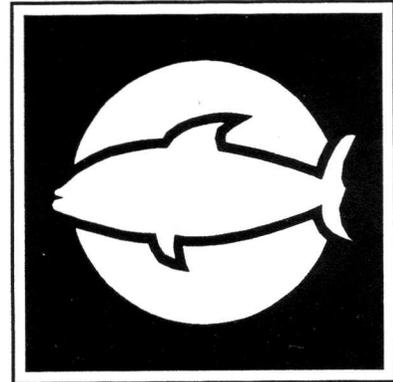
Federal and Provincial Governments: either leave for dubious prospects elsewhere or stay at home to pay higher taxes and see public services diminished.

**The rural character of Newfoundland and Labrador is one of our strengths and the source of much of our distinctive culture.** The PC Party is committed to preserving the rural character of our Province. To do that, we will try to find ways to put people back to work. We will also maintain levels of public services that strike an appropriate balance between need and our ability to pay.

**4. A Commitment to the Fishery as an Important Element of the Rural Economy**

The fishery is a major part of the economic base of the rural areas. It brought our ancestors to this Province. It is a big part of what we do, what we know, and where we live.

**A PC Government will establish a Fishery Revival Plan to help preserve and enhance the skills of people involved in fish processing and open up new opportunities based on fish species that have not traditionally been exploited.**



**5. A Belief in People as our Fundamental Strength**

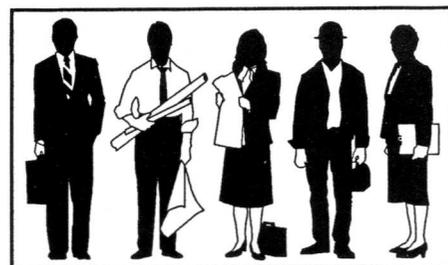
While our rich endowment of natural resources provides raw materials, products made from them must compete with similar products from other parts of the world. Ideas, knowledge, and skills are the raw materials from which sustainable competitive strength can be built in a dynamic global economy.

People are the foundation for our tourism, cultural, and knowledge-based industries, for which there are many opportunities in the years ahead. They contribute valuable services to our communities as volunteers, which help to improve the quality of life.

Morale in the public service is presently very low, after years of restraint and an arrogant, top-down approach to government.

**A PC Government will invest in people to expand our base of ideas, knowledge, and skills.**

**We will find ways to encourage volunteers to continue in their efforts and recognize outstanding contributions.**

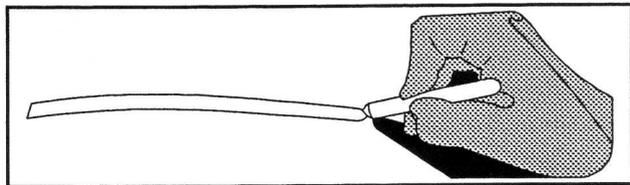


**We believe in consultation, to obtain the benefits of the talents, knowledge, and experience of people throughout the Province.** Politicians and public servants do not always have the full breadth of knowledge and experience needed to make good decisions. Team work is more likely to lead to success than top-down decision making.

**We will restore stability and confidence in our public service.** Although we will reduce the size of Government in some areas, it will be done giving full consideration to the effects on people. Cuts will be made in areas that have the least effect on service delivery. Those who remain must not be in constant fear of job loss and they must have sufficient resources to do their work properly. We will look for input and advice, avoid micro-management, and recognize exceptional achievement.

## 6. A Commitment to Excellence in Education

Education is the key to the future of ourselves and our children. It contributes much to both economic development and the quality of life.



**Education must be student-focused.** We are committed to excellence in education at the K-12 and post-secondary levels.

**We support in principle the reforms proposed by the Williams Royal Commission.** A PC Government will introduce legislation on all reforms dealing with improvement in and support for teaching and learning.

**A PC Government will not micro-manage education.** Government's role will be to set standards and hold school boards responsible for meeting and surpassing those standards. The teaching profession will be left to do its work but will be accountable for the results achieved.

**We will work toward eliminating duplication and unnecessary administrative costs.** The savings will be directed to students.

## 7. A Commitment to Health Care as a Fundamental Need

Our existing national health care system is based on the principles of comprehensiveness, universality, accessibility, portability, and public administration. This system has broadly-based support throughout Canada and here in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, its viability is being threatened by growing demands on the system and cuts by the Federal Government in its transfers to the Provinces that support health care.

**The PC Party reaffirms its commitment to the principles on which the national health care system is based.** In Government, we will pressure the Federal Government to provide adequate funding for health care.

**Innovation is needed in approaches to delivering health care services.** Because of the pressure on the system, we must investigate new ways of delivering health care services. Making appropriate changes will require input from all of the stakeholders in the system.

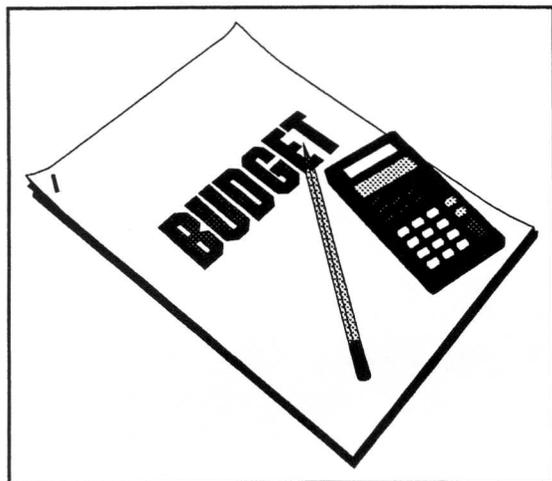
**Changes in health care delivery will be patient-centred.** While changes are needed in the system, these changes must be focused on delivering a high level of care, where that care is needed.

**The Right Agenda... for the People** is further elaborated in the pages that follow.



# FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

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THE PC PARTY IS proposing a four-year fiscal plan which encompasses policies and strategies for encouraging growth and eliminating government interference in business.

Fiscal management must deal with the real problems facing the people of Newfoundland and Labrador: lack of economic growth, high unemployment, declining revenues from Ottawa, and excessive debt.

The problems are interrelated. The Liberal record demonstrates we cannot solve the deficit problem by making the economy worse, or tax ourselves rich, or hold onto revenues by eliminating jobs. The solution is a responsible balance between measures to stimulate the economy, protect essential services, and balance the budget over a reasonable time period.

For the next two years, we face more economic difficulties because of cuts in federal transfers to the Province and to individuals. The outlook is much better in the following years as the Province reaps economic returns from new resource-based

industries. Those economic prospects give some leeway to spread the impact of federal cuts into the growth years, when a stronger, expanding economy will be better able to take the hit.

## Spending Policy

A PC Government will:

- **balance the budget** over four years, through a combination of measures to stimulate economic growth and re-order spending priorities. Deficits designed to protect funding for essential services in the lean years will be offset with planned surpluses in the growth years.
- **fix the rate of growth in borrowing** below the rate of real growth in GDP, thus bringing down the debt-to-GDP ratio.
- **use tax policy to stimulate private sector job creation** — jobs that *pay* taxes, not *depend on* taxes.
- **re-establish an Expenditure Review Committee** to identify areas of inefficiency in government and take early and decisive action to eliminate inefficiencies.
- **set priorities for program delivery** and reduce spending on expendable and low-priority programs.

- **streamline and consolidate regulations** to eliminate duplication and reduce the number of regulations and regulatory bodies.
- **put emphasis on patient care and high-quality education** while seeking efficiencies.
- **impose mandatory sunset clauses** on spending programs and regulations.
- **appoint a Public Service Pensions Task Force** within 60 days to investigate ways to address existing liabilities while honouring our commitments.
- **reform the MHA pension plan** to bring it more in line with those of public employees.
- **cut the number of seats in the House of Assembly to 40.**
- **and return to this office the tools and authority to help people seek redress** when they have grievances against the government.
- **change its accounting procedures** to bring them in line with the recommendations of the Auditor General.
- **adhere to the *Public Tender Act*** in spending public dollars to ensure fairness to businesses and a healthy competitive climate in this province.
- **enforce a rigorous conflict of interest policy** that is open to scrutiny by the legislature and the public.
- **introduce changes which will allow more free votes in the legislature**, enabling MHAs to be responsive to the wishes of their constituents.
- **consult meaningfully with people before joining in any national constitutional reform initiative.**

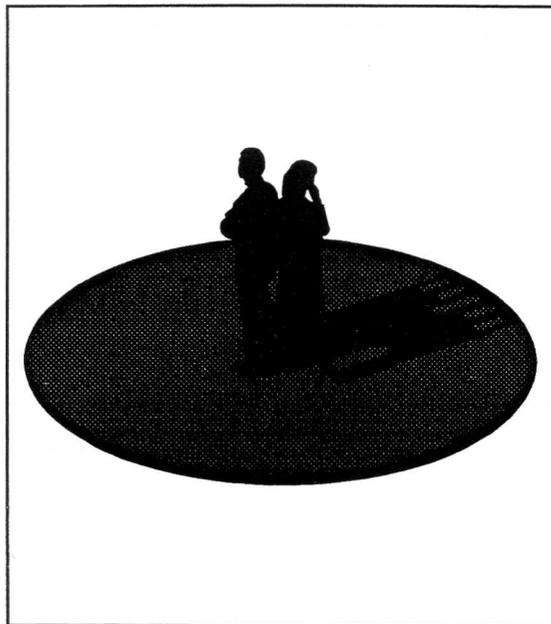
### **Accountability and Efficiency in Governing**

A PC Government will:

- **send all pieces of legislation deemed to have significant impact on the public to *Legislation Review Committees*.**
- **subject legislation and regulations to a cost-benefit analysis.**
- **restore the Ombudsman's office**

# REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT

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## Economic Policy

*The PC plan contains measures which will be applied to stimulate growth in our key industries: fisheries, forestry, agriculture, mining, oil and gas, hydro, manufacturing, environmental protection, tourism and recreation, and culture.*

A PC Government will:

- **encourage private-sector investment and enterprise** as the basis of economic growth.
- **consult regularly with the business community** to identify opportunities to stimulate economic development.
- **eliminate the Economic Recovery Commission and trim Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador Corporation**, redirecting funds to programs that stimulate jobs.

- work with financial institutions in **helping entrepreneurs to establish small businesses.**
- **establish a Provincial Benefits Policy for resource industries** to foster value-added secondary processing within the Province and the use of local goods and services in industrial operations.
- **promote joint ventures among local firms** to build more efficient enterprises that can compete successfully at home and abroad.
- **set up information networks** to keep local firms up-to-date about private and public sector procurement requirements and policies in Canada and abroad.

## Tax Policy

A PC Government will:

- **eliminate the payroll tax** during our mandate to stimulate economic activity and job creation that will generate new tax revenues.
- **legislate a basic tax structure for resource industries** and negotiate other appropriate economic benefits with individual companies seeking access to natural resources.
- **reduce the Retail Sales Tax to 8% for materials used in home construction and renovation.**

## REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT

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- **give tax credits to the general public to encourage investment** in business growth in the Province.
- **raise new revenues from new economic activity** rather than new taxes.

## SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES

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### Forestry

*This province's forest resources have been neglected for long enough. They must not be allowed to dwindle and meet the same fate as our fish resources. Our forest resources are vast and diverse and should benefit from an equally diverse management policy.*

*Through sound sustainable development practices, a PC Government will ensure strong and diverse forest resources from which we can obtain maximum economic and employment benefits. We will take action to protect existing forest-based industries. At the same time, we will foster new attitudes and behaviours with respect to our forests. We will encourage people to recognize that forests are more than sources of trees for harvesting.*

A PC Government will:

- **create a community forest program**, involving local communities and individuals in managing forest resources in their area.

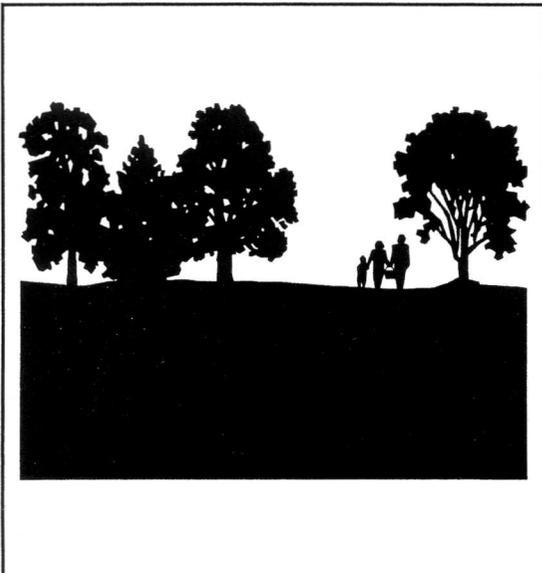
- **establish an industry-wide Forestry Advisory Board** to evaluate forestry policies and practices and make recommendations.
- **create strong conservation policies** which foster forest growth and diversity in harvested areas as well as protected spaces.
- **undertake a five-year silviculture project** to increase tree planting and thinning activities.
- **promote research and development** to help identify optimal development practices for this province's unique forest resources, to ensure our industry surpasses international standards.
- **give preference in wood allocations to integrated forest operations** that make maximum use of raw materials to produce lumber, chips, pulpwood and other forest products.
- **improve full use of the tree in the forest industry** to minimize wastage and maximize economic benefits and jobs by:
  - (a) exploring the integrated use of sawlogs and pulpwood;
  - (b) promoting innovative technologies that reduce wastage; and
  - (c) assisting in the search for new markets to promote the use of forestry by-products.

- **use incentives to expand secondary manufacturing** and opportunities for local firms to supply equipment, goods, and technical services to forest industries.
- **help find innovative uses of alternate timber resources** by aiding in the identification of markets for hardwoods, including alders, white birch and aspen, and new "green" products.
- **support investment in the development of Labrador's untapped forest potential** by promoting development of the necessary transportation infrastructure.
- **promote eco-tourism and cottage industry development opportunities** (involving Christmas tree plantations and specialty products). We will seek out and develop linkages between the agricultural, mining, and freshwater resource industries and the forest industry.
- **undertake a comprehensive review of all regulations** pertaining to the forest industry with a view to correcting inadequacies.
- **rigorously enforce regulations** aimed at sustainable forest resource management.
- **review the number of private sawmill permits** in light of the importance of sustainable forest resource development.
- **freeze the number of wood harvesting permits** until an investigation can be undertaken to determine the optimum number of wood harvesters our resources can sustain.
- **commission an independent study of domestic wood-cutting practices.**
- **undertake a thorough assessment of the current *Land Tenure Act***, encouraging public input and the proposal of alternate arrangements.
- **introduce an educational program**, as part of the grade school curriculum, to ensure our young people are aware of the importance of our forest resources and the complexities of managing them in a sound and sustainable way.

## Agriculture

A PC Government will:

- **implement progressive land-use policies** designed to preserve and use all land suitable for agricultural production.
- **expand capital investment in basic infrastructure**, and raise the limits on farm loans to better reflect the real cost of developing and running modern, efficient farms.



- **secure high-quality, locally-produced feed** for livestock and poultry producers at stable, competitive prices.
- **provide technical and scientific support** to encourage higher levels of technology and innovation to improve farm efficiency and product quality.
- **encourage cooperative producer networks** to share facilities and equipment that require large capital investments.
- **establish central storing and marketing agencies** to ensure a consistent year-round supply of farm products to local wholesalers, retailers and food processors.
- **provide Farm Skills Programs in community colleges** to meet industry needs for technical and business

management training.

- **legislate a fair and equitable municipal business tax structure** for farms, and ensure the provincial tax system allows local farmers to compete equitably with those in other provinces.

### Mining

A PC Government will pursue four objectives for our mining industry: (a) to encourage higher levels of exploration, mine development, and industrial development related to the mining industry; (b) to use the skills of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in the search for minerals, in production operations, and in supplying goods and services to the mining industry; (c) to ensure the industry remains competitive in international markets; and (d) to foster value-added secondary processing in Newfoundland and Labrador where economically feasible.

A PC Government will:

- **ensure the mining tax system achieves a proper balance** between allowing companies to achieve a good return on their investment in mineral resource development, and providing our people with an acceptable level of return.
- **provide financial incentives to local exploration** companies and prospectors to encourage more local investment and higher levels of exploration.

- **help local companies with the infrastructure** required for new mining development, such as the construction of hydro lines, access roads, and shipping facilities.
- **promote manufacturing processes** using mineral products and dimension stone, and increase opportunities for local companies and labour to supply equipment, goods, and technical services to the mining industry.

## Hydro

A PC Government will:

- **not privatize Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro Corporation.**
- **promote a consortium of public and private investors to develop the Lower Churchill** and to use the hydro power to bring industrial development and jobs to this province. Our priorities for Lower Churchill power are:
  - (a) resource and related industrial development in Labrador;
  - (b) energy needs for industrial development and long-term energy supply to the Island part of the Province; and
  - (c) equitable economic returns from the sale of surplus power to customers in other Canadian provinces or in the United States.

## Oil and Gas

A PC Government will:

- **prepare immediately for development of the Terra Nova, Whiterose, and Hebron fields**, and to attract new exploration activity. We will prepare in a way that maximizes the development of oil-related industries in this province, creates well-educated, well-trained workers for the oil industry, and brings equitable revenues to the Province.

## Environmental Protection

A PC Government will:

- **establish Environmental Centres of Excellence**, bringing together the public and private sectors and the academic community to build expertise and competitive advantage in innovative environmental technologies, management systems, and services linked to our resource base.
- **ban the importation of domestic or industrial wastes for incineration, storage, or other methods of disposal** in the Province. Waste products imported for use as raw materials in manufacturing would be subject to the review and approval process required under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

## REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT

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- **correct inadequacies in the *Environmental Assessment Act*.**
- **improve environmental management and protection, enhance pollution prevention, and boost the Province's presence in the market for environmental products and services.**
- **improve and manage fish and wildlife habitats to ensure the Province continues to offer some of the world's finest fishing and hunting.**
- **recognize the tourism and recreational value of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles and will be committed to the safe use of such vehicles in an environmentally sound way.**
- **promote reuse and recycling by implementing strategies to encourage the use of reusable and biodegradable containers and the recycling of waste materials.**
- **seek to negotiate agreements with the Government of Canada for the clean-up of St. John's Harbour, the Lower Humber River, Argentia, Goose Bay, municipal waste sites, and other areas which require action.**
- **improve the monitoring of air quality and the condition of lakes and streams that may be affected by domestic or industrial wastes or other forms of activity, and enforce compliance with environmental standards.**
- **control pollution by ensuring firms invest in appropriate pollution-control technologies.**

# PRESERVING OUR RURAL CHARACTER

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## Municipal Affairs

*THE PC PARTY RECOGNIZES the expertise, talent, and commitment of those involved in municipal government and will support municipalities by allowing them more autonomy.*

*The PC Party recognizes it is the responsibility of the government to provide a basic level of infrastructure to all municipalities. We believe it is the responsibility and right of each municipality to then make its own decision about additional infrastructure and other services for its residents.*

A PC Government will:

- **renew its commitment to rural Newfoundland and Labrador.**
  - **act to revitalize rural economies, providing continuing support for rural development associations.**
  - **renew its commitment to provide financial support for municipalities.**
  - **move to establish an electronic database of basic municipal and services information.**
  - **explore options for providing a new type of liability insurance policy to cover volunteer firefighters, working in conjunction with municipalities and the insurance industry.**
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- **release grant and debt information to municipalities by October 31st in each year to allow municipalities adequate time for budget preparation and responsible fiscal planning.**
  - **introduce a rebate system for municipalities to reduce the level of RST owed on procurement such that RST is calculated on the basis of procurement price plus GST net of the GST rebate.**
  - **reinstate electrical subsidies for community sports facilities.**
  - **establish a committee consisting of two representatives each from the municipal affairs department, the Federation of Municipalities and the Association of Municipal Administrators, to periodically review the performance of the municipal financial support programs and make recommendations for change as may be appropriate from time to time.**
  - **compensate municipalities for services provided to Provincial Government buildings.**

- establish a process whereby **municipal infrastructure** throughout the Province will be inspected and inadequacies will be identified for correction.
- work with municipalities to develop more advanced and efficient **environmental approaches for the disposal** of municipal sewage and solid wastes, and the storage, handling, and disposal of toxic and hazardous wastes.

### Transportation Policy

A PC Government is committed to the provision and maintenance of an acceptable transportation network in all areas of the Province, including secondary roads which at present are in a state of disrepair. We will renew our commitment to establish a capital works program to upgrade our roads.

A PC Government will:

- **pressure the Government of Canada** to maintain its responsibilities to operate and properly care for airports, ports, docking wharves, and federal ferry services in this province.
- **review cuts in public transportation** with a view to public safety.
- **establish a fair motor vehicle inspection policy** based on reasonable prices for vehicle owners,

in consultation with the insurance industry.

- **treat interprovincial ferry services as an extension of the highways network** and ensure the rates paid by users are comparable, within reason, to the costs of commuting by road. We will pressure the Government of Canada to adopt a similar policy with respect to ferry services now operated by Marine Atlantic.
- **replace the Fogo ferry** with a new vessel to be built at the Marystown Shipyard, and transfer the existing Fogo ferry to Bell Island for use as a second vessel there.
- **give priority to completion of an all-weather highway across Labrador**, to expand resource, manufacturing, and tourism industries in Labrador.

### Tourism Policy

A PC Government will:

- **highlight local talent and resources** in celebrating the 1997 John Cabot 500th Anniversary.
- **aggressively promote and prepare for the tourism opportunities** associated with the Cabot Anniversary, the Canada Winter Games, the 50th Anniversary of Newfoundland and Labrador's entry into Confederation, and the 1000th Anniversary of the Viking landing.

- **identify new and expanded market opportunities** in developing tourism as a year-round economic activity.
- **promote industry-wide standards** for facilities and services.
- **support promotion and marketing** targeted to local, national, and international markets, including management training in the area of market identification and development.
- **coordinate the planning and sharing of critical industry information.**
- **support agreements** with communities, heritage groups, and cultural groups to protect and restore historic sites, buildings, and other properties, and to promote distinctive cultural events.
- **invest in the special infrastructure needs of the tourism industry** including training, electronic tourist information systems, and development of primary tourist stops at strategic locations around the Province, from which tourists can be drawn to events and attractions in surrounding communities and sites.

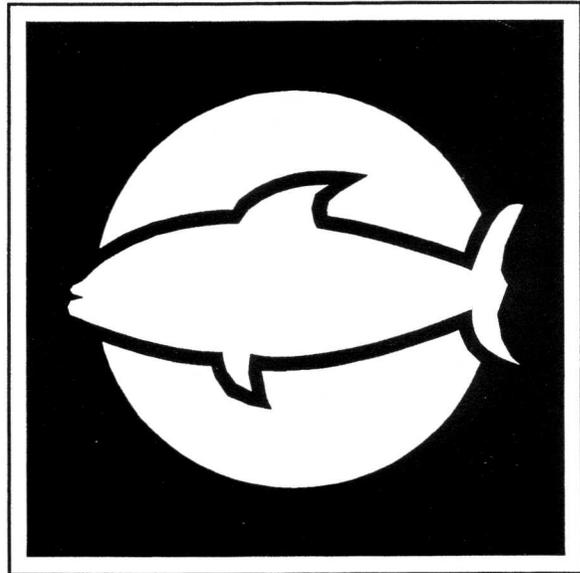
# A COMMITMENT TO THE FISHERY

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The fishery is a major part of the economic base of the rural areas. It brought our ancestors to this Province. It is a big part of what we do, what we know, and where we live.

A PC Government will:

- **restore a stand-alone fisheries department.**
- pressure the Government of Canada to allow a **food fishery** for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.
- **advocate an environmentally-responsible approach** to both inshore and offshore fishing activities.
- assist in the development of a strong and viable provincial **aquaculture** industry.
- **provide support in marine research** activities, in cooperation with the Government of Canada.
- **establish a Fishery Revival Plan (FRP)**, which will help put Newfoundlanders and Labradorians back to work and prepare them to participate in a brighter future for the Province. We will work out the details of the Fishery Revival Plan through consultation with industry representatives. However, it will have the following main features:



(a) A PC Government will provide funding in the amount of \$25 million per year for at least the next 3 years, aimed at maintaining skills required to have a world-class fish processing industry, and developing skills required to establish viable new fish processing activities.

(b) These funds will be made available to operators of fish plants who propose to undertake processing activities that would not otherwise be undertaken, such as importing frozen raw materials for processing in Newfoundland plants, or establishing new processing activities based on presently under-utilized species that have not traditionally been a significant part of our fishery, or secondary processing activities for production of new products.

(c) To obtain a share of the funds, plant operators will have to submit plans indicating the raw materials they propose to use, the processing activities they intend to undertake, the products they will produce, and how they intend to market those products. They will be subject to audit, to ensure the funds are used as intended.

(d) The amounts allocated to individual plants will depend on the plans submitted and the level of processing activity that will be created. Successful implementation in one year will help to ensure plants will be eligible to receive funding in subsequent years.

(e) The funds must be used for on-the-job training of people previously employed in processing fish, to allow them to maintain their production skills and productivity levels in anticipation of a return of the commercial groundfish fishery, or learn new skills needed to achieve economic viability in processing of under-utilized or non-traditional species, or secondary processing to produce new products.

Through implementation of the Fishery Revival Plan, we expect that up to 75 fish plants will be able to resume operation. People now displaced from the fishery will be able to return to work for a significant portion of the year. The economic base of our rural areas will be rejuvenated. The strategic

investment in people and development of production skills will:

- generate economic benefits several times the amount invested;
- ensure that people who can expect to be employed again in fish processing as our commercial fishery rebuilds will have the skills they need to be competitive in a global market;
- kick-start development of new activities in rural areas, drawing on local resources and things people already know how to do; and
- help answer the question, "Training for what?".

A PC Government will find the funds to implement this plan by eliminating the Economic Recovery Commission and reducing the activities of Enterprise Newfoundland and Labrador. Benefits are also expected in terms of activity generated in businesses related to the fishery, increased provincial revenues from income and consumption taxes, reductions in the number of people receiving social assistance, and overall improved community viability.

# PEOPLE AS OUR FUNDAMENTAL STRENGTH

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While our rich endowment of natural resources provides raw materials, products made from them must compete with similar products from other parts of the world. Ideas, knowledge, and skills are the raw materials from which sustainable competitive strength can be built in a dynamic global economy.



A PC Government will:

- **invest in people** to expand our base of ideas, knowledge, and skills.
- **redirect funding and assistance-in-kind to community groups and third-party organizations** and promote their efforts to enhance their communities and provide services to individuals in need, in recognition of the importance of volunteering to community development.
- **create links** between social assistance, employment generation, post-secondary education, and student aid to make it easier for the long-term unemployed and persons on social assistance to improve their education or learn new job skills.
- **increase the minimum wage** by an amount determined after careful study and consultation.
- develop and implement a plan to delegate the delivery of many services for which the Department of Social Services is responsible, to **community-based governing boards**

made up, in part, of the client population to be served.

## Culture Policy

*The creative enterprises of artists and cultural groups have a significant positive impact on the provincial economy. Like tourism, which is enhanced and complemented by the talent and work of artists, performers and writers, culture is a growth industry in the Province. Unlike in many other industries, the growth has been generated almost exclusively through the enterprise of individual artists and groups.*

*The failure to accept and promote the industry as a viable and important part of the provincial economy has made it difficult for entrepreneurs within the industry to access public and private sector capital and financial services. Funding for the arts is not "hand out" money; it is a sound investment in the future of our people and our province.*

A PC Government will:

- **focus on organizing and coordinating culture** as a specific area of economic activity and securing the public and private investment needed to realize the industry's full economic potential and to enhance the financial position of artists.
- **work cooperatively with artists and cultural groups** in taking full advantage of the opportunity to showcase local talent during the 1997 John Cabot 500th Anniversary Celebrations.

### **Public Employees: A Fresh Approach**

*THE PC PARTY BELIEVES in making optimal use of the experience and expertise of public service workers in managing the day-to-day affairs of government.*

*We will restore stability and confidence to public employees and create an environment where morale can improve. We will recognize the contribution of public employees to their province, and work with them to improve service to the public.*

A PC Government will:

- **take a team approach and initiate a legitimate consultation process** involving the general public, public employees, business, labour generally, municipalities, and informed individuals as we set the

Province's course for the next five years. Not only will we seek input before setting multi-year spending priorities, but we will stick to the plan and avoid crisis management.

- **negotiate openly and in good faith with public employees** — focusing on long-range goals, making only those commitments we can reasonably expect to keep, and keeping the commitments we make.
- **seek the input of public employees** in providing better service to the public. We will introduce measures which provide incentives to public employees to identify and move to correct inefficiencies in public administration.

### **Labour Relations**

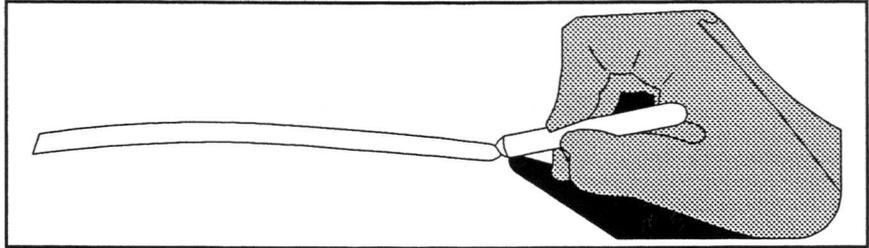
A PC Government will:

- **provide support for joint management-labour training** and reorganization projects designed to improve efficiency in the work place.
- **expand specialized mediation** and consultative services in every major sector of the economy to promote positive relations between unions and employers and increased cooperation in resolving disputes.

# EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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*THE PC PARTY RECOGNIZES the value of quality education for the citizens of this province. The Party is committed to providing excellence in education at the K-12 and post-secondary levels. In all initiatives, emphasis and focus will be on the student.*



*The PC Party has supported, in principle, reforms of the Williams Royal Commission and will introduce legislation on all reforms dealing with improvement in and support for teaching and learning.*

*Money 'saved' from consolidation of school boards and other structural and administrative changes will be directed at students through teaching and classroom needs.*

*Government's role will be to set standards and hold school boards responsible for meeting and surpassing those standards; the results of all standardized tests will be publicized so that the public is fully informed about educational performance.*

*Government will not micro-manage education. The profession will be left to do its work and will be held accountable by the people through government.*

*We will foster greater cooperation at the post-secondary level across colleges and with Memorial University. Streamlining of programs will reduce unnecessary administrative costs.*

## **Primary, Elementary, and Secondary Education Policy**

A PC Government will:

- **proceed immediately with reforms to our education system** laid out in the Williams Royal Commission report that are within government's power to implement and those changes on which the government and the stakeholders agree.
- **cooperate with all stakeholders in the education system** — with those who supported the YES side and those who supported the NO side in the recent referendum — in restructuring the system in an acceptable manner to provide maximum opportunities to students in all areas within fiscal constraints.
- **reduce the number of school boards** by consolidating the existing boards into 10 elected boards.
- **assign school boards more control** over programs and resources and greater accountability for results.

- **set achievement standards in core areas** for primary, elementary, and secondary students, administer province-wide tests to monitor levels of achievement, and publicize test results.
- **establish specific schedules for school boards to reach national achievement standards in basic skills.**
- **gradually increase the proportion of school time** that is devoted to instruction until we achieve parity with the rest of Canada.
- **set clear standards of conduct** in all schools, and give schools and school boards the means to implement and maintain the standards.
- **put in place a network of counsellors, psychologists, and child welfare professionals** to work with schools, communities, and families to ensure that children get the protection and support they need.
- **take a child-centred approach to education**, whereby quality of education will be the main factor in determining the viability of schools, and parents will be part of the decision-making process.
- **create an independent provincial School Construction Board**, as has been agreed to by the stakeholders involved, and this board will have authority to approve spending on specific school construction projects.

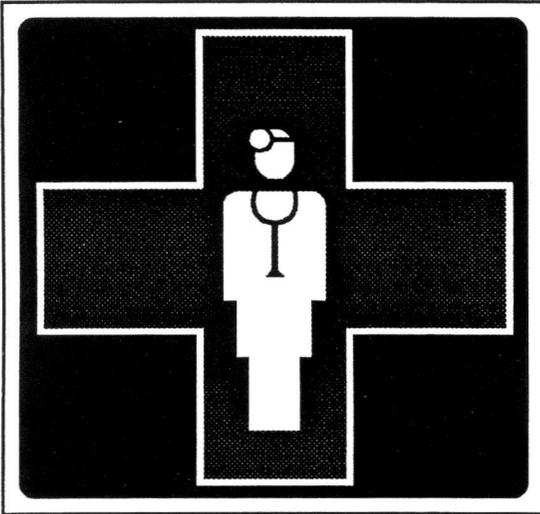
## Advanced Education Policy

A PC Government will:

- **develop linkages** among community colleges and Memorial University, and further reduce duplication at community colleges by consolidating programs in centres of specialization.
- **require the university and colleges to undergo regular "external" audits** and to publish the results, including details on income and spending.
- **cooperate with other Atlantic provinces** to reduce cost and build areas of excellence by encouraging colleges and universities to specialize within the region.

# HEALTH CARE AS A FUNDAMENTAL NEED

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THE PC PARTY IS committed to ensuring an acceptable level of health care for the people of the Province. Health care is seen by this Party as a fundamental need and right for all citizens and we are dedicated to providing the best possible health service to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Our Party is committed to excellence in child health. The needs of children as presently being met at the Janeway will be maintained and enhanced. The Janeway will continue as a discrete pediatric unit with its own space and dedicated pediatric staff.

Access to primary health care will be provided at the community level; new and innovative ways of delivery need to be developed with all the stakeholders. We must make better use and take full advantage of the skills of all of our health care professionals. Nurses must have more input into their roles in health care delivery. We need to support continuing and home-care services, particularly for the ageing population; the elderly should be looked

after in a setting as close to home as possible.

Secondary health care will be provided as appropriate at the regional level. Tertiary health care will be provided provincially. We will ensure the accountability of the health boards to the people of the Province. Mental health services will be increased and improved.

A PC Government will:

- **reaffirm its commitment to a national health care system based on the principles of comprehensiveness, universality, accessibility, portability, and public administration.**
- **pressure the Government of Canada to reverse its decision to implement major cuts in transfers for health care and post-secondary education.**
- **guarantee the Janeway Children's Hospital continues as a discrete pediatric unit with its own space and dedicated pediatric staff. We will halt the Liberals' recent decision to relocate the Janeway and close the Grace by 1998, until a thorough study of the options is completed.**
- **redirect resources away from wasteful administration and operation of facilities, and into patient care and consumer services.**

- **provide a comprehensive community support system** to help the elderly and people with disabilities remain independent and in their own homes, and ensure that adequate facilities and care are available for those who need nursing home or other institutional care. We will provide extra resources to Level-I personal care homes to enable them to care for residents requiring Level-II long-term care.
- **develop a network of appropriate facilities** throughout the Province — including the regionalization of specialty services, community clinics, and home-based health care — to ensure adequate services are available to all citizens.
- **enhance the support network for victims of abuse** by working with family resource centres, community groups, and other agencies.
- **expand mental health care, vision care, speech therapy and audiology, and rehabilitation services** as components of an expanded community health care system.
- **aggressively and creatively recruit and retain more physicians for under-serviced areas** by paying an incentive to physicians working in under-serviced areas.
- **provide education and counselling programs and services** that promote maintenance of healthy lifestyles and

the prevention of illness and accidents. We will do more to educate school children about the consequences of smoking.

- **ensure people in Labrador who are transported** to the Island for medical treatment at public expense are also transported back home at public expense.
- **restore the Labrador air ambulance transportation subsidy.**

### **Children's Health and Welfare Policy**

A PC Government will:

- **integrate services for children** provided by all relevant departments and agencies of government.
- **amend the Child Welfare legislation** to include youth between the ages of 16 and 18.
- **establish a Centre of Excellence in Child Protection**, in conjunction with Memorial University's Social Work, Medicine, and Education faculties and the Janeway Child Health Centre — an interdisciplinary program to train social workers and students, justice officials, the police, guidance counsellors, and health care professionals to deal with child abuse.

## HEALTH CARE AS A FUNDAMENTAL NEED

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- **reassign resources to establish a multidisciplinary network of counsellors and child welfare professionals** to work with schools, communities, and families to give children the protection and support they need.
- act to give social workers intervening in abusive and unhealthy family situations **increased access to mental health professionals.**
- ensure a greater measure of stability and permanence for **children placed in foster care.**
- **act to make the Province's justice system more responsive** to the special needs of children, to ensure the court room is a child-friendly environment, and to ensure child abuse cases are given early attention.
- **adopt a "caseload-cap" policy for child protection services,** in consultation with front-line workers and the Province's Association of Social Workers.
- **move quickly to introduce "Good Samaritan" legislation** designed to increase the donation of food to food banks.
- **treat child support and maintenance payments** as any other type of income for people receiving social assistance and cease to deduct these payments dollar-for-dollar.
- **establish and maintain acceptable standards in daycare and early childhood development programs,** and make professional support services available to encourage daycare operators to improve and maintain quality service. We will develop a policy on daycare for children under 2. We will maintain half-day kindergarten for five-year-olds.
- examine all policies and legislation in terms of their impact on the **family unit.**
- **improve our youth corrections process and facilities,** after a thorough investigation.

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