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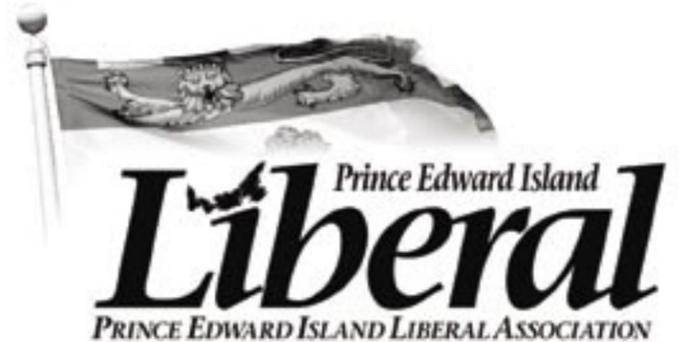
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THE ADVOCATE

ELECTION ISSUE, 2011

Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees



PEI UPSE is proud to represent over 5000 members in both the public and private sectors.

Election Advocate 2011

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THE ADVOCATE is published by the P.E.I. Union of Public Sector Employees for distribution to its members. In pursuing the goals of effective, democratic unionism, members are urged to use this newsletter as a forum to exchange opinions, information and ideas through the submission of letters, articles, cartoons, photographs and other vehicles of expression. In this way, we can Communicate with each other, Educate ourselves about what is happening and why it is happening and Advocate a course of cooperative action that is beneficial to this union, its members and the society we inhabit.

Submissions should be addressed to:

The ADVOCATE, c/o PEI UPSE, and bear the name, address and telephone number of the contributor. Material printed with a member's signature does not necessarily reflect the views of this union or any of its elected officers or staff.

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PEI UPSE special edition: Election 2011

Once again, the PEI Union of Public Sector Employees presents a special "Election Advocate" for your review. The union asked PEI's five political parties (with official status) to comment on key issues affecting the membership and all Islanders. We asked each party (*Liberal, Progressive Conservative, Island New Democrats, Green Party and the Island Party*) specific questions in the following categories:

- *Mental Health*
- *Vacancy Management*
- *Casual Issue*
- *Pensions*
- *Collective Agreements*
- *Public Services*
- *Healthcare*
- *Environment*
- *CETA*
- *Seniors*
- *Federal Transfer Payments*
- *Early Childhood Education*
- *Government Priorities*

This Advocate contains the responses provided from each party. The union hopes this special election issue will help inform you, the membership, in regard to the positions our political parties are taking on issues that affect us all.

In the past we have graded the responses of each party in accordance to the union's beliefs and values. We have decided in this edition not to evaluate the responses and leave the evaluation to you - the membership. The union has issues with accuracies and "avoiding the question" and because of this was unable to provide a simple grade evaluation without going into a detailed explanation as to why a particular grade was assigned. E.g., one of the responses states "The government has initiated efforts to have LPN's upgrade their skills. Government has supported these measures through financial assistance". This of course is only partly true, the government has only supported approximately 75 of the over 600 LPN's in their studies and has not provided any further financial assistance since. Government has also avoided constructive consultation with the union during this process resulting in staffing shortages, problems with the delivery of programs, safety, etc. The union could not in all good conscience grade these type of responses. Therefore, as members, and knowing the publications and information published from your union in the past, you should be able to judge each response for your self based on their own individual merit.



Shelley Ward, President
PEI Union of Public Sector Employees

Issue: Mental Health

In recent years, the improvement of societal mental health has been identified as one of the major challenges for government and employers. Although mental illness and addictions cost the Canadian economy around \$50 billion a year (Lim, Jacobs, Ohinmaa, et al., 2008), Canada lags behind the other G8 countries. Over the past year Canada has begun looking at creating a national mental health strategy. Besides the personal cost to individuals, mental health challenges are one of the most significant causes of workplace absence. Indeed, it is estimated, by the Mental Health Commission of Canada that between \$2.97 billion and \$11 billion per annum could be saved by discretionary modifications to the organization and management of work to make it less injurious to employee mental health, with corresponding gains to productivity, efficiency and social capital.

Furthermore, the provincial government's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), an established and valued program for more than 20 years, recently was put under review. The results of an EAP user survey, implemented as part of the review, were positive and should ensure the long term continuance of EAP. The Province has established the Provincial Mental Health Services Strategy. It identifies System Accountability, Service Coordination; Strategies for Children and Youth, Seniors and Concurrent Disorders as priorities. Unlike many other provinces, this strategy did not include a public or stakeholder engagement process.



PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, will your party initiate a public or stakeholder engagement process to provide the input needed to guide both the federal and provincial mental health strategies?*
- *If elected, will your party ensure that EAP is maintained in the long term?*
- *If elected, will your party invest more money in mental health resources?*
- *If elected, will your party support the federal government's national strategy on mental health?*



• Our government is only responsible for policies that fall within our own jurisdiction. That being said, on numerous occasions, we have had extensive public consultations on different government policies. Extensive consultations will be held in the coming year regarding government's Social Action Plan. We also encourage the Federal government to pursue a collaborative approach on mental health strategies.

- Yes. The results of a recent Employee Assistance Program review were very positive and we are committed to ensure the long-term continuity of this program.
- Government is currently studying the impact of mental health and addictions and the various impacts associated with both areas. We anticipate more focus and investment in the future.
- Government looks forward to working collaboratively with the federal government and other partners on a national mental health strategy.

Mental Health

Election Advocate 2011



- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes



• initiate a public and stakeholder engagement process to provide the input needed to guide both provincial and federal mental health strategies and we would use that input to help direct the provincial government's actions, while assisting provincial government representatives in their dealings with the federal and other governments on this topic. Mental health is — or should be a matter of great public interest and, in a democracy, a government should always consult the public and stakeholders (including those who

receive public services and those who deliver public services) when considering changes to matters of public significance.

• ensure that the EAP is not only maintained but also enhanced to allow it to expand and improve upon the range and accessibility of its services. While this could involve additional costs, we believe it would be a worthwhile investment that could reap significant benefits to the individual employees, while improving workplace productivity and reducing the costs of absenteeism and other workplace problems caused by mental health challenges. We also believe that, as the representative of the employees — some of whom may not feel comfortable in providing open feedback to their employer or to the EAP staff — the union should play an equal role in overseeing the Employee Assistance Program.

• invest more money in mental health resources. As outlined above, we believe it would be a worthwhile investment that would more than pay for itself by improving workplace productivity and reducing the costs of absenteeism and other workplace problems caused by mental health challenges. Beyond the workplace, there are many areas of our society that would benefit from the addition of more resources for mental health. For example, the whole issue of families and young people is of crucial importance. As many UPSE members know through their work or in their own lives, there are serious challenges facing Island families and young people. We need to do everything possible to value our young people and to give them the foundations that can help them become healthy, productive members of society. To do that, families must have access to as much assistance as possible. And this can't be done "on the cheap". It's too important to the future of these individuals and to our province as a whole; we must focus as many resources as possible to support our young people and to help their families in dealing with the very serious challenges that exist now like never before. We need more workers in this field, to put more emphasis on outreach and prevention, to have the time to facilitate and participate in mentorship programs, etc. If we really value our young people and our families — as is often claimed — then we must spend the time and money to back this up.

• push for a national strategy on mental health, with leadership from the federal, provincial and territorial governments and participation by all interested Canadians. As a starting point, this strategy could use the reports already produced by both the Canadian Mental Health Commission and a Senate Committee that has examined this issue. It should also rely on the recommendations developed by many advocates in the mental health field. As well, we feel that the current approach to mental health in such area as the federal prison system is totally inadequate and likely to get worse under the Harper government's so-called "tough on crime" philosophy.

In general, we see money spent in the mental health field as a good investment in both human and economic terms. Mental health issues are often the hidden element behind other problems in our society and can produce conditions that impair the ability of individuals to lead full and complete lives while also interfering with their ability to develop their full potential as citizens, workers and taxpayers. It's in everyone's interests to tackle mental health issues.

In particular, a New Democratic Party government would want to ensure that it sets a good example by investing proper amounts of time and money in addressing mental health issues (stress, etc.) in its own workplaces, while also encouraging and supporting such efforts in the private sector. One good way of encouraging the identification and mitigation of mental health issues, of course, is to ensure that all workers have access to unionization so that they will have the support and protection of a union in addressing mental health issues.

Vacancy Management

Election Advocate 2011



- Islanders must have meaningful opportunities to participate in the decisions that affect their lives, created through responsive and decentralized democratic processes, structures and institutions. The Green Party would engage citizens in discussions to map out a mental health strategy.

- The Green Party supports the EAP for as long as workers have a need for it.

- There are many failures in the way our system treats mental health issues. There is a focus on treating acute mental health problems after they arise with few resources dedicated to preventing problems in the first place. The Green Party would allocate more money to mental health services and ensure efficient spending through a broad range of holistic commitments ranging from improved acute care and addictions treatment, affordable housing, early intervention especially for children and young people, and community-based services. We support the current national strategy on mental health.



- In order to guide provincial and federal mental health strategies, it is essential to involve the public and stakeholders in the process, therefore the Island Party (IP) would initiate that process.

- The IP would maintain the EAP. EAPs are a benefit to both employees and employer if managed properly.

- Untreated mental health issues affect the workplace and society in general. Therefore money invested in mental health resources benefit everyone. The IP would review the current state of mental health resources and invest as required to provide what is needed to help Islanders.

- In general the IP would support the federal government's national strategy on mental health, while advocating for more funding for PEI.

Issue: Vacancy Management

Government has been engaged in vacancy management for some time. It has become a tool for fiscal management.

UPSE has filed grievances re: chronic unfilled positions. For example, the Departments of Agriculture, Environment, Energy and Forestry and Health and Wellness are experiencing HR challenges due to unfilled positions and/or waiting for Treasury Board approval for positions that are already included on new Departmental organization charts.

All current positions, filled or vacant, have been justified to Treasury Board as necessary positions before they are approved. To carry out the vacancy management process government must pick and choose between positions and determine which ones are more or less necessary. This is not an easy process. Any decision to leave positions unfilled or to eliminate may be discretionary and / or arbitrary.



The net result is that there are less government workers than there should be or are necessary to provide the services that Islanders need. Government has determined what services are necessary and what positions are needed to carry out these services but is now unwilling to provide these services to Islanders.

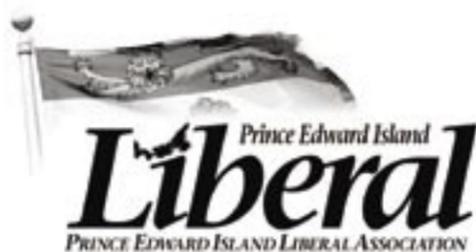
Due to a lack of dialogue regarding vacancy management, PEI UPSE is uncertain whether government will achieve sufficient savings as a result of the process and therefore consider other measures that are perhaps less palatable. Government should express targets (other than balancing the budget by 2014) for vacancy management.

Vacancy Management

Election Advocate 2011

PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, will your party carry out a vacancy management process within Government in an attempt to keep overall costs down?*
- *If not in favour of vacancy management as a tool to reduce spending, how would your party deal with the deficit situation? In other jurisdictions unions have been consulted with and are part of the solution.*
- *How will the vacancy management process work?*
- *What are the implications for PEI UPSE members working in the Civil Service if vacancy management targets are not reached?*
- *Will your party do further research on retirement intention/eligibility to inform the process of the establishment of vacancy management targets and communicate these targets to UPSE?*



- Yes. Vacancy management has long been a fiscal management tool within governments across Canada.
- N/A
- As you are aware, UPSE has asked for face-to-face meetings with each Department which government has agreed to. During this process UPSE will be fully advised of the Vacancy Management process.

• The government has been clear that any vacancies or reductions in staffing will be dealt with through attrition and the Vacancy Management process.

• Yes. This is an on-going process and we are willing to continue to work with UPSE regarding this matter.



• Our new Progressive Conservative team is committed to the principals of an accountable, fiscally responsible government. Our new PC government will review all avenues possible for prudent fiscal management.

• Our new Progressive Conservative team is committed to an extensive consultation with all stakeholders, including unions, as we work together to find solutions towards prudent fiscal management.

• The details of such a process will be developed after an extensive consultation process with all stakeholders.

• Our new Progressive Conservative government is committed to a strong collaborative relationship and effective two-way dialogue with PEI UPSE members.

• Yes



Every employer should, as a normal course, be working with workers and unions to ensure that a system involving succession planning and vacancy management is conducted in a fair and efficient manner. Employees leave their employment from time to time, either upon retirement, for other employment or any number of other reasons. And the current aging of our population means that retirements, in particular, are becoming more common. However, governments should not be using this situation as an excuse to lower their costs, as public services must still be retained and delivered at a proper level.

We believe that efforts to leave vacancies unfilled or to reduce the workforce by attrition or other means will, in the long term, only serve to “cut off our nose to spite our face”. They can also lead to situations where the remaining workload is then divided among the remaining workers, producing employee burnout and all its negative consequences (see Mental Health above).

Some political parties may be tempted to use the current situation to reduce the overall costs of the provincial civil service, as a way to fool voters into thinking that they are saving money. True, money might be saved in one particular year or even within a four-year election cycle. But the true costs of such a short-sighted approach in terms of both finances and service delivery may not show up for many years to come.

Vacancy Management

Election Advocate 2011

And when vacancies do occur — whether through retirements or other means — a smart employer who wishes to support good workplace morale and productivity will ensure that such vacancies are filled as quickly as possible through a fair, open and unbiased internal promotion process. By employing a proper “upward promotion ladder”, promotional opportunities are thus created throughout the workforce and eventually lead to opportunities for public and external competitions for vacancies at the lower levels. These public competitions must, of course, also be conducted in a fair, open and unbiased manner so that every Islander has an equal opportunity for employment in those government positions for which they are qualified.

It makes sense that the provincial government should develop a proper approach to succession planning, for everyone’s sake. However, this should be done in a collaborative fashion with employees and their union and should be based on proper research and consultation with those affected (which is to say virtually every government employee).

The issue of the provincial government’s deficit is a much larger and more complex matter. Efforts to focus solely or primarily on government employment as a means of addressing the deficit remind us of the attitude displayed by the Liberal government during the infamous 7.5% cuts. We would support a much broader analysis and public discussion on this issue that would also examine the revenue side of the equation and such related elements as the need for a fair and progressive taxation system. It would also look at such things as the true costs of patronage in government hiring, in the use of consultants by government departments and agencies and in the awarding of government contracts.



- The Green Party does not support vacancy management for positions deemed necessary. The perception of savings through vacancy management is an illusion and could end up costing Islanders more in the long run. The Department of Environment, for example, is doubling up on positions, assigning jobs to untrained and possibly unqualified people. The result is a loss of protection for the environment and the health of Islanders.

- The deficit situation, including the \$2 billion Islanders owe, is one of the most serious crises facing the people of PEI. The solution will involve extensive consultation with citizens in hopes that collectively we can develop creative ideas to ease ourselves out of a very bad situation. In the short term, The Green Party believes an examination of government spending would disclose wastefulness that could be eliminated and allow critical government positions to be filled.



This is a very interesting question to be asked, let us, The Island Party, first state we are Union friendly. We believe in fair collective bargaining and the right to strike. We can say this as we never intend to let problems get to such a state. Several of the Island Party founding members are from labour and know the need to have a good reliable professional work force. We have stated in our Policy Book that NO government employees will lose their jobs.

The Island party is not like the previous governments and we intend to make changes. You make reference to the departments of Forestry, Agriculture and Fisheries. These are key areas in which we intend to expand assistance to Islanders . We feel that a knowledgeable work force will be in demand. The Island Party will not make any changes to UPSE members work areas or departments in which they are currently employed without consulting, seeking input from members and letting all who would be effected have a say. We have the ideas to improve various programs and add others. We will need the help of an experienced workforce.

The Island Party believes that the backbone of the Island economy is still to be found in its Farming, Fishing and Tourism Industries. The IP is intent on expanding these key areas to service larger markets which will require more skilled personnel. The IP doesn’t see reducing positions to balance the budget. We intend to expand the Islands productivity to increase jobs and products. The previous governments have never thought outside of the box. In this way they have only followed others.

The IP is cognizant of the ageing population, the various dares this covers and the changes that must be put into play to meet these needs. There are many programs in government that must be rethought and we will seek input from all parties that are affected prior to implementation. We see this as a sure way to save tax dollars. Take time to think through the policy changes and then it only has to be done once, unlike the present governments way of handling things i.e. health care, education, tourism fisheries etc.

The Island Party will be seeking union input to get this province back on its feet. No intention of reducing the work force to balance a deficit that has occurred through gross mismanagement. UPSE members are Islanders and The Island Party intends to bring back the Island to Islanders.

Issue: Casuals

The PEI Union of Public Sector Employees represents over 5000 members, and 1200 of these are casual employees working directly for the province. Despite being members of PEI UPSE, casual employees do not have the full benefit of the collective agreement and do not enjoy true job security. PEI UPSE believes that government is discriminating against Civil Service casual employees by denying them their full bargaining rights.

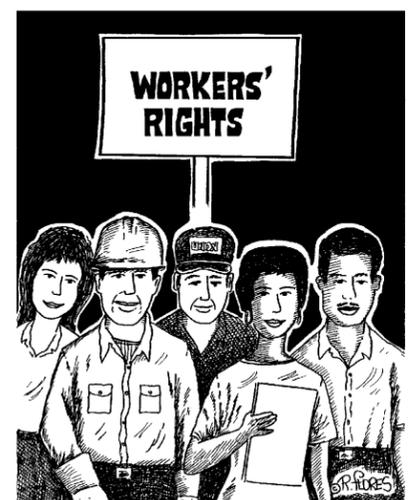
The collective bargaining process provides two mechanisms to settle disputes if parties are unable to reach an agreement. The first is conciliation whereby a conciliator helps parties resolve outstanding issues to bring about a negotiated settlement; the second, is arbitration, whereby a third party - the arbitrator - hears the case and arrives at a decision that is legally binding on both parties. The current *Civil Service Act* regulations, as outlined in sections 82.6 and 66 (f) do not give an arbitrator or arbitration board the jurisdiction to rule on casual issues. Therefore, our casual workforce does not enjoy the same bargaining rights as every other member of PEI UPSE in both the private and public sectors. Casual employees simply have no access to an alternative dispute resolution process - which is a violation of their bargaining rights.

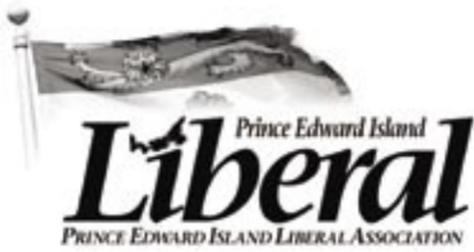
The government has the power to amend the *Civil Service Act* regulations through Executive Council so that an arbitration board does have the power to rule on casual issues. The union met with Premier Ghiz on this issue; however, he has refused to make the necessary changes. Every other casual employee on PEI has the right to fully and collectively bargain with third party intervention under the *Labour Act*.

In June of 2011, the provincial government refused to bargain in good faith with PEI UPSE on 3 issues (paid leave, participation in group insurance plan and preferred hiring of casuals in open competitions) and it amounted to a "take it or leave it" stance during conciliation. Government did not show up to bargain in good faith on behalf of their own employees and presented a proposal that was entirely unsatisfactory, and then refused to negotiate further with the union. This refusal has left casual employees in the civil service without any resolve in regard to a number of issues.

PEI UPSE asked:

- *Does your party recognize that Casual employees have the right to a full bargaining process?*
- *If elected, will your party be willing to make the necessary amendments to the Civil Service Act regulations to provide full collective bargaining rights to casual employees? If yes, please provide a time frame for implementation.*





• Yes

• Government always has, and will pledge to continue to, discuss issues related to casuals in a negotiation format in good faith, but at this time is not willing to change long-standing regulations.



• Our new Progressive Conservative team recognizes and acknowledges the importance of casual employees having the right to a full bargaining process. Upon election, our new Progressive Conservative government will study this issue in greater detail.

• Upon election, our new Progressive Conservative government will review the legislation and move towards implementation.



• We take the position that EVERY employee should have the right to full and free collective bargaining. As such, we believe that the Civil Service Act regulations should be amended to provide full collective bargaining rights to casual employees. Since this is a matter of principle and would require a relatively simple amendment to the regulations that could be made at one of the first meetings of an NDP cabinet, we believe that such a change could be

implemented within the first month or two after an NDP government is sworn into office.

• We also believe that there has been much abuse of employee rights in the Casual Division. As a result, we would like to work with the union to dramatically reduce the number of Casual positions, converting those that cover ongoing work into permanent, Classified positions (with some positions being defined as temporary or seasonal, depending on the nature of the work required). We also want to reduce the money spent — and often wasted — on contract employees and, especially, on the contracts the Liberal and Conservative parties have long awarded to their friends for consulting and other services.



• Yes, the Green party supports the rights of Casual employees to a full bargaining process and if elected we would amend the regulations as soon as possible.



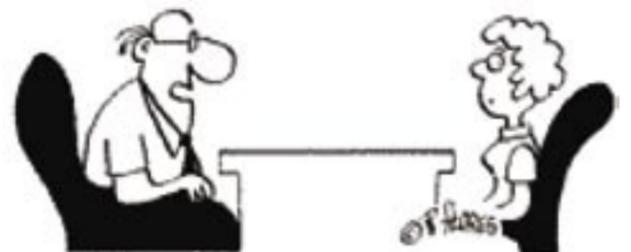
• The IP absolutely recognizes that Casual employees have the right to a full bargaining process just a full time employees do. An employee is an employee.

• Amendments to the Civil Service Act regulations to provide full collective bargaining rights to casual employees is long over due. The IP would expect it to be in place for the next round of bargaining.

Issue: Pensions

In June 2010 PEI UPSE hosted a pension rally at Crowbush Resort calling for an expansion of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). At the time, Minister Flaherty publically declared that some increase to the CPP was a necessary step for Canadians. However, when finance ministers from across the country met in Alberta in December 2010 they found that Minister Flaherty had backed away from his commitment. Instead, he now asked Canadians to participate in a new Pooled Registered Pension Plan, or PRPP. This is a voluntary plan administered by banks and insurance companies.

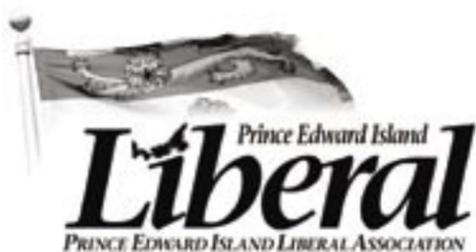
The problem with a voluntary option is that millions of Canadians will not use it. We know that roughly 30% of Canadians have no pension plan or RRSP savings. The CPP is the most effective tool for modifying the retirement income system for a number of reasons. CPP is pervasive; it is a guaranteed payment that covers 93% of working Canadians. CPP is portable from job to job and from province to province. CPP is also low cost, low risk, indexed to inflation and secure.



The introduction of the CPP in Canada effectively reduced the senior poverty rate from 33% in 1977 to just 3.9% in 1995. However, due to the recent world financial crisis, and escalating cost of living, the senior poverty rate has climbed back to 11.5% in 2009. The challenge is simply that the level of CPP benefits today is too low, yet for over six million Canadians without workplace pensions or RRSPs, the CPP is their only real source of retirement income.

PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, will your party strongly advocate increasing the CPP?*
- *If elected, will your party enact the "Pensions Benefit Act", which did not progress beyond first reading in the legislature?*



- Yes. We will continue to be vocal in our support for enhancing the CPP and working with our Federal Partners on this issue.
- Yes. The consultation phase for the Pension Benefit Act is underway and we intend to proceed with the enactment of this Legislation.



- Upon election, our new Progressive Conservative government will work collaboratively with our federal partners on this issue.

- No



- Like the federal New Democratic Party, the New Democratic Party of Prince Edward Island supports the efforts by Canadian unions and others to increase the Canada Pension Plan. With so many workers denied the protection of a solid group insurance plan that is cost-shared by their employers, we feel that the increase in the CPP is the only way for Canada to do right by its workers.

• And unlike the Liberal and Conservative Parties in Prince Edward Island, we will not only introduce a Pensions Benefits Act to protect the pensions of workers in this province — we will actually pass it and put it into effect! In addition to the recent aborted effort put forward by the current government, a Pensions Benefits Act was passed by the legislature some years ago but never proclaimed or implemented by any of the Liberal or Conservative governments that came along in the intervening years. Both parties had numerous chances to do so but, despite their alleged support of working people, they just never seemed to find the time. In the meantime, workers such as those at Garden Province Meat found that, without the protection of a Pensions Benefit Act, their pensions were not protected when their employer went out of business. As a result, they had to settle for only a portion of the pension amounts to which they were owed. And all because neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives saw fit to implement an act that had already been passed!



- Yes, the Green party will advocate increasing the CPP and would enact a Pensions Benefit Act that brings PEI into line with other provinces.



- The Island Party has met with many seniors living below the poverty level on PEI and we recognize the hardships they are incurring. We see clearly the need for increased pension benefits. We would support increasing the CPP or an alternative means of increasing income for our seniors.

- Both previous parties have failed to enact this very important legislation (Pensions Benefits Act), and the Island Party would commit to enacting this Legislation.

Collective Agreements

Election Advocate 2011

Issue: Collective Agreements

Currently, the government of PEI has a projected deficit of \$42 million for the current fiscal year. Government also remains committed to balancing the budget by 2014. In the past, PEI governments have grown impatient with the results of gradual or incremental fiscal management and overreacted and implemented rollbacks (1994) and layoffs (2005). In 1994, the provincial government rolled back salaries for PEI public service employees only a few months after signing collective agreements with the same workers. Government, in this case, had mismanaged the finances of the Province and made its own workers the victims of its inadequate fiscal management. They also showed a lack of integrity by signing contracts which they did not intend to honour.

PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, will your party honour signed collective agreements?*
- *If elected, will your party work with the union on issues that affect the membership with open communication and consultation?*



• The current government since taking office in 2007 has honoured signed collective agreements and employee contracts. The government is committed to maintaining this policy.

• Yes.



• Yes

• Yes

Collective Agreements

Election Advocate 2011



- Yes, we will honour collective agreements. Unlike the Liberals with their 7.5% cuts and the Conservatives with their Compensation Review Act, an NDP government would not use the “bully tool” of legislation to impose a settlement or limit the compensation available in a collective agreement. Employers and workers must come to the bargaining table as equals and demonstrate their respect for each other. In the long term, that’s the only way to produce a positive, co-operative atmosphere in the workplace and to encourage the kind of teamwork that is necessary for any effective and efficient government that really meets the needs of the citizens of Prince Edward Island.
- Along the same lines, we would encourage open communication and consultation as a means of identifying problems before they become crises and of discussing new ideas to improve the workplace environment.



- The Green Party will honour signed collective agreements. We believe in accountability, transparency and consultation with the people affected by decisions.



- The IP respects negotiated and signed collective agreements as legal documents between two parties. There is no question that they would be honoured.
- The IP believes it is the responsibility of government to work with unions on issues that affect the membership. Consultation and open communication are two of the main tenets of the IP.

Issue: Public Services

A strong economy depends on a vital public service. Government should not be looking to save money by eliminating or transferring these services to the private sector. When it comes down to it, public services are the most affordable way of meeting our needs. They are accessible to everyone; they are democratic and accountable to the public; and they are the most affordable. “No better bargain exists for Canadians than to pool their resources and spend on providing public capital and services available to all.”

However, the provincial government, as of late, has been attempting to shift public services into private control, whether through the introduction of P3s or awarding contracts to the private sector. This winter we saw government relying on the public service by using heavy equipment operators and equipment to clear roads that private contractors could not adequately clear themselves. This amounted to Islanders paying twice to have the roads cleared – once for the private sector to do it wrong and then once again for the public service to get the job done. Clearly, public service heavy equipment operators should be the ones to do the job.

The same trend can be seen regarding infrastructure and highway projects on PEI. The government is falling to the pressure of private contractors to divvy out contracts at the expense of the public service. Again, this approach will not save the public any money – it will cost more. The private partner wants to maximize profits and this means adding at least 30% to the costs of a project at the outset which Islanders ultimately pay for.



PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, will your party maintain and / or increase current levels of heavy equipment operators and road crews?*
- *If elected, will your party hire more crews to perform construction and road work at night?*



• These are reasonable concerns, which we take seriously. Government is interested in the sustainable and affordable delivery of public services. Toward achieving this goal, the professionalism of the public service is a clear strength. We have no plans to reduce the current levels of heavy equipment operators in road crews; however, we have no plans to increase current levels either.

• Unless warranted, the government will not adopt night road work as a general management practice. Recent assessments indicate that it is not cost-effective.



- Our new Progressive Conservative government will review the levels of heavy equipment operators and road crews.
- Our new Progressive Conservative government will include this issue in our review of the levels of heavy equipment operators and road crews.



- For decades, both Liberal and Conservative governments have used the highways and transportation sector as a means of dispensing contracts and favours to its corporate friends. These are public roads and they should be maintained by public employees, with direct accountability for that service laid at the feet of the minister responsible. A New Democratic Party government would eliminate the patronage that serves to favour corporate friends of the government and use the money saved by this move to hire more public employees as heavy equipment operators and members of road crews. If done right, with a fair and open

hiring process, the employees thus hired should be able to provide a better level of service at a cost that is the same or lower than that found under the current approach.

- In consultation with the union, we would also favour the hiring of more crews to perform construction and road work at night. We believe that this would be a more efficient manner of ensuring that highway construction and maintenance is conducted with as little disruption as possible to the traveling public. However, we would also want to take additional measures to ensure that the workers were provided with the proper safety and security measures to accommodate the special circumstances related to working on our highways during the night. This would also be a subject for consultation with the union.



- The Green Party will maintain heavy equipment operators and road crews at levels needed to provide proper services. We will also prohibit donations to political parties from corporations and unions. Currently, road construction companies are generous donors to parties, obligating political favours in return.

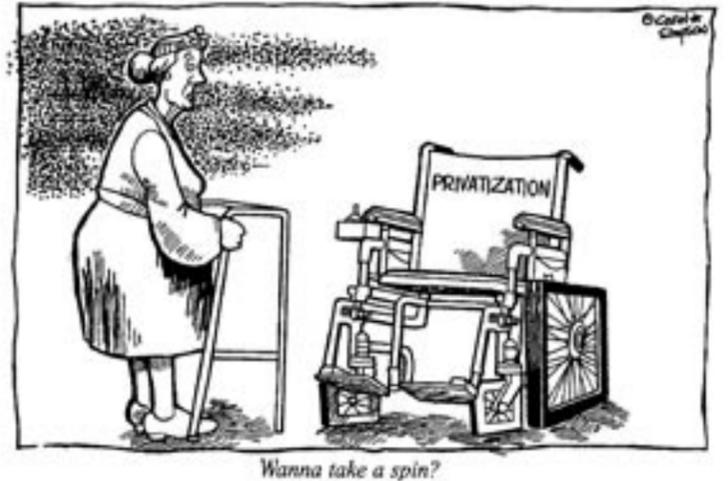


- Safety and maintenance of roads is an absolute necessity and should be the responsibility of the government through the Department of Highways. The IP does not believe there should be a shift of public services to private control.
- Construction of road work at night would depend on where and when and would be decided upon after consultation with communities that may be affected by noise. Also consultation with the workers involved would be necessary.

Issue: Health care

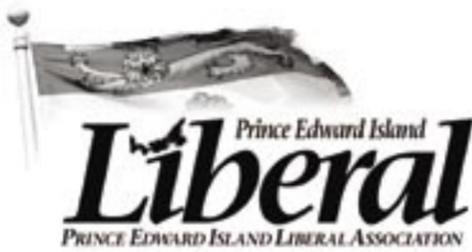
Part of the philosophy of the province's new model of care is to ensure patients receive quality health care from the best mix of qualified health providers within a publically-funded and publically-delivered system. Government made the right decision to implement the full scope of practice for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) on Prince Edward Island. Prior to this move, LPNs were not permitted to provide the full range of services that many of them were trained and qualified to deliver. And it is in everyone's best interest, whether it is the patient or the employer, that health care providers are fully utilized in accordance with their training and capabilities.

However, it is not the philosophy of the model of care per se that PEI UPSE is ultimately concerned about. The union's concern is directed at the planning and implementation of the model of care. Government has not done their homework in determining staffing needed to successfully launch the new model. These requirements include necessary education upgrades for LPNs and the need to create standardized education for Resident Care Workers (RCWs) in the province. In regard to the former, there have been problems with the availability, access, cost and timelines for this education. In regard to the latter, RCWs in Prince Edward Island are not provided with a consistent training program that ensures protection for both the patient and the employee. There are four training sites in the province and they do not all share a standardized Resident Care Worker curriculum. The 2009 PEI Health Sector Council report on RCW education further reveals that education providers are not even required to offer a program that meets the baseline level of proficiency required for RCWs as outlined in the RCW DACUM or occupational skill profile.



PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, will your party guarantee to the people of Prince Edward Island that our health care system remains publically funded and publically delivered?*
- *If elected, will your party ensure that LPNs seeking upgrades are provided with financial support and educational opportunities, as well as sufficient time?*
- *If elected, will your party ensure that a standard program of study is created for RCWs in PEI?*
- *If elected, will your party create legislation that will include regulations for RCW core competencies?*



- Government is committed to carrying out the principles of the Canada Health Act, which includes providing publicly funded and publicly delivered health care services.
- The Government has initiated efforts to have LPNs upgrade their skills. Government has supported these measures through financial assistance.

- The standard competency profile for RCWs has been created by training institutions in consultation with the provincial government. This competency profile is the basis for programs of study for RCWs.
- Government, through the Department of Health and Wellness, is in the process of developing umbrella legislation for Health Professions that are seeking regulation. RCWs are involved in this process.



- Yes, our new Progressive Conservative government strongly believes in a publically funded and publically delivered health care system.
- Our new Progressive Conservative government is committed to supporting all health professionals in their professional skills development goals.

• Our new Progressive Conservative government is committed to supporting all health professionals in their professional skills development goals.

• Our new Progressive Conservative government will review this matter once elected.



• As outlined in another response, the New Democratic Party under Tommy Douglas pioneered public health care in Canada. We are not about to let the Liberals or the Conservatives turn all or part of that system over to their friends and financial supporters in the private sector. (For more on corporate financing of both the Liberal and Conservative parties in P.E.I., please see the analysis of Election P.E.I. data on our website at www.ndppei.ca/2010/06/28/corporate-contributions-to-liberals-tories-demand-political-financing-reform-rodd-says and www.ndppei.ca/2010/11/16/150.)

So not only do we guarantee that the current health care system will remain publicly funded and publicly delivered but we intend to actually expand the reach of the public sector in such areas as pharmacare.

Health care

Election Advocate 2011

- As well, we want to reverse the Ghiz government's policy of allowing the private sector to expand into the long-term care of seniors while, at the same time, they are limiting the government manors to the same number of beds as they currently have. With an aging population, we believe it is the government's responsibility to provide long-term care and, in fact, to move into the area of providing the full continuum of care in one location. In that way, seniors can move through the various levels of care as needed without having to risk experiencing the adverse health effects — and, in some cases, death — often produced by a move to a new facility.
- In regard to Licensed Practical Nurses, we believe that they should have the right to access financial support and sufficient time off work to pursue educational opportunities within a practical timeframe that recognizes the reality of their working lives and their family situations. Just like the Early Childhood Educators during the move to integrate kindergarten into the school system, LPNs are not being given the kind of practical support they need to make this transition a success for everyone. As a matter of respect for these workers — and the value they bring to the health care system — an NDP government would view providing appropriate support as an investment in LPNs as workers and in the best interests of a productive health care system.
- And, yes, we believe Resident Care Workers deserve to have access to a standard program of study — and to have access to the full range of financial and other supports that will provide them with the practical means to take this program of study without sacrificing their family's income.
- As well, we would create legislation and regulations covering RCW core competencies. This only makes sense in the bigger picture of things and would help clarify and co-ordinate roles and responsibilities on the health care "team".



- The Green Party supports all of these measures. We are opposed to any privatization of health services.



- Publically funded universal health care is part of the social fabric of Canada. We believe it is important to all Islanders that it is maintained. The IP would absolutely guarantee that public funding is maintained and not eroded.
- Where changes in responsibilities and expectations of LPNs job descriptions is put in place by the government, then financial support should be made available for upgrading. We note Holland College is offering upgrade courses this fall.

• The IP will assure that a standard program of study is created for RCWs in PEI. Less than a standard puts RCWs, patients and government in jeopardy.

• Protection is necessary for both RCWs and those requiring and receiving care. Therefore, legislation that will include regulations for RCW core competencies is absolutely necessary as it is for all health care providers.

Issue: Environment

Hydro-fracking is a process that involves injecting (under extreme pressure) a mixture of water, sand and chemicals into a natural gas well. The extreme pressure fractures the surrounding rock and tight sand formations creating fissures that enable a better flow of gas – and also the potential migration of chemicals and methane into the water supply.

PetroWorth, a Toronto based oil and gas company, had 100% exploration and development rights to 440,000 acres of land in PEI in 2010. PetroWorth and its partner, Corridor Resources, use fracking to extract natural gas from wells. We are concerned about the safety of our water table here on PEI and believe that fracking is a potential threat to safe, clean drinking water for Islanders.

Recently, we have seen moratoriums placed on fracking in Quebec, New York State and Texas until full scale environmental impact studies are carried out.

PEI UPSE asked:

• *If elected, will your party institute a moratorium on fracking and initiate a full scale environmental impact study on this process?*



• Government is on the record stating that no permits for fracking will be issued without a full environmental assessment, which must include a public consultation process. There are currently no applications for a fracking permit on Prince Edward Island.



• Our new Progressive Conservative government has committed to a moratorium on fracking once elected.

Environment

Election Advocate 2011



• We are opposed to fracking. In addition to the environmental hazards that it poses, we believe that it is an example of investing in the wrong solutions to our energy and environmental needs. Instead of encouraging or allowing the development of non-renewable resources, we believe that we must focus on the development of energy from renewable resources such as local wind, solar, tidal, biomass, etc. Combined with additional underground cables linking P.E.I. to a regional energy grid powered primarily by hydroelectric, we believe this is the only sensible direction to take. So, yes, we would not only institute a moratorium on fracking, we would prohibit it entirely (negating the need for an environmental impact study of the process).



• The Green Party would go further than a just moratorium and studies. We would prohibit fracking and end the doling out of leases to the fossil fuel industry. The precautionary principle, now embedded in Canadian law, dictates that when we have reasonable suspicions that an action may cause harm, then we have an obligation to not proceed. The evidence that the actual process of fracking can contaminate groundwater is compelling. The evidence that burning fossil fuel causes global warming and climate chaos is absolute. We have an obligation to prevent further global warming, therefore no new sources of fossil fuel should be exploited. Environmental impact studies cost taxpayers money that could be better spent elsewhere.



• The Island Party would first do an Environmental Impact Study on this process. Protection of PEI's groundwater resources would be our main concern in regards to allowing fracking on PEI. PEI is 100% dependant on ground water unlike any other Canadian Province and we need to be very cautious with any process that endangers our groundwater.

Issue: CETA

The provincial government of Prince Edward Island is currently participating in discussions via the federal/provincial/territorial Committee on Internal Trade which will ultimately lead to the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union. Currently, the public has not received information on the areas which will be negotiated.

The union understands that its members and all Islanders want a say in how their communities are governed. CETA puts the interests of large corporations ahead of the interests of Islanders. Under the CETA proposal, the European Union wants open access to our markets including municipal and provincial government purchasing for goods and services. If implemented, CETA will infringe on “buy local” policies and programs that encourage investment in local business and local job creation.

In regard to public services, the European Union has put drinking water and wastewater services on the table. This could lead to the eventual privatization of our water services and a significant decrease in public accountability. CETA is clearly paving the way toward privatizing public services. It is paramount that union members and all Islanders are informed about the CETA negotiations with the province so that informed decisions with public input can be made.

**PEI UPSE asked:**

- *If elected, will your party opt out of CETA?*
- *Will regular reports on the content and progress of the discussions be provided to PEI UPSE and the public?*
- *Is privatization of government services and de-regulation being discussed with other provinces, territories, the federal government and/or the European Union representatives?*



• The government is of view that it can best serve the Island’s interests by participating in the federal government’s CETA process.

• Our government is committed to keeping Islanders informed of the negotiations and consulting as much as possible to ensure the agreement meets the needs of our province. We have an open door policy and are willing to meet to discuss the negotiations.

• All of Canada’s trade agreements covering services exclude public services such as health care, education and social services. Nothing in these trade agreements can force Canada to privatize or to deregulate public services.



- Our new Progressive Conservative team is committed to open and accountable government. We support local manufacturers and producers. Our new PC government has no plans at this time to opt out of CETA.
- Upholding our strong commitment to open and accountable government, our new PC government will provide all Islanders with details about any CETA discussions.
- Our new Progressive Conservative team is not aware of any discussions around privatization and de-regulation that are currently underway.



- We are opposed to CETA and the other so-called free trade deals that have been negotiated and supported by Liberal and Conservative governments over the past 20 years or more. We believe that, in this “global village”, trade is necessary and should be promoted and encouraged. However, it should be based on the principles of Fair Trade — not so-called Free Trade — and should be designed to provide more-or-less equitable benefits to all those involved, not just for multinational corporations.
- We also oppose the secrecy that has surrounded much of the CETA negotiations and believe that all Canadians have the right to know what their governments are saying and doing as their representatives. And these governments are supposed to be our representatives. It's unfortunate and undemocratic that, as in so many other areas of public decision-making, some politicians and political parties seem to think that they own the government instead of seeing themselves for what they really are — temporary managers of our government, accountable to us.
- If elected to government, we will opt out of CETA. And if we had anything to do with it, any further talks on trade agreements between P.E.I. and Europe (or other areas) would then have to be based on the principles of Fair Trade (which, of course, would not involve discussion with anyone about privatization of government services and de-regulation). And any such talks would have to include reports on the content and progress of the discussions that would be provided to the public and other affected parties.



- The Green Party would opt out of any CETA agreements that were not in the best interests of ordinary Islanders.
- We believe in a transparent and accountable government where decisions are made at the closest level to the people affected. All CETA discussions would be public information in a Green government.
- We do not support the privatization of government services.



- Most certainly! (will opt out of CETA)
- As stated the Island Party of PEI would be open and transparent with the UPSE and the public on this as would plan to be with all issues that would impact Islands.
- We would like to have the answers to this question come out during the campaign and the Island Party will be questioning all other Parties on this issue. The Island Party is not in favor of de-regulation and privatization (P3's, government owned properties etc). De-regulation in regards to food could put Islanders health at risk and we see this as a very serious issue.

Issue: Seniors

Island seniors are our most vulnerable citizens and deserve our respect, gratitude and support in every sense. Senior citizens are living more active lives and are also living longer than ever before. By 2031 the population of senior citizens on PEI will represent 28% of our total population. However, with increased longevity comes the need for increased economic support. Senior citizens need more retirement savings than in the past simply because they are living longer. This is a significant challenge for our seniors and for our society. We know that the Canada Pension Plan is in dire need of reform as it does not provide Canadians with a decent level of income to be secure in retirement. We also know that millions of Canadians have no retirement savings whatsoever. At the same time, we live in an environment where the cost of living is escalating on a monthly basis. We are all familiar with the rising costs of living in PEI and throughout the world – whether we are talking about the cost of food, shelter or energy provision. Government needs to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are protected as they face new economic realities and social challenges in the years ahead.

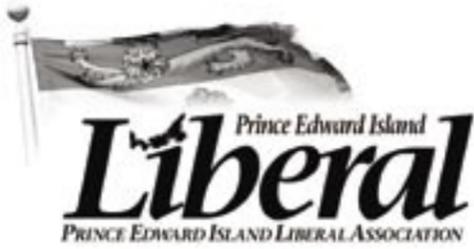
PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, will your party reduce income tax for seniors?*
- *If elected will your party provide a discount on property tax for seniors?*
- *If elected, will your party provide a \$500 tax credit for seniors who are involved in volunteer work?*



Seniors

Election Advocate 2011



- Since getting elected in 2007, the government has implemented tax savings programs that have saved Islanders \$36 million in personal income taxes. We continue to search for way to pass on savings to all Islanders, including seniors.

- Between 2007 and 2010, property assessments were frozen. This resulted in almost \$10 million in savings for Islanders. We will continue to explore ways to save money. Since 2007, we enacted the following policies to save money for seniors:

- The PEI Energy Accord which will save seniors over \$4 million dollars in the first two years;
- The Seniors Home Repair Program, and the Freeze on Property Assessments;
- Government made investments in affordable housing projects for seniors across Prince Edward Island, including Charlotte Court and the Summerside Seniors Project;
- The government is replacing the aged manors with new, state-of-the-art facilities in Alberton, Summerside, Charlottetown, Montague and Souris;
- The government made a 70% increase in funding for Home Care;
- The government has added or expanded coverage of almost 150 drugs and increased drug spending by 34 per cent from 2007 2010, and
- Government eliminated Emergency Ambulance fees for Seniors

- We are currently exploring options related to numerous requests for tax credits from various interest groups.



- Our new Progressive Conservative team is proud of the contributions our Island seniors have made to our great province. Our platform contains many new initiatives for Island seniors; however, an income tax reduction is not one of them.

- Our new Progressive Conservative government will provide a discount on property tax for seniors.

- Our new Progressive Conservative government will take this suggestion under advisement and review it.



- We favour changes to the tax system that would produce a more progressive tax regime, one where those who can afford to pay more would pay more and those on low incomes would pay less. Under such a system, those seniors with low incomes — which is a large part of the seniors' population — would see their income tax reduced. Similarly, a tax credit for certified volunteer work would make sense and, again, because seniors perform a great deal of volunteer work, they would be the chief beneficiaries of such a tax credit.
- In addition, as a means of encouraging and supporting efforts by seniors to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, a discount on property tax for seniors would serve as a practical tool to help achieve that goal.



- It would be difficult to justify tax breaks and tax credits to people based solely on age rather than income. The Green Party will eliminate income tax for all Islanders whose incomes are below the poverty line (Canada's Low Income Cut-off measure). We would urge the federal government to increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors by 25%. We will ensure all seniors are aware of and apply for the benefits they are entitled to.
- We will work with the Green Party of Canada to advance a bold and controversial idea – the use of negative income tax, or Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI). The GLI would provide a regular annual payment to all Canadians without regard to a needs test. Additional income would not be clawed back until a higher level of income, above subsistence, is achieved. Through co-operation and careful deliberation by all levels of government, the use of a GLI could eliminate poverty.



- The IP would reduce income tax for seniors by adjusting the formula for the allowable tax deduction. As it stands now one has to be living below the poverty line to qualify for the full deduction.
- It is the IP policy to have lower property tax for seniors.
- Many seniors give hours of their time to volunteer in a variety of ways that benefit communities and the Island in general. Therefore, a \$500 tax credit is a very low cost to government for all that seniors give in time, often raising money for our hospitals that may otherwise fall to the government to provide.

Federal Transfer Payments

Election Advocate 2011

Issue: Federal Transfer Payments

The agreement on the federal transfer payments with the federal government expires in 2014 affecting health, post-secondary education, infrastructure and equalization. These payments, issued through the Canada Health Transfer (CHT), the Canada Social Transfer (CST) and equalization, help “ensure the provincial governments have sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation” (Canadian Constitution).

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has committed to maintain the 6% annual increase in health care funding (Canada Health Transfer) to the provinces that was ushered in by Prime Minister Paul Martin as part of the 2004 health accord. It is imperative that this 6% escalator clause is maintained in order for the federal government to protect our publically funded health care system. This really is a bare minimum commitment – the federal government used to pay 45 cents out of every dollar spent provincially on health care as opposed to the roughly 20 cents on every dollar it spends now.

Further, the health care system needs to be expanded in ways that will keep costs under control. The 2004 health accord provided an additional \$41 billion over the ten years to focus on key issues like wait times and the implementation of a national pharmaceutical strategy. In regard to the latter, we still don't see a national pharmacare program which could realize up to \$10 billion in savings for the government through vastly increased purchasing power which would free up more dollars for each and every province.



PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, will your party negotiate strongly for increased transfer payments from Ottawa? This includes maintaining the 6% yearly increase through CHT and for ensuring that funding is not reduced through either the CST and or equalization.*
- *If elected, will your party negotiate for the implementation of a national pharmacare program?*



- Yes. That is the position of the Liberal Party of PEI.
- The Liberal Party of PEI is in support of the implementation of a national pharmacare program.



- Our new Progressive Conservative government is committed to negotiating with the federal government for increased transfer payments.
- Our new Progressive Conservative government is committed to negotiating with the federal government to implement a national pharmacare program.



- We do not believe that the federal government should have the right to unilaterally determine that an artificial and arbitrary cap should be placed on transfer payments to the provinces. This is not the co-operative attitude that Canadians expect of their governments in general and their federal government in particular. In addition, we believe that the P.E.I. government is quite some distance from having “sufficient revenues to provide reasonably comparable levels of public services at reasonably comparable levels of taxation”. So, not only would we push strongly for increased transfer payments from Ottawa that are determined by the reality of the needs of Islanders – as opposed to the political goals of the Harper government – but we believe particular arguments can be mustered for requiring even greater transfers based on the lack of access to certain services by those Canadians who reside in P.E.I.
- In regard to a national pharmacare program, it should be noted that, under Tommy Douglas, it was the New Democratic Party that championed the creation of the Canadian medicare system. Similarly, New Democrats have long championed pharmacare in Canada and in Prince Edward Island. We believe that it only makes sense to extend the same principles that support medicare into the realm of pharmacare. Drug costs are the most rapidly increasing component of health care costs and so it makes good sense from both a public policy perspective and a tax saving perspective to move to a system that will reduce and control such costs.

We already know that medicare is less expensive and more efficient than the private sector model employed in such places as the United States. So, too, is pharmacare less expensive and more efficient than the system now in place. As well, there are many Islanders who cannot afford their prescribed medications and, in some cases, these Islanders are dealing with potentially fatal or debilitating afflictions. So while we support a catastrophic drug plan, we see it as just a step toward the creation of more comprehensive and efficient pharmacare program.

We also support measures such as co-operating with other provinces in arranging the bulk purchase of medications and in changing the patent laws to allow for and encourage the earlier availability of generic drugs.

Federal Transfer Payments

Election Advocate 2011



- In theory we support increased transfer payments from Ottawa. In practice, we deplore the wasteful spending policies of successive Island governments that are unaccountable to the Canadians who contribute to what they believe is a means to assist Islanders. We support increased transfer funds coupled with a radical change in provincial government transparency and accountability to the people.
- The Green Party will advocate for a national pharmacare program in conjunction with a new vision for health services in PEI that is focused on illness prevention.



- The only way PEI can maintain the same quality of life as the larger provinces is through transfer payments. The PEI government must have a strong negotiating team at meetings with federal politicians. The IP would do everything possible to see that PEI is able to provide that quality we have come to expect. The IP would also insist on all provincial health Ministers meeting with the Prime Minister at the same time with regard to the new health accord. It appears that the PM is trying to use the divide and conquer method by sending a lesser official out to meet with Premier Ghiz while cancelling the scheduled meeting with all the health ministers.
- The implementation of a national pharmacare program is long overdue. It was promised by the Federal government ten years ago. PEI is the last province with no plan to cover catastrophic illness. NB the second to the last initiated their program this year. This must be a federal initiative and should be strongly advocated for by the provincial health ministers. There should not be availability of life-saving drugs in other provinces and not in PEI. The savings brought about by a national pharmacare program would pay for the cost of all provinces having access to the same drugs for catastrophic illnesses. In any case, the IP would initiate the start of coverage for these illnesses.

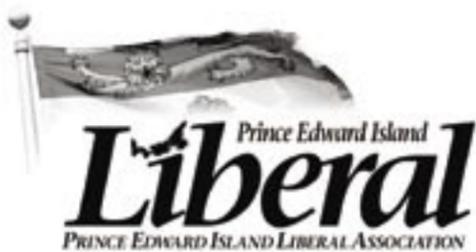
Issue: Early Childhood Education

Research shows that who and what a child becomes is mainly determined from birth to age 8. As a parent or caregiver, every time you talk, play, sing or interact with your child, you are stimulating your child's brain and helping him or her become a happy, healthy, productive individual.

As a result of this, early childhood education is key to enhanced personal development. Successful early childhood programs have been proven to have a long term positive effect on a strong economy and poverty reduction. As a means to ensuring that PEI has quality daycare programs, we must have sufficient and appropriately paid early childhood educators.

PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected will your party be committed to maintaining/improving an equitable pay grid for the Early Childhood Educators?*
- *Will large scale corporate daycares be licensed by government if they wish to come to Prince Edward Island?*



- We are very pleased to have established – for the first time ever – a pay grid for early childhood educators. Improvements and expansion to the Early Childhood system is a priority of the Liberal Party of PEI.

- We have a strong, new publicly supported system for early learning. We do not anticipate having to deal with large scale corporate daycares wishing to enter this market. There is also a cap on the number of licenses that can be issued for daycares on PEI.



- Our new Progressive Conservative team recognizes the important work that our early childhood educators carry out in the province. Our PC government will commit to reviewing the pay grid for Early Childhood Educators.
- Our new Progressive Conservative government has no plans to license large scale corporate daycares.

Early Childhood Education

Election Advocate 2011



- As most Island voters know, Early Childhood Education has been a priority of the New Democratic Party for decades. In fact, in the 1996 election, we were the first political party in P.E.I. to support the move to have kindergarten integrated into the school system — a move the other parties opposed at the time but, as with many NDP suggestions, eventually

adopted when voter support for the idea became apparent. However, we don't believe they did it properly, as Early Childhood Education in P.E.I. is still not easily accessible in all areas of the province and the costs are still too high for some families.

We favour an approach similar to the Quebec child care model, where access to child care is seen as a right and is provided at very affordable rates. We also feel that both Liberal and Conservative governments in the past failed to properly support the unionization of child care workers and failed to make adequate arrangements so that many workers in the child care field had the time and the financial support to upgrade their skills to adjust to the new model. As a result, the Liberal and Conservative parties failed to make an equitable pay grid a priority. In the interests of social and employment justice, we support an equitable pay grid for Early Childhood Educators.

- At the same time, we do not believe that child care and education should be seen as corporate profit centres. Just as we do not favour or support the "industrialization" of agriculture that has occurred over the past 60 or 70 years under the Liberals and Conservatives, we do not favour the "industrialization" of child care in Prince Edward Island, either. "MacKids" will not be licensed in P.E.I. under any NDP government!



- Parents entrust their most precious possessions to Early Childhood Educators who are, for the most part, women. Women's work is very often valued less than men's work and pay is subsequently lower. The Green Party believes we all share a collective responsibility for ensuring that every child is raised in a healthy nurturing environment where they are afforded an equal opportunity to develop physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually to their reach their full potential. Workers must be paid enough to guarantee that only the most qualified and committed educators are tasked with managing this critical phase of a child's education. We are committed to improving pay for Early Childhood Educators.

- Corporate daycares will not be licensed. Communities must be in charge of their own destiny to the greatest extent possible. Resilient, sustainable communities require economies that meet local needs and are locally controlled, minimizing dependency on external forces.

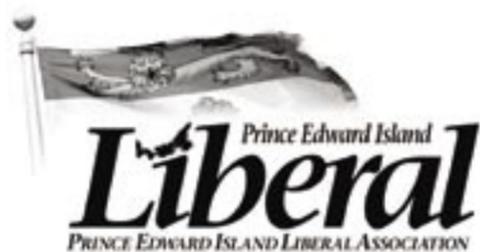


- ECE workers should be paid in accordance with their training and experience which should be a negotiated contract.
- The IP would definitely not license large scale corporate daycare centres. Daycare centres should be kept close to home as small businesses. However, all daycare facilities must be regulated, licensed and evaluated regularly.

Issue: Priorities

PEI UPSE asked:

- *If elected, what will be your party's top three priorities for PEI?*



- Our top three priorities are Health Care, Education, as well as Jobs and the Economy.

- We want to thank you for your questions and your interests in the Liberal Party of Prince Edward Island. We trust that these answers are satisfactory and we look forward to further dialogue with Islanders during the election period.



- The top three priorities of our new Progressive Conservative government are accountability through a fair and open, fiscally prudent and transparent government; strong and healthy Island families who have access to effective programs and services; and, healthy and vibrant communities all across Prince Edward Island.



As New Democrats, we believe there are many fundamental imbalances in our society, with some Islanders on the “inside” and the rest of us on the “outside”. As a political party, our mission is to highlight these imbalances — and the inequalities and inefficiencies they produce — and to generate public support for the positive alternatives that we offer. In this context, it is very difficult to select just three priorities. Nevertheless, we believe that:

1. The provincial government of Prince Edward Island must work with all Islanders to re-build our rural communities. The refusal of Liberal and Conservative governments over the past 60 or 70 years to intervene in any meaningful way to prevent the demise of our rural communities constitutes, in our view, neglect of historical proportions. We must invest in our rural communities before it is too late and work with those communities to design a sustainable and prosperous future — not to return to the so-called “good old days” but to build vibrant communities that can provide hope to current and future generations, while protecting and enhancing the environment that serves as the foundation for our farming, fishing, forestry and tourism industries.

2. Just as our rural communities and our environment must be restored to full health, the physical and mental health of all Islanders must be seen as a fundamental pillar of a prosperous and harmonious society. Health care is an investment in our future and, if delivered properly, it can create a future in which our entire society benefits and where no Islander is left behind. Yes, we must spend wisely — and listen to the voices of those who work in the health care field and those who use on our health care system. But we must also measure the true and full benefits of our health care system, not just the costs. A proper investment in health care will pay off many times over in both human and economic terms.

3. As the New Democratic Party, “Democratic” is our middle name. And while the “democratic mechanisms” of politics and government may sometimes be seen as meaningless and irrelevant by those who already possess power and influence in our society, we believe it is essential that a truly democratic form of government respect and encourage meaningful involvement in public decision-making by all citizens — not just by those who are friends of the current “home” team in the Red or Blue uniforms. A democratic government must be open and accountable and must operate its hiring and purchasing systems without favour to one group or sector in the community. It must also allow proper and easy access to the decisions made on behalf of the citizens it is supposed to represent and to the information that led to those decisions and to the steps taken as result of those decisions.

Priorities

Election Advocate 2011

As well, it must enact whistleblowers' legislation to ensure voters are protected against illegal or inappropriate actions that violate the public interest and create an Ombudsperson's office to assist citizens and public employees in exercising their rights. We do not believe that these (and the many other changes that we propose) will produce dramatic changes immediately. However, as a province, we really have only two choices: we can continue down the path that we are currently treading or we can choose to take another path that holds out the hope of a healthier, more sustainable and more equitable society. As voters, we all have a chance to affect that choice, with every vote representing a step in one direction or another. We invite UPSE members — and all Islanders — to join with us in walking this new path.



1. Democratic renewal: To ensure governments are elected via democratic processes, the Green Party will radically reform the acts governing elections and elections financing to bring PEI in line with federal election legislation and legislation in more progressive provinces. Proportional representation will replace the antiquated first-past-the-post electoral system.

2. 100% organic province: To end the ongoing and increasing contamination of air and drinking water with chemical fertilizer and pesticides, the loss of arable land to soil erosion, the de-population of rural PEI, the killing of wildlife and the negative economic effects, the Green Party will transition quickly from an industrial agriculture system to a small organic family farm system of local food production.

3. Healthy people: To reduce the massive and escalating cost of health care so that more money is available to spend on unavoidable expenses, the Green Party will implement a holistic health strategy designed to prevent illness that would include taxing junk food, kitchens in every school to prepare serve organic meals, a toxic tax on pesticides and other harmful chemicals and products, mandatory physical fitness classes in schools, free fitness, nutrition and cooking classes, expand provincial health insurance to include alternative therapies like chiropractic, acupuncture, massage and naturopathy.



• Debt reduction through a moratorium on nonessential spending. At present every section of every government department has a travel and training budget amounting to millions of dollars. The IP wonders which is the priority the training or the travel, as travel is named first. While it is essential for some out of province meetings to take place, the IP believes there is a lot of room for savings. Outsourced contracts, appointed boards, commissions and the like all need to be reviewed and many abolished.

• HST - The IP would not, under any circumstances, bring in the HST. We estimate that the added tax on a multitude of goods and services now not taxed would add an average cost of \$500 to each PEI household.

• Support for small business and farmers with guaranteed loans and fair access to the PNP. Small businesses are the backbone of the economy and unlike off shore companies they do not pack up and leave on a minutes notice. IP MLAs and their immediate family members would not be eligible to apply for PNP money. The IP believes it is a conflict of interest regardless of how it is set up.

• Control of energy costs without borrowing money for large for profit companies like Fortis (Maritime Electric). They are paying large dividends to their shareholders and the PEI government should not be in the business of financing their profits. The IP would investigate other models of providing energy to Islanders without it all being shipped south of the border.

• Elimination of the Health PEI Board. Consultations with all health care providers with regard to a sustainable, affordable way to provide the best health care possible for all Islanders. The IP is aware that we have to look at different ways of providing that care, but we also believe that a successful model cannot be laid on those who provide the care. The most important information and care model will come from those who provide it. Not to be left out are the public. Everyone needs to know, understand and approve necessary change if the change is to be a success.

• Maintain three elected school boards as the best model for parents to have input into education. While the Department of Education sets the standards, Boards deal with many issues not overseen by the Dept of Educ. The IP would meet with all Special Education Stakeholders regarding needs and assessments. The wait list for assessment is a provincial disgrace. The sooner students are assessed and on appropriate programs the more successful the child will be.