

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians:

After almost a decade and a half of Liberal government, many people are saying it's time for a change. We in the New Democratic Party agree – it's time for real change.

A real change in the way our province is run would make a big difference in the daily lives of our people. But you will not see that change come from simply flipping the Liberal/Tory coin.

We are inviting all voters to take a closer look at both the other parties. We think you'll agree that real change can happen only if we elect more New Democrats to the House of Assembly.

We need a real change in the way auto insurance operates in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We need real change to get control of our energy future in Newfoundland and Labrador.

We need real change to ensure electricity revenues and profits stay in the province, rather than building a financial empire for Fortis.

We need real change if we are to give our families a fairer future.

We need real change to protect and create jobs in our rural communities. We need fisheries policy that supports our communities and insists on rebuilding stocks.

If you want to improve everybody's quality of life and build a more equal and secure future, you need more New Democrats to fight to make it happen.

If we are to have confidence in ourselves – and our ability to build our own future based on fair treatment from Ottawa and a fair return from our resources, we need more New Democrats fighting to make it happen.

I invite you to take a closer look at all three parties and their plans. We think when you do, you'll vote for real change and put more New Democrats in the House.



Thank you,

Jack Harris, Leader
New Democratic Party of Newfoundland and Labrador

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The difference we've made

It doesn't take an election call for the NDP to listen to your concerns. We're here for people like you all the time, bringing the issues that matter to you to the House of Assembly and to the media.

Here are just a few highlights of the work Jack Harris and Randy Collins have done on behalf of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in the past few years:

- Exposed the inequalities of royalty returns from Voisey's Bay -- Canada will receive ten times the returns of the province!
- Called for more representation of women in the House of Assembly and recommended an appropriate election process based on a dual member constituency to ensure equality.
- Challenged the government on their support for private colleges and supported students victimized by the spectacular collapse of the Career Academy.
- Stood against the government in its effort to privatize Newfoundland Hydro
- Consistently led the debate for a universal hot-meal program for Newfoundland and Labrador school children.
- Campaigned for a higher minimum wage and more equitable social assistance payments.
- Fought for a home heating fuel rebate to combat high fuel prices for seniors, low-income citizens and social assistance recipients.
- Successfully lobbied for free school busing for all students in the St. John's area.
- Successfully lobbied government to add high-cost drugs to the provincial drug formulary for people suffering from Alzheimer's and fought to include Multiple Sclerosis drugs.
- Fought against the school fees that families pay for their children's "free" education.

Real Change

The New Democratic Party of Newfoundland and Labrador offers the people of the province real change. In this document, you will find concrete suggestions that would make the lives of you and your families better. Political change is coming to Newfoundland and Labrador. After this election, the House of Assembly will look very different. Electing more New Democrats will mean real change.

We believe our policies reflect the hopes and aspirations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. We invite you to read our platform and join the debate about the future of our province.

We invite you to vote NDP.

Public Auto Insurance – a real change

If you drive a car in this province, the government requires you to buy auto insurance. This law is supposed to protect innocent people from the often expensive and sometimes horrendous consequences of motor vehicle accidents.

It now seems that both the Liberals and the Conservatives want to protect insurance companies from the financial consequences of paying claims – and from their bad investments.

Premium costs have skyrocketed. More and more often, people with clean driving records find themselves unable to pay the costs of even basic insurance. And if you happen to have an accident you can forget the years you've

paid your premiums to your insurance company without making a claim.

If your insurance company pays a claim on your policy, your premiums are going way up – like the 50-year-old man, accident free for more than 30 years, who saw his premiums increase by \$5000 a year after he had filed a \$4000 accident claim. The situation is so bad that many people are reluctant to file claims at all, choosing to somehow absorb one-time repair costs rather than pay several times over through their insurance bills. Others are forced to choose to drive without insurance.

The solution, as the Conservatives see it, is to limit “minor” soft-tissue injury

compensation to \$2500. The Liberals want to create a two-tier insurance system where recovery depends on who hits you or whether you can afford high

premiums. Neither of these options does anything for the families of this province.

The real answer is a public auto insurance plan run by and for Newfoundlanders & Labradorians:.

Real change means:

- ◆ Savings of 25% - 50% for all drivers
- ◆ Reducing rates without reducing the right to sue
- ◆ Public insurance with a proven record of delivering among the lowest rates in the country year after year
- ◆ No rate discrimination based on age or gender
- ◆ Keeping reserves for claims invested in the province rather than the stock market
- ◆ Opportunities for investment in road safety and driver safety to reduce accidents and lower rates even further
- ◆ No costs to taxpayers for real reform

Newfoundland & Labrador Energy Corporation – a real change

We hear over and over that Newfoundland and Labrador is rich in resources.

Our offshore oil and gas should be combined with our potential to generate electricity from our rivers and waterfalls to bring real and tangible benefits to the communities of our province. Instead, we have two separate companies producing and distributing our electricity. Big oil companies and the federal government grab all but a small portion of offshore revenues. Electricity costs go up every year for Newfoundland and Labrador

families, while Fortis, the owner of Newfoundland Power, invests billions of dollars outside the province based on the revenues from local ratepayers.

People in a province rich with energy resources should not have to pay such a large share of their income for energy. And without active conservation programs and a commitment to developing alternative energy sources, we are forced to burn oil to create electricity without any significant investment in alternatives like wind power and natural gas.

Real Change means:

- ◆ Creating a new public corporation, the Newfoundland and Labrador Energy Corporation to include the following:
 1. The existing Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro generation and distribution assets
 2. All the assets related to the Upper and Lower Churchill
 3. The generation and distribution assets of Newfoundland Power
 4. A Newfoundland and Labrador equity stake in offshore oil and gas developments, starting with the existing Government of Canada share of the Hibernia project

- ◆ Creating a new and invigorated public corporation with a broad mandate in electricity generation and distribution, research and development, energy conservation and alternatives, and an agenda to do this for the economic and social benefit of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians

- ◆ Creating jobs by investing in wind generation and other alternate technologies including gas development

- ◆ Keeping profits in the communities of Newfoundland and Labrador

- ◆ Having an engine of economic growth and development for us like Hydro Quebec is for the people of Quebec

- ◆ Having a vehicle for conservation projects and a tool for new energy policy to maximize the benefits to this province of all our electricity resources

Improving Democracy – a real change

New Democrats believe that democracy is not working for the ordinary people of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is too much power in the governing party, too much patronage, too much access by the powerful who finance elections. And we have a House of Assembly that doesn't reflect the voters, either by gender or by party support. We believe that significant change needs to take place.

Our first past the post system of voting doesn't translate into fair representation in the legislature and a vote for a candidate or party that doesn't win a district isn't counted in deciding who sits in the House of Assembly. We believe that every vote should count and this can best

be done by proportional representation – the standard for democracies around the world.

The present method of election financing leaves control of parties and the agenda of elected government in the hands of those who can pay. It's no wonder the corporations and the wealthy benefit disproportionately from government policy. We think that only individuals should be allowed to contribute to a political party and there should be strict limits on the total annual contribution.

Many people are disgusted at the way individuals can switch parties to suit their own self-interest, even after they have been elected under another party.

Up to now the Premier can call an election whenever it suits

him, taking advantage of a crisis or an upswing in the polls. This leaves the electorate open to manipulation and breeds cynicism about politics.

Finally, public faith in government requires transparency in government operation. The manipulation of government by lobbyists betrays that public trust.

Real Change means:

- ◆ Establishing a commission to investigate and report on the best way to introduce proportional representation to the Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly and appointing a select committee of the House to find a way to best obtain gender equity
- ◆ Changing the law on election financing to allow only individual contributions to an annual maximum of \$1,000.
- ◆ Holding a by-election if an MHA wishes to change parties
- ◆ Fixed term elections every four years, with provisions for interim elections if the governing party loses the confidence of the House of Assembly.
- ◆ Giving more independence and resources to committees of the House
- ◆ Limiting confidence matters to budgets and other major issues of government policy or direction, allowing members to vote their conscience for most policy and legislation
- ◆ Registration of lobbyists and their clients, a depository for contracts and stiff penalties for non-compliance.

Strengthening & Protecting Public Services & Jobs – a real change

The NDP says no to P3s

In a misguided effort to make up for its cutbacks and downsizing, the government has proposed entering into partnership with the private sector in the areas of healthcare and education.

The P3 myth is that government saves money and provides vital service without having to make major investments. The reality is that the public pays more for fewer services, and that private companies make profits on public services. In Nova Scotia, P3 schools put gym rentals out of

reach for youth organizations and sports leagues and were so costly the government had to reverse its decision to use P3 for development. Experiments with contracting out food services in Newfoundland and Labrador hospitals have meant families must bring food to loved ones because the quality of hospital food has deteriorated.

When P3s enter the picture, government evades responsibility, big business makes profit, and people suffer.

Real change means:

◆ Refusing to enter into P3 agreements for public services in health care and education

The NDP says yes to public services and jobs

The public service is not a number that can be cut or pared down to fit badly-conceived government budget plans. Public employees are people, people who live in your community, people

who work hard to provide the services on which we all depend.

They are nurses, school carpenters, snowplow operators, water inspectors, teachers and thousands of others.

Real change means:

- ◆ Enhancing public services, not paring them down
- ◆ Saying no to privatization
- ◆ Recognizing the important contribution the public sector makes to our economy
- ◆ Realizing that cutting public sector workers, even by attrition, reduces public services, stifles hope for young people and reduces the opportunity of good jobs for women.

The NDP says yes to safe and affordable housing

There's a place where some families pay 50 to 80 per cent of their income to rent a roof over their heads, where that roof often leaks and covers a home that is in dangerously bad repair.

That place is our province; the problems worsen every year.

Years of neglect and underfunding of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation

have resulted in today's desperate lack of affordable, decent housing for low-income families and individuals. Among the worst hit are single parent families and older women, who find skyrocketing rents pushing up against their fixed incomes.

In many parts of the province, rental units aren't even available.

People who live in boarding houses live in dangerous conditions. It's more than the non-compliance with safety codes. It's landlords who refuse to allow deadbolts on doors and who force

tenants to stay outside for most of the day. Women are particularly at risk in these situations.

Our seniors deserve special attention from us. Too often, they are forced to leave the homes they've had for years when simple modifications would let them stay where they are.

And who would ever have thought that here, in the communities of Newfoundland and Labrador, we would have such a rapidly-increasing number of homeless people?

Real change means:

- ◆ Investing in new affordable social housing and making necessary repairs to existing units
- ◆ Funding NLHC to modify homes so seniors and people with disabilities don't have to move
- ◆ Improving Landlord Tenant legislation, strengthening tenant rights and stiffening penalties for landlords who fail to keep units in good repair

Education: a right, not a privilege – a real change

Early childhood education

All children, wherever they live in the province, whatever their family's income level, deserve an equal start in life. As more and more research demonstrates the importance of early learning experiences to future academic success, our government ignores the needs of our youngest citizens, leaving the important work of

child education and care to an unequal patchwork quilt of public and private, large and home-based, paid and unpaid caregivers.

Childcare providers who hold one of society's most important jobs –the care and early education of our young -- are dedicated, well-trained people and grossly underpaid.

Real change means:

- ◆ Developing childcare/ECE solutions according to needs of communities and parents
- ◆ Working to make ECE available to children from as many families as possible
- ◆ Supporting the people who provide early education to our children

K-12 system

When our children go to school, we expect they're headed for a day of stimulating learning in an environment where each child is equally nurtured. Sadly, this is not the case for too many of the children of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Study after study shows that 25 per cent of the province's children go to school hungry, while scores of experts have linked the importance of good nutrition to academic achievement. A dedicated but uneven network of volunteers and charitable organizations struggles to bring nourishment to children in need.

Teachers struggle with new curricula in overcrowded classrooms. We have seen larger

schools slash music, art, and physical education programs, and rural high schools are forced to offer courses like biology through internet delivery.

Parents dip into grocery budgets to pay for a school's photocopying and textbooks in order to save their children the stigma of being labeled poor.

Children need safe environments for growing and learning. But many are forced to walk alongside major highways with no sidewalks to get to their schools. Also far too many of them face physical violence and emotional abuse from other students.

It's time to put our children first.

Real change means:

- ◆ An anti-bullying program (including racism and sexism awareness) for every school
- ◆ A school meal program for every school including nutrition awareness/healthy food choices programs
- ◆ Eliminating school fees and charges for textbooks
- ◆ Instituting full-day kindergarten
- ◆ A more flexible school busing policy so children get to school safely
- ◆ Developing a more responsive and realistic teacher allocation formula following consultations with school boards, teachers and parent groups to realistically reflect the needs of today's classrooms

A Commitment to Public Post Secondary Education

Years ago the public college system of this province was gutted, an action that paved the way for private colleges that charge extremely high tuition fees and whose graduates have problems

finding work. Hopeful young adults invest tens of thousands of dollars to train for a better future, only to find that the diplomas they worked so hard to obtain qualify them for at best a minimum wage

position and at worst for nothing at all.

In a province with significant illiteracy rates, Adult Basic Education is often difficult if not impossible to access.

Government relies on dedicated and underfunded volunteer groups to take on the enormous challenge of bringing basic literacy to adult learners – or it leaves the problem to private schools and learning centers.

Adult learners are also in trouble if they want to retrain for new careers. Long waiting lists and limited offerings mean our public college system simply cannot train a skilled and dynamic workforce.

And the major support for students is a student loan system that ensures they'll be paying interest to a major bank for years after they graduate.

Real change means:

- ◆ An expanded role for the public college system to deliver needed programs including adult basic education and training for relevant in-province occupations
- ◆ Continuing to reduce, with a goal of eliminating, tuition fees for public post secondary students in Newfoundland and Labrador
- ◆ A revised needs-based student grants program to achieve universal access
- ◆ Ending the offloading of basic literacy efforts to communities and the voluntary sector
- ◆ Working with unions and employers to make apprenticeship training available to students who finish qualifying trades programs
- ◆ Supporting programs that provide opportunities for women to access training in the trades and technologies sectors

Health Care that's there when you need it – a real change

Community health clinics

In communities large and small, people need to know that vital health care will be there for them when they need it. Doctor shortages, waiting lists, and limited access to pharmacies, allied health professionals and mental health services are some of the failings of our system.

Doctors leave our rural communities because they burn out. Working on call 24 hours a day and seven-day weeks without adequate leave will do that. Emergency rooms are overused, often by people who know this is the only way they can get any medical attention.

Real change means:

- ◆ Expanding on the model of multi-disciplinary community health clinics, providing access to nurses, doctors, prescription drugs, and mental health services at one community site
- ◆ Giving nurses, nurse practitioners and allied professionals an increased role in these clinics
- ◆ Community consultation would help determine the health care services that are appropriate and necessary for each area.

Medical Transportation Costs

We're a small population spread over a large geographic area, and sometimes we're forced to travel great distances to see medical specialists or benefit from specialized testing. Depending on the distance they live from a major centre, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador sometimes face enormous costs

and inconvenience to get the health care they need.

No one in this province should have to bear exorbitant travel costs to access the health care others can take for granted. The problem is particularly acute for Labrador residents, who often have to pay significant air travel costs.

Real change means:

- ◆ Extending the \$40 flight cost now available in parts of Labrador to the people of Labrador West
- ◆ Increasing transportation subsidies to Labradorians who must travel to the island portion of the province for medical services not available in Labrador
- ◆ Reviewing medical transportation subsidy programs to ensure consistency and fairness within the province

Drug costs

Advances in medical treatment and drug therapies means people are released earlier from hospital and are increasingly reliant on home-based treatment for conditions that were once exclusively treated in hospitals, where the cost of drugs is covered like any other part of medical care.

Our families too often face financial disaster because of the

high cost of prescription drugs. And even those eligible for provincial government support find that the medications their doctors recommend are not included in the Provincial Drug Formulary. Too often our families, friends and neighbours are forced to live knowing there is a medicine that would help their illness, but it is financially beyond their reach.

Real change means:

- ◆ Developing and implementing a support program to cover catastrophic drug costs for our working families
- ◆ Upgrading the provincial drug formulary to include all medications approved by Health Canada for treating a specific illness
- ◆ Fighting for the long-overdue national pharmacare plan recommended in the Romanow Report, and pressing Ottawa to pay its fair share

Rebuilding and diversifying rural communities – a real change

The Fishery

The last decade has been a heartbreaking one for our rural communities, many of which have been devastated by out-migration. Tens of thousands of people have left the province since 1991, most of them young Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who see no future for themselves in the towns and communities in which they grew up. In addition to people migrating out of the province, many families have migrated to larger centres within the province.

Those who remain in the fishery are nearly crippled by the

costs of vessels and licenses, and have to turn to fish companies for their financing needs. The cost of insuring vessels has risen 200 to 300 per cent. And while fishing families struggle to stay in the traditional life that sustained us for so many centuries, fisheries are closed without recovery plans and Canada continues to stand by while foreign fishing boats plunder stocks.

We must restore the health of our rural communities.

Real change means:

- ◆ Requiring processing licence holders to add value to the products they export.
- ◆ Creating a marketing development plan for the fishing industry.
- ◆ Fighting for cost-shared federal/provincial early retirement and licence buyout programs for processing workers and harvesters
- ◆ Re-establishing a Fisheries Loan Board with a mandate that would include loans for both vessels and licences
- ◆ Getting federal and provincial governments working with communities to develop a plan for rebuilding cod stocks
- ◆ Demanding custodial management of the fish stocks on the nose and tail of the Grand Banks.
- ◆ Reviewing the feasibility of including fishing boats up to 65 feet in length in plans for public insurance.

Communities

As people are forced to move away, government policy seems designed to speed them on

their way. Rigid formulas for assigning teachers to schools means that school boards are

unable to staff classrooms, and are forced to close schools. This in turn further weakens communities by taking away the meeting places and facilities such as gymnasias and libraries.

Children have to travel up to an hour each way on school buses. In addition to the implicit dangers of this much highway time, they suffer because they cannot participate in activities like team sports and other extracurricular activities.

We have a rural heritage of which we are justly proud, but the

energy and creativity of our people languish while government policy seems designed to keep moving them away. At the same time as the world is noticing our tourism potential, our government is developing transportation policies that keep people away.

The traditional buildings and lifestyle of rural Newfoundland and Labrador are enormously attractive to visitors from away. Our artists and craftspeople, unmatched in the world, keep them coming back. their dedication to historic

Real change means:

- ◆ Stopping the closing of schools and other community-sustaining infrastructure
- ◆ Building links between our fishing and tourism industries
- ◆ Supporting economic diversity

Tourism and Culture

Our culture is a vital part of who we are as a people. Our artists are internationally renowned for both

The province's tourism

industry is expanding rapidly, as people from all over the world come to visit and enjoy our beauty, our communities, and the artistic and cultural experiences here. The NDP recognizes the importance of tourism and culture and would substantially increase support for them.

Our artists, as indisputably good as they are, get spotty funding project by project, and have difficulty developing the organizational infrastructure they need to establish permanent presence. Professional development opportunities are

rare.

Training is also an issue in other areas of the tourism industry. For many of our people, access to educational programs is difficult. The physical distance that separates so many of the diverse areas of the province often bars artists from appreciating each others' work.

Even though our children are growing up surrounded by one of the richest cultures in the world, they can often tell you more about music videos and Hollywood movies than our own artistic treasures.

Real change means:

- ◆ Increasing support for arts organizations in the province.
- ◆ Ensuring program support to allow schools to have arts programming.
- ◆ Establishing a high school course in Newfoundland and Labrador history and cultural heritage, including Aboriginal and Francophone cultures.

Real change means:

- ◆ Giving schools greater access to community cultural activities such as performances, museums, libraries, festivals and exhibitions
- ◆ Providing training subsidies and other financial support for professional development of artists and arts educators, and creating training programs in strategic areas
- ◆ Promoting awareness of the contribution of the arts to community and social development
- ◆ Increasing the provincial tourism marketing budget, and promoting cultural tourism products in national and international markets.
- ◆ Consulting with community organizations, regional economic development boards, tourism associations, heritage societies and arts organizations.

A fair share of resources

Part of the strategy for economic diversification is to make certain we get a fair share of all our resources. One of the leading new industries in Newfoundland and Labrador is offshore oil and gas.

For too long, the people of the province have received too small a share of the benefits of the development of these resources, as government after government traded away long-term returns for short-term job creation.

We have the opportunity now to ensure that future development guarantees greater benefits for all our communities. Getting a fairer return on our

resources will provide the jobs and government revenue needed to sustain and develop communities across the province.

Real change means:

- ◆ Taking action now so we don't lose our chance at offshore revenue to Ottawa
- ◆ Requiring a full public review of the royalty regimes for our offshore oil and gas
- ◆ Ensuring any future project that requires us to share the risk of development costs makes us real partners in the profits.

Infrastructure

Our province needs an efficient, high quality and safe network of highways, railways, ferries, ports and airports to move goods and people, support its primary and secondary producers, and allow its industries to thrive.

We need well-resourced libraries for all our communities, and we need schools that are safe.

Developing infrastructure is not an end in itself, but a way to enhance every aspect of life in this province.

Real change means:

- ◆ recognizing the importance of the public library system to the community, and providing funding to increase the number of libraries, their resources, and their accessibility
- ◆ Making the completion of the Trans Labrador Highway a priority
- ◆ Improving air and ferry services throughout the province
- ◆ Stopping the closure of schools and other community-sustaining infrastructure

Standing up for Working Families – a real change

Home heating costs

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians work hard to provide for their families' needs.

Sometimes it seems like it's impossible to get any kind of break. When the price of essentials – like heating your home in the

winter – is out of reach, it's doubly unkind to have to pay an extra 15 per cent on top of rising rates.

Governments should not reap extra revenues because the cost of fuel is spiraling out of control.

Real change means:

- ◆ Removing the HST from home heating fuel and electricity

Minimum wage

Too many of the people we talk to every day are trying to raise their families on a wage that is far short of any poverty line you choose to use as a definition.

In stores, restaurants, and service industries, minimum wage earners toil for the minimum wage of \$6 an hour – before taxes and other deductions. A full-time job for a

whole year would not earn a person enough to reach the poverty line.

The argument from some in the business community is that an increase would stifle job creation, but research shows that increasing the minimum wage stimulates local

economies by increasing the spending power of low-income earners.

Most economists recognize that an increase in the minimum wage results in almost all the additional income being spent immediately in the local community.

Real change means:

- ◆ Immediately increasing the minimum wage to eight dollars an hour

Sunday shop closing

Since Sunday shopping was introduced in Newfoundland and Labrador, it's meant convenience for a lot of people – but not for the people who work in the stores. Shop employees tell us that Sunday work takes away the only day most families have together.

The idea of Sunday shopping is entrenched for consumers here. But those of us who enjoy the benefits of weekend family time must recognize that all families deserve some time to relax with one another.

Real change means:

- Enforcing Sunday shop closing for at least four Sundays a year to allow families to enjoy special weekends together

Childcare

No one today would dispute the importance of early childhood education for the social and mental development of our children. But trained and caring professional providers yield other benefits for society, and allow parents to work outside their homes to support their families.

Low-waged earners and students, especially, cannot afford full-time childcare for preschoolers, and often have trouble finding an after-school program their children can attend.

And when this happens people who want to work are unable to join the paid workforce or school-aged children are left

alone well before they are ready for this responsibility. The people who do this very important work make little more than minimum wage.

Too often, parents are dependent on extended family to care for their children. Quality time with grandchildren shouldn't have to extend to being a full-time unpaid caregiver.

Not every childcare model works for every child. Not all childcare models would work in every area of this province. But we must make every effort to ensure that every parent who wishes to enter the paid workforce should not be denied access to childcare.

Real change means:

- ◆ Developing a provincial childcare strategy in consultation with parents and following examination of models in place elsewhere.
- ◆ Ensuring that caregivers' earnings are adequate so we don't continue to lose these valuable workers to other occupations and jurisdictions

Returning to work

Because we are a caring society, we help people who, for one reason or another, are not able to work. Sometimes those who cannot work (particularly those on income support) receive government health cards as part of their benefits, but in Newfoundland and Labrador, once they return to work those benefits are recalled after six months even if they are only receiving minimum wage.

In order to properly control even a relatively mild case of childhood asthma, a parent without prescription drug coverage can expect to spend about \$1000 a year – hard to do if your annual salary is \$12,000. And if you have to assume new costs (such as childcare and work clothes), any financial incentive to returning to the workforce is completely lost.

The cycle of poverty continues thanks to short-sighted government policy.

Real Change Means

◆ Basing continuation of drug benefits on income level, not an arbitrary cutoff date.

Fairness

We like to think our society offers equal opportunities to all. We've moved a long way towards

that goal in the past few decades, but we still have some distance to go. People with disabilities still face

enormous challenges getting equal treatment in the workplace.

More and more of the jobs created today are part-time, temporary, or contractual. For many people, their entire working lives may be spent in such employment; they may never enjoy the benefits of health insurance or a pension plan.

And while some people struggle to find work, others work incredible amounts of overtime.

Many are struggling to find a balance between family responsibilities and paid employment.

Real change means:

- ◆ Removing barriers and creating a supportive environment so all people with disabilities can achieve equality
- ◆ Improving employment provisions for temporary contract workers
- ◆ Prorating benefits for part-time workers
- ◆ Finding ways to redistribute working time through limits on overtime, job sharing and enhanced leave provisions

Real Equality for Women – a real change

Harassment-free workplaces

Many workers still do not have sexual harassment-free workplaces.

Women forced to deal with ongoing abuse find getting satisfactory resolutions to their complaints isn't easy, and the processes for dealing with harassment often make the

situation worse for the victim.

Employer policies dealing with harassment are inadequate and employers often lack understanding and education on this important workplace issue.

Real change means:

- ◆ Developing a program to ensure that all workplaces create an environment of respect for employees and where ignorance can no longer be an excuse for sexual or other workplace harassment
- ◆ A compliance regime modeled on the occupational health and safety programs of the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission

Pay Equity

The concept of equal pay for equal work is well-enshrined in our society. If two people have the same job description, they should get the same pay, regardless of gender or other factors. But the idea that people should be equally well-paid if they do work of equal

value isn't quite as well established.

The provincial government, having negotiated pay equity agreements with public sector workers, has mounted one legal challenge after another to avoid paying.

Real change means:

- ◆ A real commitment to pay equity for both the public and private sectors with appropriate legislation.
- ◆ Government compliance with the 1991 pay equity award in the public service

Equal representation in the House of Assembly

Our House of Assembly does not represent equally the men and women of the province. Only 8 of the current 48 members are women. Our party has established the Helen Fogwill Porter Fund to help promote and support women

candidates.

But more needs to be done. In 1992 the leader of the NDP presented a private member's resolution to the House to establish dual member districts, which would result in half the number of

districts, but with each one each represented by one man and one woman, guaranteeing immediate gender equity.

This is one solution, but not the only idea that should be thoroughly and seriously studied.

Real Change means:

- ◆ Establishing a Select Committee of the House of Assembly to study and investigate the issue of representation of women and report on ways to achieve gender equity in the Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly.

Ending violence

Violence against women and children remains a serious problem – assault by partners (or ex-partners) still results in too many instances of hospitalization, even death. Dedicated and under-funded non-profit agencies that help desperate women and children escape their tormentors are stretched to the limit.

The problem is compounded in isolated and rural communities.

It isn't feasible to have a full-time safe house in every town in the province, but neither is it acceptable to have women living in fear and danger. Even if a woman summons up the courage to leave a life-threatening situation, she has to choose between staying in the same community as her attacker or leaving her home to start again elsewhere.

Real change means:

- ◆ Safe house funding must be guaranteed and sustained
- ◆ In areas where full-time permanent safe houses are not feasible, we must identify alternatives for women and children in danger
- ◆ Toll-free crisis lines must be available throughout the province
- ◆ Violence prevention and intervention programs must become a priority
- ◆ Telling people about Victim Services and how to access its services

Women's Centres

The less than a dozen women's centers scattered around Newfoundland and Labrador are vital to the communities they serve. They are safe gathering places, resource centers, support groups, and so much more.

The volunteers and staff members of women's centers help women facing legal, domestic, and personal crisis. They research important issues like housing and

nutrition, offer courses in self-defense and home maintenance, and benefit the community in dozens of other ways.

An erratic granting process often means that the flow of work, what projects are taken on, and whether a center is able to pay its light bill, are dependent on bureaucracies. Women are concerned that the centers depend on short-term grants.

Real change means:

- Guaranteeing funding sufficient to sustain basic operations
- Seeking out and encouraging the independent opinions of women's centre boards and personnel.

Protecting the environment – a real change

Newfoundland and Labrador is world-famous for its unspoiled beauty. However, government has long ignored overflowing garbage dumps and air-polluting incinerators, and recently supported turning the unique landscape of Windmill Bight Provincial Park into a golf course.

Recycling, in Newfoundland and Labrador, through the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board, has failed to achieve its potential and is mismanaged through political agendas and interference by government.

As for papers, cardboards, organic waste, and non-beverage metal, plastic, and glass containers, they contribute to our overflowing landfill sites.

Two-thirds of our communities endured boil water orders in 2002 as existing water and sewer systems break down and water inspectors are laid off.

Government lays claim to developing an aquaculture industry while tons of raw sewage pour into our bays and harbours.

Real change means:

- ◆ Restructuring the MMSB to manage our recycling efforts
- ◆ Supporting the solid waste management plans

Real change means:

- ◆ Establishing clear guidelines for landfill site creation and management, including cleanup of older sites
- ◆ Committing to reducing landfill waste by 50 per cent
- ◆ Developing a comprehensive recycling program to support innovative reuses of materials including plastics, metals, and papers
- ◆ Committing to assisting municipalities in developing programs to reduce household garbage and to start projects such as community composting projects
- ◆ Guaranteeing clean water for all our communities
- ◆ Completing a system plan for protected areas

Justice for all – a real change

Working justice

Equal access to a good justice system is fundamental to a fair society.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, we face a severe shortage of Legal Aid services.

While the number of women phoning Women's Centres desperate for advice on custody,

access, violence, and child support is rising, accessing Legal Aid, particularly for the civil law and family court cases that affect our children, is increasingly difficult.

Court services in Labrador are inadequate, with unacceptable waits.

Real change means:

- ◆ Reviewing the way the justice system treats victims of crime, especially women who are subject to violence, and a full review of how the police and justice system deal with alleged criminals in light of our recent record of wrongful convictions
- ◆ Making the justice system accessible for all regardless of income level or geographic location
- ◆ Developing in consultation with lawyers and consumers a better Legal Aid plan that adequately addresses peoples' needs for legal services.

Citizens' Representative

The abolition of the office of Ombudsman by the Liberal government of Clyde Wells was a backwards step so the creation of the office of Citizens' Representative was a welcome

move. However, the office has been underfunded to the point that serious questions arise as to the government's commitment to the office.

Real change means:

- ◆ Ensuring the Citizens' Representative has the resources required to properly discharge the responsibilities of the office as requested in his first report to government

Building Labrador – a real change

Transportation

Labrador is two-thirds of our province's land mass. If transportation is a challenge in the province as a whole, it is a special problem in Labrador. The people in some parts of Labrador rely on a ferry schedule determined in St. John's for food, fuel, and other necessities. Other Labradorians are served by the Trans Labrador Highway - 600 km of desolate dirt road. Government refuses to chip seal the TLH until it conducts a feasibility study; meanwhile, chip seal has been studied, applied, and

approved countless times just across the border in northern Quebec.

Wherever you live in Labrador, you're a long way from a lot of health services. Sometimes the only feasible way to travel is by air. And with deregulation and lack of subsidies, air travel is incredibly expensive for Labradorians – and often seats are unavailable when they are needed for medical or bereavement reasons.

Real change means:

◆ Making completion of the Trans Labrador Highway a priority

Real change means:

- ◆ Instituting a major review of essential ferry services
- ◆ Improving subsidies for health-related travel
- ◆ Developing a plan to make seating available for medical and compassionate airline travel
- ◆ Ensuring timely return by air ambulance for those discharged from medical treatment without requiring another medical emergency before they can be returned to Labrador.

Tourism

As a place rich in history, scenery and recreational opportunities, Labrador has incredible potential for a greatly expanded tourism industry. Visitors would come year round if it were made easier for them to do

so. A stable Labrador tourism industry could include cruise ship visits, archaeological tours, winter recreation, hunting, and eco-tourism – but requires adequate support from government.

Real change means:

- ◆ An improved transportation system
- ◆ Assisting the development of ski and snowmobile facilities in Labrador City and elsewhere in the region
- ◆ Including Labrador tourism representatives in all marketing plans for the province.

Respect for Aboriginal Peoples – a real change

Our province's aboriginal heritage is rich, but historically we have had a poor record of respect and recognition for their cultural values and inherent rights.

This has changed in recent years and the Innu Nation and the Labrador Inuit Association have succeeded in gaining a large measure of self-determination in planning and building their future. We have seen slow progress towards the completion of land claims negotiations and have seen development agreements on resource issues such as the Voisey's Bay development and forest management.

We must build on the success of these negotiations and

cooperation with the Inuit and Innu of Labrador. We would work with the Labrador Metis Nation to give effect to the rights recognized by the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision which gave legal recognition to the Labrador Metis after many years of effort and struggle.

In Newfoundland the Conne River Mi'kmaq have made great strides, but other M'ikmaq throughout the province who do not benefit from treaty status have a long way to go to get the recognition and support they deserve.

Real Change means:

- ◆ Including the Mi'kmaq throughout the island of Newfoundland in formal negotiations for recognition of their status and rights as aboriginal people, and ensuring that the Newfoundland and Labrador government cooperates fully and supports the Mi'kmaq and their representatives in this effort.

- ◆ Supporting the needs of aboriginal communities in Labrador for
 - aboriginal language daycares, so children can learn and be spoken to in their own language
 - community sports facilities and promoting nutrition for children in Aboriginal communities
 - community co-operative freezers
 - combining treatment facilities with outpost camps, run by trained Aboriginal councilors
 - adequate translation for Aboriginal people who need medical care, or are involved in the justice system.