

Check Against Delivery

New
Nouveau  Brunswick

**SPEAKING NOTES
FOR
HONORABLE BERNARD LORD
PREMIER
TO THE
CANADIAN CLUB**

Royal York Hotel
Toronto, Ontario
February 7th, 2000

THANK YOU.

EIGHT MONTHS AGO TODAY, I HAD THE ENORMOUS PRIVILEGE OF BEING CHOSEN BY THE PEOPLE OF MY PROVINCE AS THEIR PREMIER.

THIS ELECTION HAS BEEN VARIOUSLY REFERRED TO AS A SURPRISE, AN UPSET, AND A MYSTERY – AND THAT WAS JUST MY FAMILY!

ACTUALLY, IT WAS ALL THREE – A SURPRISE TO THE PUNDITS, AN UPSET TO THE LIBERALS, AND A MYSTERY TO THE NDP.

I HAVE BEEN SERVING AS PREMIER FOR EXACTLY 232 DAYS – I’VE GOTTEN INTO THE HABIT OF COUNTING DAYS SINCE LAST JUNE 7TH – AND IN THAT TIME WE HAVE ALREADY SET NEW BRUNSWICK ON A NEW PATH OF CHANGE.

TODAY, I WANT TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT SOME OF THE HOW WE ARE CREATING A MORE COMPETITIVE, COMPASSIONATE NEW BRUNSWICK, THE CHALLENGES WE FACE AS A PROVINCE, AND ABOUT THE MOST IMPORTANT

CHALLENGE WE FACE AS A COUNTRY RIGHT NOW – SUSTAINING OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

LAST WEEK, I GAVE MY FIRST STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS. LET ME SAY TO YOU WHAT I SAID TO MY FELLOW NEW BRUNSWICKERS.

THE STATE OF OUR PROVINCE IS GOOD AND GETTING BETTER.

- ACCOMPLISHMENTS
- CHALLENGES
- OPPORTUNITIES

FOR EXAMPLE, LAST YEAR, THE ANNUAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WAS THE BEST IN 10 YEARS.

LAST MONTH, WE HAD THE BIGGEST PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN JOBS IN ALL OF CANADA. WE HAVE TODAY THE LOWEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN ATLANTIC CANADA.

ONE CITY, MONCTON, HAS THE SECOND OR THIRD LOWEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF ANY URBAN CENTRE ACROSS CANADA.

WE ARE ENJOYING THE BEST CAPITAL INVESTMENT YEAR IN OUR HISTORY.

THERE IS A GREAT MOOD OF OPTIMISM AND HOPE IN OUR PROVINCE.

BUT WE CANNOT PRETEND THIS IS ENOUGH.

UNEMPLOYMENT IS DOWN IN NEW BRUNSWICK BUT IT IS STILL 2-3 PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER THAN THE REST OF CANADA. AND CANADA'S, IN TURN, IS 3-4 PERCENTAGE POINTS HIGHER THAN OUR MAJOR COMPETITOR - THE UNITED STATES.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE SEE SOME CHALLENGES ON THE HORIZON.

OUR POPULATION IS AGING. IN 1980, LESS THAN 10% OF OUR POPULATION WAS OVER THE AGE OF 65. IN LESS THAN 10 YEARS, OVER 15% OF OUR POPULATION WILL BE.

SECOND, WE HAVE FEWER YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR PROVINCE. BETWEEN NOW AND 2011, WE WILL HAVE 30,000 FEWER STUDENTS IN OUR K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM – A DECREASE OF ABOUT 25%.

THIRD, THIS IS NOT UNIQUE TO NEW BRUNSWICK. THE FINANCES OF THE PROVINCE HAVE A STRUCTURAL FLAW. AN INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL AUDIT OF THE PROVINCE'S BOOKS UNDERTAKEN AFTER WE TOOK OFFICE, CONFIRMED THAT YEARS OF OFF-BALANCE SHEET FINANCING AND CREATIVE ACCOUNTING MEANS WE WILL BE FACING A \$425 MILLION DEFICIT WITHIN FIVE YEARS UNLESS WE ACT NOW.

TOGETHER, THESE AND OTHER TRENDS REQUIRE NEW THINKING AND NEW APPROACHES TO THE VERY ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN OUR SOCIETY.

TOO OFTEN, GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN CONTENT TO CONGRATULATE – THEMSELVES AND EACH OTHER – FOR STATISTICS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, PROGRAMS, AND NOTHING RIBBON-CUTTINGS. THEY GOVERNED FOR THE NEXT ELECTION, NOT THE NEXT GENERATION.

IT'S EASY TO CONFUSE ACTIVITY WITH PROGRESS. IN THE PROCESS, WE SHUT OUR EYES TO SOME CORE REALITIES. REALITIES THAT, IF NOT ADDRESSED, WILL DROWN OUR ABILITY TO PASS ON AN IMPROVED SOCIETY TO OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. AND COULD BE A MORE FUNDAMENTAL, MORE IMPORTANT GOAL THAN THAT.

THAT'S WHY WE ARE FOCUSED ON FIVE CLEAR PUBLIC PRIORITIES TO MAKE CERTAIN GOVERNMENT IS MEETING THE MOST IMPORTANT NEEDS OF NEW BRUNSWICKERS.

THESE FIVE PRIORITIES ARE:

- 1. CHANGING THE WAY GOVERNMENT WORKS**
- 2. RENEWING HEALTH CARE**
- 3. BUILDING NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES**
- 4. INVESTING IN EDUCATION**
- 5. MANAGING SMARTER AND LOWERING TAXES**

THIS IS OUR PLAN FOR NEW BRUNSWICK'S FUTURE.

ONE PART OF OUR PLAN WAS A SPECIFIC LIST OF 20 INITIATIVES CALLED – YOU MAY HAVE HEARD A LITTLE OF IT – 200 DAYS OF CHANGE.

200 DAYS OF CHANGE DEMONSTRATES CLEARLY TWO THINGS: FIRST, WE ARE MAKING THE CHOICES NECESSARY TO FOCUS ON CLEAR PUBLIC PRIORITIES SUCH AS CREATING 300 NEW, PERMANENT NURSING POSITIONS; HIRING 100 NEW TEACHING ASSISTANTS; CUTTING THE SIZE OF CABINET; AND, SECOND, WE ACTUALLY MEAN WHAT WE SAY.

EVEN THOUGH EVERY COMMITMENT WAS IMPORTANT, WHAT WAS JUST AS IMPORTANT WAS THE FACT WE HAD A PLAN AND THAT WE FOLLOWED IT.

200 DAYS WAS REALLY ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY. TELLING PEOPLE WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO, THEN TELLING THEM WHETHER OR NOT YOU HAVE DONE IT.

SO, HOW HAVE WE DONE ON OUR 200 DAYS OF CHANGE? WELL, WE FULLY COMPLETED 19 OF THE 20 SPECIFIC ITEMS. THE REMAINING ITEM – A CERTAIN TOLL HIGHWAY ISSUE - IS JUST ABOUT COMPLETED. WE CONTINUE TO MAKE PROGRESS ON IT.

200 DAYS OF CHANGE WAS ONLY OUR FIRST STEP IN OUR PLAN. CHANGE TAKES COMMITMENT. CHANGE TAKES A PLAN.

- ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN 21ST CENTURY

LET ME BE CLEAR. THERE IS A ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY GOVERNMENT HAS TO ALL ITS CITIZENS – RICH AND POOR, YOUNG AND OLD, THE SECURE AND THE VULNERABLE.

BUT TO TRULY FULFILL THAT ROLE AND HONOUR THAT RESPONSIBILITY, GOVERNMENT MUST CHANGE.

IN NEW BRUNSWICK TODAY, WE HAVE OVER 600 DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR A POPULATION OF ABOUT THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION PEOPLE. THAT'S ONE TAXPAYER-FUNDED PROGRAM FOR EVERY 1200 PEOPLE.

WE HAVE 244 ABCS – AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

PRIOR TO OUR ARRIVAL, NEW BRUNSWICK, THE THIRD-SMALLEST PROVINCE, HAD THE THIRD-LARGEST CABINET.

MORE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T EQUAL BETTER GOVERNMENT. ASK ANY TAXPAYER.

THIS PHENOMENON ERNMENT HAS GRADUALLY BECOME LARGER AND LARGER.

LEGITIMATELY, POLITICIANS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO RESPOND TO THE REAL AND PERCEIVED NEEDS OF A CHANGING SOCIETY.

THE RESULT? NEW PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN ADDED, PILED-ON, INCREASED, AND GROWN.

AND, WITH THAT, HAS GROWN A CYCLE OF PUBLIC SPENDING THAT HAS LED US TO THE DEFICIT AND DEBT SITUATION AFFLICING ALL CANADIANS. A SITUATION WHERE DEBT INTEREST PAYMENTS HAVE BECOME AMONG THE TOP TWO OR THREE FINANCIAL OUTLAYS OF ANY GOVERNMENT.

INEVITABLY, THERE COMES A TIME WHEN GOVERNMENTS HAVE TO GET OUT OF THIS FISCAL STRAIGHTJACKET. IN THE PAST, THIS HAS BEEN DONE BY SQUEEZING HERE, PARING THERE. ACROSS-THE-BOARD CUTS MEANT ACROSS-THE-BOARD INEFFICIENCIES AS THE PROGRAM OR SERVICE REMAINED, BUT WITHOUT THE REAL ABILITY TO DO THE JOB IT WAS MEANT TO DO.

NO ONE ASKED WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACTUALLY BE DOING THE JOB IN THE FIRST PLACE. THE RESULT IS MANY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS HAVE NOW OUTLIVED THEIR RELEVANCE AND THEIR USEFULNESS.

WE HAVE BEGUN TO CHANGE THAT.

ON OUR FIRST DAY, WE CUT THE SIZE OF CABINET BY 30%.

WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN A 6-MONTH ABC REVIEW OF ALL AGENCIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS TO DETERMINE THEIR ONGOING PUBLIC POLICY RELEVANCE. MANY WILL BE ELIMINATED.

WE SET UP A RED TAPE REDUCTION COMMITTEE OF PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERTS WITH A 6-MONTH MANDATE TO TELL US HOW TO CUT

GOVERNMENT RED TAPE – LICENCES, FEES, REGULATIONS, AND PAPER BURDEN - THAT AFFECTS JOB CREATION.

WE PUT A PUBLIC SERVICE HIRING FREEZE INTO PLACE AND JUST TEN DAYS AGO, ANNOUNCED A VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT WINDOW THAT WILL HELP US REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BY AS MUCH AS 10 PER CENT.

WE CUT THE NUMBER OF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS – SO-TERMED SPIN DOCTORS – BY 50 PER CENT.

AND, WE SET UP A SPECIAL WASTE REDUCTION TASK FORCE OF CABINET TO UNDERTAKE THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM AND SERVICE REVIEW EVER CONDUCTED IN THE HISTORY OF PROVINCE'S GOVERNMENT.

THIS REVIEW IS A NEW APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT; ONE THAT BEGINS BY ASKING THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF “WHY?”. WHY IS THIS PROGRAM OR SERVICE NECESSARY?

IN THE END, SOME PROGRAMS WILL BE ELIMINATED BECAUSE THEY ARE NO LONGER NEEDED. OTHERS WILL BE ENHANCED OR IMPROVED BECAUSE THEY ARE NEEDED. THE GOAL IS TO MANAGE SMARTER BY FOCUSING ON WHAT’S REALLY IMPORTANT TO PEOPLE. TO PROVIDE THE SERVICES NEW BRUNSWICKERS NEED AT TAXATION LEVELS WE CAN AFFORD.

LET ME ASK YOU THE QUESTION, IF WE DON’T MAKE THESE KINDS OF CHANGES WHEN THE ECONOMY IS GOOD, WHEN WILL WE? IF WE DON’T RESTRUCTURE KNOWING WHAT LIES AHEAD, WHAT EXCUSE DO WE HAVE?

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT LIES AHEAD IS THE MEDICARE WALL.

LET ME PUT IT CANDIDLY. IF WE DO NOT CHANGE THE SIZE, ROLE, AND STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT, WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO AFFORD OUR CURRENT HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. THE REVERSE MAY ALSO BE TRUE . IN FACT, EVEN THAT WILL NOT BE ENOUGH TO PRESERVE IT.

WE ARE FACING, ACROSS THIS COUNTRY, A MEDICARE WALL. A WALL THAT, IF WE DO NOT FIND A WAY TO BREACH, WILL UNDERMINE THE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM THAT CANADIANS EXPECT AND DESERVE.

LET ME PUT IT IN CONTEXT FOR YOU. IF WE ELIMINATED COMPLETELY OUR DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND ALL OUR FARMING PROGRAMS, THAT WOULD PAY FOR ABOUT ONE WEEK'S WORTH OF HEALTH CARE.

THIS YEAR, OUR HEALTH BUDGET WILL BE ABOUT 10% MORE THAN LAST YEAR. AT THIS RATE, OUR TOTAL HEALTH BUDGET WILL DOUBLE IN LESS THAN EIGHT YEARS.

THIS IS CLEARLY NOT SUSTAINABLE FOR A PROVINCE SUCH AS OURS, NOR IS IT FOR ANY OTHER.

THERE IS AN URGENT AND PRESSING NEED FOR MORE FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN HEALTH CARE NOW; NOT JUST TO IMPROVE THE SYSTEM, BUT TO MAINTAIN IT.

HEALTH CARE IS THE TOP PRIORITY OF CANADIANS. THEY ARE WORRIED AND ANXIOUS ABOUT IT. AND WITH GOOD REASON.

HEALTH CARE SHOULD BE THE TOP PRIORITY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN ITS BUDGET ON FEBRUARY 28TH. THAT WAS THE MESSAGE ALL PREMIERS RELAYED TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON BEHALF OF CANADIANS IN A LETTER WE SIGNED LAST THURSDAY AT A MEETING IN QUEBEC CITY.

CANADIANS EXPECT THEIR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO BE A FULL PARTNER IN GUARANTEEING OUR MEDICARE SYSTEM. THEY WANT AND EXPECT BOTH LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO WORK COOPERATIVELY TO PRESERVE HEALTH CARE FOR FAMILIES. THIS CANNOT HAPPEN WHEN OTTAWA CONTRIBUTES ONLY 13 CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS SPEND ON HEALTH CARE.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S INITIAL RESPONSE HAS, UNFORTUNATELY, BEEN DISAPPOINTING. HE APPEARS TO HAVE DISMISSED OUR REQUEST. I HOPE HE WILL RECONSIDER IN TIME FOR THE BUDGET. MR CHRETIEN HAS IN THE PAST BEEN A STRONG PROPONENT OF MEDICARE.

THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HIM AND HIS GOVERNMENT TO BECOME A CHAMPION ONCE AGAIN. TO BE A TRULY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, ONE MUST HAVE A NATIONAL VISION. CANADIANS HOLD HEALTH CARE DEAR. ONLY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CAN ADEQUATELY PRESERVE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND MEET NATIONAL NEEDS.

THE FEDERAL MINISTER OF HEALTH, MR ROCK, HAS SAID HE IS PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE 50% TOWARDS NEW HOME CARE PROGRAMS. HE WANTS MINISTERS OF HEALTH FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO MEET IN MAY TO DISCUSS THIS IDEA.

I SAY, "WHY WAIT?" WE ARE READY TO MEET NOW; BEFORE THE FEDERAL BUDGET.

WE ARE ALREADY CONTRIBUTING TO HOME CARE AND LONG-TERM CARE PROGRAMS WITHOUT 50 CENT FEDERAL DOLLARS. WE DON'T NEED NEW

“DESIGNER BOUTIQUE” PROGRAMS; WE NEED TO ADEQUATELY FUND THE ONES WE ALREADY HAVE.

IF MR ROCK IS PREPARED TO CONSIDER FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THESE ONGOING PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, NEW BRUNSWICK WILL WORK COOPERATIVELY WITH HIM.

I WOULD REMIND US ALL, HOWEVER, THAT MEDICARE WAS ORIGINALLY CREATED WITH 50 CENT FEDERAL DOLLARS. IT IS NOW SIGNIFICANTLY LESS THAN THAT. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT’S COMMITMENT TO MEDICARE MUST BE A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT.

WE ALSO KNOW THAT MORE MONEY BY ITSELF, WILL NOT FIX OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. MORE MONEY NOW IS NEEDED TO STABILIZE AND SECURE OUR SYSTEM. IT IS THE PRICE OF ADMISSION TO REFORM AND MODERNIZE THE SYSTEM.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST RECOGNIZE THIS. AND THEY MUST RECOGNIZE IT NOW. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE, SECURE FUNDING FOR HEALTH CARE WILL JEOPARDIZE OUR COLLECTIVE ABILITY TO REFORM THE SYSTEM. THEY CANNOT TALK

ABOUT THE NEED FOR REFORM WITHOUT PROVIDING THE INVESTMENTS TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.

WE MUST, AS WELL, BEGIN TO ASK OURSELVES SOME DIFFICULT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

**IS IT GIVING US THE RIGHT CARE AT THE RIGHT TIME IN THE RIGHT WAY?
IF WE ALL HAVE A RIGHT TO PUBLICLY-FUNDED HEALTH CARE, DO WE NOT HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES AS WELL, TO USE THIS PRECIOUS RESOURCE MORE WISELY? WHAT IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE ROLE FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN HEALTH CARE?**

**CAN OR WILL SERVICE PROVIDERS INTEGRATE THEMSELVES TO CREATE A TRULY PATIENT-FOCUSED, COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH CARE SYSTEM?
ARE THERE OTHER MODELS OF HEALTH CARE FROM AROUND THE WORLD WHOSE EXPERIENCE CAN BENEFIT US?**

I BELIEVE THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR GOVERNMENTS NOT TO ASK THESE QUESTIONS. IT'S NOT AS IF WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S COMING. WE DO. AS I ASKED EARLIER, IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING NOW, WHEN WE KNOW WHAT'S AHEAD – A GROWING, AGING POPULATION; INCREASED COSTS; NEW TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES – WHEN WILL WE DO IT?

IN NEW BRUNSWICK, WE HAVE TAKEN THE FIRST STEPS TO BOTH IMPROVING AND REFORMING OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM. WE BEGAN DURING OUR FIRST 200 DAYS BY CREATING 300 NEW, PERMANENT NURSING POSITIONS. WE ARE IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY, TO MAKE NEW BRUNSWICK 'PHYSICIAN-FRIENDLY' AND BRING NEEDED DOCTORS INTO RURAL AND UNDER SERVICED AREAS.

THESE STEPS ARE NECESSARY TO HELP STABILIZE THE SYSTEM AS A FIRST STEP TO REFORMING IT. IT PROVES THE POINT OF PREMIERS IN SAYING MORE FEDERAL DOLLARS ARE NEEDED NOW WHILE WE WORK COOPERATIVELY TO FIX THE SYSTEM.

I HAVE FORMED A PREMIER'S HEALTH QUALITY COUNCIL OF HEALTH EXPERTS AND CONSUMERS WITH A TWO-YEAR MANDATE TO CREATE AN ACTION PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT TO A MORE INTEGRATED HEALTH CARE SYSTEM BASED ON THE PATIENTS'S NEEDS, NOT THE SYSTEM'S NEEDS.

AT THE SAME TIME, THIS COUNCIL WILL HELP US DRAFT A PATIENT CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND SET OUT PROVINCIAL HEALTH STANDARDS AS PART OF A NEW PROVINCE-WIDE HEALTH REPORT CARD.

THESE ARE REAL STEPS TO MAKING OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM MORE ACCOUNTABLE AND SUSTAINABLE. THEY ARE FIRSTS FOR NEW BRUNSWICK; INDEED, I BELIEVE WE WILL LEAD OTHER JURISDICTIONS IN THESE AREAS.

AS PREMIER, I HAVE SET OUT A GOAL FOR OUR PROVINCE. TO CREATE A MORE COMPETITIVE, COMPASSIONATE NEW BRUNSWICK. A LEADER IN ATLANTIC CANADA; A MODEL FOR THE REST OF CANADA.

TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, WE CAN ONLY DO SO BY PLANNING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION, NOT THE NEXT ELECTION.

NEW BRUNSWICK IS A PROVINCE OF TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL. OUR PEOPLE ARE WARM, OPEN, AND FRIENDLY.

AS ONE OF THE FOUNDING PARTNERS OF CANADA, AND AS OUR NATION'S ONLY OFFICIALLY BILINGUAL PROVINCE, WE HAVE A UNIQUE ROLE AND IDENTITY IN THE CANADIAN FEDERATION. WE ARE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD AND AWARE OF THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY THIS BRINGS. THAT'S WHAT MAKES US CANADIANS FIRST.

I INVITE YOU ALL TO SHARE NEW BRUNSWICK'S PRIDE; TO EXPERIENCE OUR OPTIMISM; TO SHARE IN THE POTENTIAL THAT IS OUR PROVINCE.

THANK YOU.