

Prairie Manifesto Project

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Province: Alberta Saskatchewan Manitoba

Party: LIB Election Year: 1971

AA = Alberta Alliance
CON = Conservative Party
LP = Liberal-Progressive Party
PC = Progressive Conservative Party
SKP = Saskatchewan Party
UFM = United Farmers of Manitoba

CCF = Cooperative Commonwealth Federation
LIB = Liberal Party
NDP = New Democratic Party
SC = Social Credit
UFA = United Farmers of Alberta
WCC = Western Canadian Concept

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AB = Alberta
SK = Saskatchewan
MB = Manitoba

UofA = University of Alberta
UofC = University of Calgary
UofR = University of Regina
UofS = University of Saskatchewan
UofM = University of Manitoba
BU = Brandon University

PARC = Provincial Archives
LEG = Legislative Library
SPC = Special Collections
ULIB = University Library

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AUGUST 4, 1971

POLICY STATEMENT

LIBERAL PARTY OF ALBERTA

1971 PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Bob Russell

Leader

Liberal Party of Alberta

I N D E X

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Mobile Labs.
8. Line of Credit Financing
9. Land Use Plan
National Marketing Legislation
10. Alberta Power & Water Authority
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The Consumer
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Natural Resources Royalties
13. The Environment
Large Cities
14. Native Peoples
15. Conduct of the Legislature.

The 1971 Alberta Provincial Election Platform of the Liberal Party of Alberta has been drafted after a great deal of discussion and study regarding two critical areas of concern to the people of Alberta:

JOBS - AND - THE QUALITY OF LIFE

We believe that every Albertan is concerned about the future of this Province. Will there be enough jobs ... will Albertans have an opportunity to invest in the resource industries of Alberta ... will our small communities remain strong and healthy ... will our farmers be able to earn a decent living for their efforts ... will we be able to enjoy our lakes, rivers and forests... and will we be able to look forward to our senior years with confidence?

We believe that every young person who has grown up in Alberta has a right to a good job here in Alberta, where they can build their homes and raise their families in prosperity.

We believe that all Albertans have the right to enjoy a good life in this Province, and that they should be able to look forward to their senior years with the expectation of doing the things they have wanted to do without a burden of fear and apprehension.

We believe that Albertans have a right to invest in the industrial growth of Alberta and receive a personal benefit from our natural riches.

We believe that Alberta has a tremendous potential both for growth and for the provision of a QUALITY OF LIFE that can surpass any other area of North America. But these goals can only be reached by recognizing the problems that go with growth in a modern society and by a political party that has the dedication to provide the solutions to these problems.

THE REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE

We believe that the Liberal Party of Alberta presents the reasonable alternative to the conservative consensus in the Alberta Legislature.

The Liberal Party of Alberta under the Leadership of Bob Russell can have a voice in the Legislature and provide the reasonable alternative that is essential to Alberta's future.

JOBS FOR ALBERTANS

We intend to change the pattern of exploitation of Alberta's natural resources to one of development of secondary industry in the production of more finished products.

This will mean government initiative in three areas:

1. A comprehensive study of our industrial potential based on the primary resources. This would include an independent outside study of the natural gas reserves in this Province on a district basis. We want to know in detail where the timber, minerals, water, oil and gas is located in Alberta, what the reserves are in each area and what the potential is, based on global and pacific rim marketing prospects. In the interim, we would increase the gas reserves to 50 years.
2. We will provide funds at reasonable interest rates to municipalities in designated areas of Alberta outside the two major cities to enable these smaller cities and towns to establish industrial parks. The money would be provided to service the industrial parks with roads, water and utilities. These are major expenses which cannot normally be met under the present financial conditions imposed on municipalities, and yet are essential to the establishment of a stronger economic tax base to provide the growth of secondary industry in smaller centres.

3. Alberta's agriculture potential is greatly enhanced by the increased use of animal protein by the far eastern nations, particularly Japan and by the tremendous prospects of trade with mainland China. We would establish a team of food marketing specialists and researchers who would travel to China and Japan and study at first hand the market potential of Alberta's agriculture products.

THE QUALITY OF LIFE

1. Community Life

We believe that the continued growth of large urban sprawl, and what seems to be the inevitable problems related to the breakdown of human relationships and all its accompanying illnesses, must be seriously questioned.

We believe that there is a quality of life in the small communities worth preserving. We believe that the development of small communities near large urban areas can provide a much better life for the people of this Province.

We do not believe that bigness means more efficiency... or for that matter, that efficiency is the only criteria by which we should measure services for people.

Small communities have a community spirit... where people care about each other... where they are closer to their own local government... where local governments tend to work together for a common purpose rather than the advisory system that is constantly demonstrated in our large city councils.

We believe that definite steps must be taken through Regional Planning Boards for the establishment of satellite communities to the large urban areas.

This program will be brought about by three specific steps:

1. The initiative must be taken by our Regional Planning Boards. Future communities adjacent to large metropolitan areas must be set aside now, and the planning for transportation corridors, utilities and other essential services should be an ongoing matter.
2. The creation of a new concept in taxation must be established whereby the taxation base of an economic area would be combined, equalized and distributed to all the municipalities within the area. Each municipality would still have to raise local taxes and supplementary taxes to pay for the services and amenities they decided they wanted for their citizens.
3. Regional Transportation Authority. The establishment of such an authority which would have the responsibility for designing a rapid transit system for the region is imperative if we are to escape strangulation by the automobile. As each new community is established, some form of rapid transit could be provided even to the minimal extent of a collector system at an outlying central point.
4. Regional Water & Sewage Authority. Some ten municipalities now dump sewage in various degrees of treatment into the North Saskatchewan River in the immediate Edmonton area. The same is true of many other Alberta rivers. Yet we have no co-ordinating authority with any real power. We propose that this Regional Water & Sewage Authority be partially financed by the Provincial Government for at least 25% of the capital costs. Immense savings can be realized by bringing in the treatment of water and sewage under one authority and one system of major plants.

CLEAN UP PROGRAM

We call for a massive "clean up" program for our lakes and rivers. We would establish Regional Water & Sewage Authorities throughout Alberta over a period of ten years, dealing with the most critical areas first.

The provincial government would provide weed cutting machines and dredges to begin the cleaning of our lakes and rivers. An expanded Ecology Corp would employ students on a contract basis in co-operation with the Student Enterprises Loan Fund.

RECYCLING PLANTS

We would establish government-operated recycling plants for glass, paper, metal, cloth and other waste products, in conjunction with garbage packing plants to consolidate and sterilize certain wastes before being hauled away to land fill sites.

SOCIAL WELFARE

We are aware that any system of social welfare payments is subject to certain abuses by unscrupulous people. At the same time, there is an obvious and genuine need for an effective system to aid the less fortunate in our society.

Therefore we would concentrate upon eliminating specific abuses of the system. In particular, we would allow municipalities to place caveats upon property owned by welfare recipients who have indulged in second and third mortgage manipulations.

At the same time, we would attempt to solve a serious "drop out" problem that is specific to the teenager in a welfare family. We would provide increased regular assistance for dependent children in welfare families who continue their education in university, college or any recognized training institute. These allowances would be sufficient to enable them to dress properly and feel that they are a part of their peer group.

TAXATION REFORM

We would change the property tax system to the extent that we would immediately remove the practise of penalizing a family for improving their property. Home owner taxes would be a simple formula based on the size of the house and the size of the lot ... what a man does in improving the inside of the house is his own business.

OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST

Albertans should have the opportunity to invest in any foreign company that establishes in Alberta. We would allow foreign investment under new ground rules that would make it mandatory for foreign interests to form subsidiary companies in Alberta that would offer at least 55% of the equity shares to Albertans for the period of one year and a decreasing percentage of shares for the next five years.

KINDERGARTEN AND DAY-CARE CENTERS

A Liberal Government would provide government support of kindergartens through the School Foundation Fund and provide capital and operating funds to municipalities for the operation of a province wide day-care center program.

NATURAL RESOURCE LEVY FOR EDUCATION FINANCE

We would place a levy on all non-renewable natural resources exported from the Province of Alberta and place the revenue directly into the School Foundation Fund.

BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

The Liberal Party of Alberta would provide for the certification of a bargaining agent for the Civil Services employees of Alberta.

During the initial negotiations with the certified bargaining agent, a Liberal Government would endeavour to reach an agreement on a provision for

binding arbitration in essential services. These essential services would not be arbitrarily selected by the government, but arrived at through negotiations.

AGRICULTURE

1. The farmer still buys most of his equipment, supplies and material in a partially protected market where the increased earnings of organized labour are directly reflected in everything he buys.
2. The farmer still has to sell his products in a largely unprotected market place and his income has not kept pace with the rest of the economy.

There are no magic solutions, but we believe that we can at least begin to close the economic gap.

FARM COMMODITY INSURANCE

A Liberal Government would bring in a government operated complete line of commodity insurance for farmers covering animals and crops. The government would provide the initial funding and bear the administration costs of such a plan. It would be a vital form of insurance for everyone who is in danger of losing a crop or animals from hail, disease, flood, snow, frost, pests, etc.

MOBILE LABORATORIES

A Liberal Government would take more essential services to the farmer and therefore assist him in cutting down his operating expenses. Our mobile labs would make regular visits to districts and provide soil testing and preliminary testing for animal and crop disease, as well as dispense essential information of interest to the farmers in the specific areas that the lab is located.

VETERINARY SCIENCE COLLEGE

We propose that a new Veterinary Science College be established in central Alberta as part of the University of Athabasca near St. Albert. Farmers in central Alberta are raising an increasing amount of cattle, hogs, chickens and there is a heavy demand on the special services offered by veterinarians. Alberta must have its own veterinary college.

LINE-OF-CREDIT FINANCING

A Liberal Government has proposed to create a Bank of Alberta from the existing Treasury Branches. The Bank of Alberta would have a special Agriculture Department which would be directed to provide line-of-credit financing to Alberta farmers.

The credit needs of farmers will continue to increase in the future if farmers are to have the economic facilities to expand and make greater gains from better units of operation.

Farmers have borrowed on an item by item basis for years. A time consuming and often frustrating experience that has been discarded by most other businessmen years ago.

We believe that line-of-credit financing by the Bank of Alberta will meet the demands of modern farming.

1. A farmer would estimate his probable credit needs in advance. This calls for careful planning and a realistic assessment of the farm business throughout the year, plus a good relationship between the farmer and the Agriculture Branch of the Bank.
2. The farmer would be expected to monitor his performance and modify his operation when conditions warrant change and keep the Bank informed at regular periods regarding these adjustments.

3. The farmer would submit a profit and loss statement of his past operation along with a complete inventory of farm and personal resources.
4. Provide an operating budget for the following year's operation and submit a very simple cash flow sheet.

By setting up this system of line-of-credit financing used by modern business, we believe that a farmer will be able to operate more efficiently and save a great deal of time and money on the problems of financing.

LAND USE PLAN

The Liberal Party is concerned about the amount of good agricultural land that is being turned into small holdings, urban sprawl and industrial complexes near large urban centres.

We therefore propose that a "Land Use Plan" be established in Alberta that would provide guidelines for Regional Planning Authorities. Land is a unique resource that once destroyed can rarely be restored without high cost. It is imperative that we evaluate the land around our urban centres and determine its classification and possible future use.

Areas of high agricultural potential for market garden crops should be protected now since we may have to rely on these rich soils to feed more and more Canadians. Furthermore, proper planning can result in these protected areas providing excellent green belts between urban communities.

NATIONAL MARKETING LEGISLATION

We believe that, in the long run, the farmers must have more control of the marketing of their products if they are ever to receive a reasonable return for their labours and for their investments in machinery and land.

We believe that National Marketing Plans and systems are part of the answer to the problem, but it is essential that the farmer become more deeply involved in the preparation of the necessary legislation and in particular, that the farmer have majority control of all national systems.

The farmer should decide what commodities he wants brought under any national marketing scheme and at what time.

As the Provincial Government, we would undertake the responsibility for providing hearings throughout Alberta on the various forms of marketing legislation to be considered, and would provide^d discussion white paper on the establishment and function of provincial marketing boards which might come under Federal enabling legislation.

ALBERTA POWER & WATER AUTHORITY

A Liberal Government will create an Alberta Power and Water Authority which will be responsible For:

1. The construction of all dams in the Province of Alberta
2. The distribution of power in Alberta to:
 - a) Rural electrification associations
 - b) Municipalities
 - c) Private power companies.
3. Hold hearings on all proposed -
 - a) dams
 - b) diversion schemes
 - c) irrigation programs.
4. Establish Regional Water Boards.
5. Be invested with the power to investigate, hold hearings and grant applications for power franchises in Alberta .after first establishing as to whether the granting of any franchise to any private power company is in the public interest.

6. Establish a study on the long range needs for water in the Province of Alberta.
7. The Liberal Government will provide funds for the Alberta Power and Water Authority in order that the Authority may, on the request of any Rural Electrification Association or municipality, purchase the assets of that Association or municipality at a price to be negotiated and thereafter provide power directly from the Authority.

WOMENS LIBERATION

We believe that women cannot be truly liberated until we are able to provide them with certain essential freedoms to enable them to take advantage of the increasing number of choices open to the modern woman.

1. Day care centres for pre-school children.
2. Provincial government support for kindergarten and other forms of early childhood education.
3. A Provincial program of family planning and birth control information and facilities.
4. Together with an 'open admissions' policy for university and college entrance, grants and bursaries would be available for adult women students who are renewing their education.
5. Development of special classes within our educational system to enable women who have interrupted their education to "catch up" and "Brush up".
6. A complete study of our provincial legislation to ensure that no discriminatory legislation exists in our laws.

THE CONSUMER.

A Liberal government will establish a Department of Consumer Affairs.

The primary function of this department will be the education of the public and protection of the consumer. This department will also be responsible for:

1. The appointment of senior representatives to provincial marketing boards to represent the interests of the consumer.

2. Require the licensing of credit reporting agencies in order to regulate their activities in collecting and reporting information concerning individuals.
3. Require that a copy of an adverse credit report be made available to the individual concerned and in the event that the report is in error, requiring the agency to immediately issue a corrected report.
4. A consumer education program be established as part of the education curriculum in the Alberta school systems. This program should begin at the grade six level.

MEDICAL CARE COSTS

A Liberal Government would introduce legislation to eliminate the medicare premiums in the Province of Alberta. A more efficient and more fair income tax levy would be introduced to cover the cost of medicare in Alberta.

NATURAL RESOURCE ROYALTIES

A Liberal Government would conduct public hearings into a review of all royalty charges on natural resources. We believe that certain royalties are completely inadequate in this day and age and that Albertans are not benefiting to any extent that we could be from our natural heritage.

EXPROPRIATION

A Liberal Government would introduce legislation that would make it mandatory for any municipality or authorized authority to replace an expropriated home with replacement value if this is higher than appraised value. This would mean that it would be possible to replace a person's expropriated home with one of comparable value.

The ENVIRONMENT

We recognize the concern of all Albertans for preserving an environment in which future industrial and human growth can be achieved without detriment to one or the other.

With this in mind, we would carry out an immediate survey of all potential wilderness areas, in order to establish in perpetuity many new Wilderness Parks, large enough to make ecological sense.

In the case of all future strip-mining operations, a complete rehabilitation 'blue-print', together with adequate bonding, will require approval before any permits are issued. A system of forestry management licenses, revokable in the case of abuse or neglect, would be instituted in a similar manner.

We would establish an independent Pollution Control Commission, which would be responsible for the setting up and enforcement of standards of air, water, noise and soil pollution control.

And a number of Regional Parks and Recreation Commissions would be created for the purpose of ensuring the formation of the necessary increased leisure areas for the citizens of the province.

THE LARGE CITIES

We have expanded upon our view of the necessity for encouraging the growth of smaller urban areas as an alternative to the unlimited expansion of cities such as Edmonton and Calgary. This is because we recognize, as do these cities themselves, that such untrammelled urban sprawl is not in their best interests nor in the best interests of their surrounding areas.

At the same time, we also realize that the seeds of counteracting some of these associated problems lie in the base of the relationships between the cities and the provincial and federal governments.

We believe that those senior governments must accept such urban municipalities as a third and equal partner in the governmental structure of our country.

We would work to create a partnership between the province and these cities so that they would be in a position to broaden their tax base in order to cope with increasing needs and problems, and we would maintain standing committees to insure ongoing consultation on all matters of planning and policy-making that directly affects their future development.

Arising from this, we believe that the problems heretofore associated with big city growth can be averted in this province.

NATIVE PEOPLES

We will work with the native people of Alberta to assist them in the solving of problems facing their communities and their peoples.

While we see some developments taking place on Indian reserves as a result of their access to sub-surface mineral revenues, the Metis colonies, also on crown land, are denied access to such special funds for development purposes. We would bring in measures aimed at correcting this situation.

We would also establish a Native Development Agency. Working in conjunction with representatives of native organizations, this Agency would ensure that all proposed provincial development plans include the recognition of the needs and potential of native people, and would specify those particular resource needs -- financial, human, and physical -- desired by and included in the programs which they themselves would design.

For the Treaty Indian people of Alberta, we would assure access to all provincial services which they feel they need, and would do so without harm to their treaty relationship with the federal government.

In addition, we would urge the federal government to act immediately to clarify those issues -- the status of the treaties in today's world, the fulfilling of treaty promises, particularly in the area of land entitlement, and the settlement of aboriginal rights claims -- which are of prime concern to Alberta Indians.

CONDUCT OF THE LEGISLATURE

We cannot condone the continuation of two aspects of the provincial legislature which seem to have become ingrained in Alberta folk-lore. In the Alberta of the 70s, it is essential that adequate time be provided for the conduct of the public business in public. Thus we would terminate the custom of holding only a spring sitting of the House, and the execution of the province's business for the greater part of the year by order-in-council.

A Liberal Government would initiate regular Spring and Fall Sessions of the Legislature, the length of the sittings being commensurate with the volume of business to be enacted.

At the same time, we would institute the publication of an Alberta Hansard. As it now stands, we have no official public record of the proceedings of Alberta's parliament. In a day and age when legislators are preaching about the improvement of communications with the public, such a need can no longer be ignored or put aside.

OUR GENERAL AIM

We will not indulge in the practice, now being revived by both the Social Credit and Progressive Conservatives, of trying to "outgive" each other as a means of wooing the electorate.

We believe Albertans are tired of this 'once-every-four-years' cycle, and are not impressed by it.

Nor do we intend to conjure up wonderful visions of 'pie-in-the-sky' for Albertans -- visions which are incapable of being achieved without huge increases in public taxation, however much this aspect may be obscured in the standard campaign procedures.

We believe, and we reiterate this simple theme, that Albertans want the prospect of a decent job; the continuing prospect for jobs being available in the future; the prospect of a place to raise their families in confidence; the prospect of a province unravaged by irresponsible industrial exploitation; the prospect of a society in which all Albertans, young and old, native and foreign-born alike, may develop their talents and abilities, and enjoy the returns of this development.

Our policy is structured toward the achievement of these basic ends.