



Speech from the Throne

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of the Nova Scotia Legislature
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Lieutenant Governor



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What We Owe Each Other

Our province faces a world filled with uncertainty.

It is not the first time our province faced challenging times.

In each instance, our province persevered because Nova Scotians refused to give up.

And whenever necessary we supported our Canadian brothers and sisters.

We rallied behind our flag - the Maple Leaf flag - and stood in solidarity with one another.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of *our* flag.

The use of the maple leaf pre-dates the flag. It was worn throughout the 19th century by many in our military to help distinguish themselves from British and American troops.

Nous nous sommes rassemblés derrière notre drapeau,
l'unifolié, pour nous tenir dans la solidarité.

Cette année, notre drapeau célèbre son 60^e anniversaire.

L'utilisation de la feuille d'érable précède le drapeau. Tout
au long du 19^e siècle, de nombreux soldats canadiens
ont porté la feuille d'érable pour se distinguer des troupes
britanniques et américaines.

And though it differentiates us from others, it is also a symbol of our unity. It ties our people together - no matter where in the world our paths cross.

It reminds us of our country's natural beauty and the sacredness of our land.

The maple tree thrives in many different conditions - including our harsh winters. This serves as a reminder of how resilient and resourceful a people we are.

The maple leaf reminds us that nature provides sustenance and that we can responsibly use the land to generate prosperity.

And, as we watch the leaves turn, fall, and return, we are continually reminded that change is unavoidable ... and that it brings new opportunities.

Our flag is a reminder of our heritage and our history while also asking us to embrace change, respect one another, and respect our land while creating value from it.

I am proud to be Canadian.

I am proud to be a Nova Scotian.

Je suis fier d'être Canadien.

Je suis fier d'être Néo-Écossais.

And I am excited to address this house and our province at such a pivotal point in our history.

This throne speech is the first delivered in Nova Scotia during the reign of King Charles III.

On the eve of our flag's anniversary, it became our flag on February 15, we must remember the words uttered by Lester Pearson during its first raising:

"May the land over which this new Flag flies remain united in freedom and justice; a land of decent God-fearing people; fair and generous in all its dealings; sensitive, tolerant and compassionate towards all men; industrious, energetic, resolute; wise, and just in the giving of security and opportunity equally to all its cultures; and strong in its adherence to those moral principles which are the only sure guide to greatness."

I know we can chart a future for our province that lives up to these principles and ideals.

It won't be easy.

Storms will continually crash on our shores, but we will carry on ... with the same resolve as always.

Through wildfires and floods - we endured.

Through recessions and wars - we endured.

Through pandemics, tragedies and heartbreak - we endured.

President Trump's tariff threats are the latest storm to come crashing on our shores.

We will continue to endure.

It is what we owe those who built our province and country.

We must take a moment to remember those we've lost.

We must build a stronger province to honour them.

- **Dr. Ron Stewart**
- **Brian MacLeod**
- **Gordon Balsler**

And also because it is what we owe one another.

But it is not all that we owe each other.

We owe each other much more than that.

We must build a province that is stronger and more resilient ...

... A province where we spend more of our money here and support more local businesses.

... A province that opens our borders to trade with our Canadian neighbours.

... A province that creates more prosperity by embracing our industriousness with a resolute will to secure opportunity for all.

And mostly, we must be united in these trying times.

Only when we stand with and up for one another, can we push back forces that try to hold us back.

That is what we owe each other.

As a government, we owe Nova Scotians focus and action on the things that matter most. The government knows that you want action to improve health care ...

Action to build more housing ...

Action to address affordability ...

Action to combat future threats to our province.

The government's second term will address these issues with the same energy and level of activity as its first.

And just look at what it accomplished ...

A new medical school at Cape Breton University and the first medical graduate assessment clinic in the world will train, certify, and bring more new doctors ... *every year*.

Imagine if governments took these steps in 2009 ... 2013 ... or even just five years ago. Our health care system would look dramatically different.

When we compare 2021 to 2023, we see an increase of 265 doctors ... 75 of which are family doctors ... and 1,750 more nurses.

In addition to all of the new professionals ... the government invested in new buildings and equipment ... to have a modern health care system where health care professionals *want* to work.

In its first term, this government opened more primary care clinics, new collaborative care clinics, and made improvements at existing clinics.

New mental health clinics in Halifax ... Sydney ... and Kentville.

New recovery support centres in Dartmouth ... New Glasgow ... and Lunenburg.

There is better access to virtual care ... There is a new cardiac catheterization lab ... new MRI machines ... a new SPECT/CT scanner in Yarmouth ... and a new PET-CT scanner in Cape Breton.

In addition to all of this ... there are 2,200 more long-term care beds.

This is the result of focus and action. Because focus and action deliver results for Nova Scotians.

These investments and initiatives are how the government reduced the Need a Family Practice Registry by nearly 60,000 people from its height.

During its first term, the government delivered for families and communities by replacing older schools and building new schools.

The government offered new teaching jobs to every Bachelor of Education graduate in Nova Scotia ... and improved the classroom for teachers and students by restricting cell phones in class.

And ... the government cut daycare fees in half. By the end of March, day care fees will be \$10 per day on average.

Families also deserve a place to call a home ... one that is affordable ... the foundation for a family to grow together.

In its first term, this government launched the province's first housing plan.

It will create over 40,000 new homes.

It made record investments in affordable and public housing.

As you can see, accomplishing big things is within our reach.

We accomplish big things by holding tight to our passion for a better tomorrow while tempering our demands with patience as long as progress continues.

This government will continue to accomplish big things ... because that is what it owes the people of Nova Scotia.

In its second term, we will see more doctors come through the assessment clinic ...

We will see more doctors graduate from our universities ... and stay here to work ...

We will see more nurses and health care professionals choose to live here and build a life here.

This means the waitlist for a doctor will continue to shrink and it will continue to get easier to access care here ... because that is what the government owes *you*.

The government will fund a universal shingles program ...

This means Nova Scotians 65 years of age and older will get access to the vaccine free of charge.

It will continue to support women's health by creating Canada's first Menopause Centre of Excellence.

And it will remove parking fees at all Nova Scotia Health facilities as well as the IWK.

Nova Scotians should not have to worry about paying for parking when they are sick, healing, or grieving.

Better care. Faster. That's what you are owed.

Just last week, the government announced more publicly funded mental health care support as it works toward providing universal mental health services to the people of Nova Scotia.

Improving access to mental health and addictions treatment will help combat homelessness, reduce the use of illegal drugs, combat the overuse of legal drugs, and reduce crime.

When our streets and communities become safer, we create stronger communities where families can flourish.

These efforts and investments are not free ... they do not come cheaply. When the 2020-21 budget was tabled, health spending was just over \$4.8 billion.

Last year's budget saw that total grow to over \$5.5 billion.

This trend will continue.

Without economic growth and the new revenue it brings, the government will be unable to offer the support and services Nova Scotians need and deserve.

And a stagnant economy leads to worse health outcomes for Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotia has a high proportion of people over 65 and too many people living in low-income households.

Economic insecurity is tied to poorer health outcomes and a shorter life.

Those living in lower income neighbourhoods live 10 fewer years than those living in higher income neighbourhoods.

Chronic disease rates are also higher among low-income households. Chronic diseases are the leading cause of disability and death ... and are often preventable.

These chronic diseases were more widespread among Nova Scotians with lower household incomes.

It is clear. Poverty is poison.

The best and most enduring solution to poverty is a good-paying job.

We can create those here. We can bring jobs and the opportunities that follow.

That is also what we owe you.

We must do the work to attract businesses to our province because the government can only do so much without economic growth.

At this time, it is impossible to talk about our economy without talking about the threat of U.S. imposed tariffs on Canadian exports.

February's scare served as a wake up call for many - our nation wasn't approving projects or pipelines.

We accepted internal barriers to trade that held our people and our economy back.

We allowed ourselves to become over reliant on the United States because we believed the friendship and hospitality we showed to them would be returned.

Things are already changing.

Earlier this month, the government sent representatives to Europe to find new markets for seafood.

The premier joined a delegation to the U.S.

The government is ramping up its buy local efforts and setting up new ways for businesses to share information with the government.

But there is more to do.

In our province, we actively imposed barriers to development and investment.

We allowed sectors of our economy to become captured by special interests.

Opposing investment and job creation cannot be our default.

Giving groups vetoes that impoverish our fellow Nova Scotians will no longer be tolerated.

If we want to be ready to face tariffs or any future economic threat, we need to build an economy that is independent, resilient, and resource-focused.

We are active participants in the global economy.

Being part of this large, integrated, and interdependent economic system means many things are outside of our control.

It doesn't mean we sit back and accept whatever comes our way.

We must focus on those things we can control. Those things like approving more projects, building more pipelines, building more homes, and finding ways to do so in an environmentally safe and responsible manner.

That is what we must do.

There are countless opportunities for resource development in our province, but they will be met with resistance.

We must band together and push back against these voices who look only to oppose.

In doing so we can ensure that Nova Scotia is a generational economic success story.

That's what we must do because that is what we owe one another.

To our fishers, farmers, and foresters ... you are part of our future. The government will help your industries evolve. We are already seeing this.

In just the last month, the government announced more support for our traditional, yet innovative, sectors.

There was more support to help the beef industry upgrade their facilities.

Nova Scotia forestry products now carry the Nova Scotia Loyal brand.

Blueberry and apple farmers will receive assistance to purchase new equipment.

New tech for agriculture was funded ... which will lead to new products and new businesses.

And we aren't finished. We are here to be an ally for fishers ... farmers ... and foresters.

There are also emerging sectors that can position our province for growth.

Growth that will bring with it prosperity for the families in this province.

Like hydrogen. This industry can provide greenhouse gas free energy and add \$5 billion to our economy.

We are blessed with incredible onshore and offshore wind speeds. We must use this to our advantage. This sector is projected to be worth \$4.6 billion within seven years.

And we must harvest and develop our deposits of critical minerals. Antimony. Cobalt. Copper. Graphite. Lithium and others.

We have an abundance of critical minerals that the world needs.

These minerals are the building blocks of the green revolution.

As King Charles III has said, "We need to act now to ensure that future generations inherit a world that is not only habitable but one where nature thrives alongside human enterprise."

These minerals are how we can combat the global threat of climate change while ensuring nature thrives alongside human enterprise.

And when we develop these resources here we can use them here.

We can also send them around the world.

We can green our province while becoming a reliable and stable trading partner that can produce clean tech for countries throughout the world.

Global demand for lithium is expected to grow 43 times over 2020 levels. It is essential for the rechargeable batteries used in everything from laptops to electric vehicles.

If we are going to use clean tech, we must mine the minerals needed for clean tech.

We cannot demand electric vehicles while refusing to mine lithium.

We cannot use wind energy unless we are also willing to develop the rare earth elements needed for windmills.

We can't use energy efficient technology while refusing to develop our indium resources.

Critical minerals are called that because we cannot combat climate change without them.

As we develop these resources, we will help in the global fight against climate change and create jobs that will lift Nova Scotian families out of poverty.

On average, jobs in mining pay over \$100,000 a year.

The economic potential of hydrogen, wind, and critical minerals is massive.

Combined they can add \$16 billion to our economy and jobs throughout the province.

The government will bring in and develop modern regulations that enable development while ensuring we protect the environment.

If people tell you that can't be done ... they are trying to scare you.

The government will create an environment that is attractive to investment because that will bring jobs and prosperity here.

That is what the government owes you.

But this requires all of us to come together.

All of us have responsibility for the success of these industries.

No amount of policy or regulation can overcome a mindset that has captured too many people.

A mindset pushed by special interests.

Capitalizing on the opportunity presented by these burgeoning industries will require taking the "no" out of Nova Scotia.

Government will lead this effort, but it needs Nova Scotians to join us.

Leading by example means we will stop legislating outright bans on entire sectors.

And the government will reverse bans to allow for meaningful discussion. Discussions that will ask, "How do we do this safely?"

These industries will bring growth and this growth will bring revenue to the province, which will produce returns for Nova Scotians.

We want to keep investing in health care.

Keep investing in affordable housing.

And we want to keep cutting taxes and fees.

But these things are only possible with more economic growth.

This year, the government will reduce the HST, increase the basic personal exemption, and put an end to bracket creep.

And bridge tolls will soon be a thing of the past.

Small business taxes will drop and the small business threshold will rise ... this will help free up capital for our entrepreneurs to invest and hire more.

Reducing *your* tax burden means more money in *your* pocket ... and gives you more control over your finances.

If we look at the 10 provinces in Canada and the 50 states in the United States we see a worrying statistic.

Nova Scotia has the lowest GDP per capita in North America. We are 60th of 60.

This hurts our economy, our finances, and our health.

Economic inaction is costing many Nova Scotians a decade of their life.

This is unacceptable. We owe each other better than that.

When we look back and see where we fell short ... We can see that self-imposed limits stifled growth and opportunity.

Poverty of imagination perpetuates the cycle of poverty in our communities.

And perpetuating poverty means shorter lives for our fellow Nova Scotians.

At this moment, we must stand tall and answer this call to action.

Former Premier Robert Stanfield once asked, "Why do we try to polarize a society that is already taut with tension and confrontation?"

I doubt the former premier could imagine the world we are in today, but his question is as pressing as ever.

We must not let special interests polarize our province ... at the expense of our fellow Nova Scotians.

We must stand up for the interests of our fellow Nova Scotians.

*Nous ne devons pas laisser les intérêts spéciaux diviser
notre province... et nuire aux gens de la Nouvelle-Écosse.*

*Nous devons défendre les intérêts des gens de la
Nouvelle-Écosse.*

If we fail, we will deprive fellow Nova Scotians of life-changing opportunities.

We must stand united and embrace a growth oriented mindset.

That is what we owe one another.

Only by taking the "no" out of Nova Scotia can we unlock our province's potential.

God bless Nova Scotia, God bless Canada, God save the King.