



Newfoundland and Labrador

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# Speech from the Throne

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Delivered at the Opening of  
The First Session of the Fiftieth  
General Assembly of the Province of  
Newfoundland and Labrador  
by Her Honour  
The Honourable Judy M. Foote, PC, ONL  
Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador

**April 15, 2021**



## **Speaker and Honourable Members of the House of Assembly:**

As the representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, I welcome the newly elected and returning members of the House of Assembly for the opening of this, the First Session of the Fiftieth General Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II today mourns the loss of Her Royal Consort, His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador join together to offer Her Majesty the most sincere condolences for His passing. The Duke was a great friend to this province, having occasion to visit seventeen times from 1951 to 1997. Many will remember, with affection, His work to encourage young people throughout this province, and indeed around the world, to challenge themselves in the pursuit of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. His dedication to public service was an inspiration to us all.

In opening this session, we respectfully acknowledge the province of Newfoundland and Labrador as the ancestral homelands of many diverse populations of Indigenous people who have contributed to 9,000 years of history including the Beothuk on the Island of Newfoundland. Today, this province is home to diverse populations of Indigenous and

other people. We also acknowledge, with respect, the diverse histories and cultures of the Mi'kmaq, Innu, and Inuit.

Honourable Members, you assemble here today during a perilous time in our history. Locally, nationally, and globally, we are collectively fighting the COVID-19 pandemic that has changed every aspect of our lives in previously unthinkable ways – from the economy to education, from industries to all businesses big or small. It has claimed millions of lives around the world, including six here in Newfoundland and Labrador. To their families and loved ones, you have our deepest condolences. The people of this province share your sorrow.

We are also grateful. To all those people who get up every day to provide very necessary services to our province, you have our profound gratitude. Together, with continued perseverance, we will overcome this challenge.

My Government's vaccination plan continues to roll out. With more than 100,000 first doses in the arms of the people of this province, the goal of giving a single dose of vaccine to every eligible person who wants one by June 30<sup>th</sup> is achievable. There is a feeling of hope springing up, that this darkness we have all lived under for far too long is nearing its end.

Hope is transformative. It is something that My Government fully intends to nurture and grow, to broaden and build upon.

Honourable Members, My Government will always be forward thinking, forward moving. My Government's priorities will include promoting a healthy Newfoundland and Labrador, driving meaningful opportunities, fostering inclusive growth, modernizing education and childcare, and building strong partnerships. The coming years will bring reimagination and reinvention for our industries, and the reinvigoration of the provincial economy.

The road before us starts with fully coming to terms with the extensive economic crisis facing this province. It was a long slide to get to this point and there is no overnight solution. The recovery will require bigger, bolder steps. It will also require every member of this House of Assembly to put aside partisan issues and commit to work together. All Honourable Members must act today for the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. My Government recognizes that the situation is critical, but the opportunity is great. Each Honourable Member here today made the decision to represent the people of this province. You put yourselves forward for the good of this province. Now is the time to work together to put the good of the province first. My Government is ready and willing to rise to that challenge.

My Government's legislative program will focus on its initial plans toward economic recovery, fostering economic growth, and establishing economic and social conditions that will allow the people of this province to thrive. A review of the Elections Act will be conducted in order to develop modern legislation that ensures voting is as accessible as possible for the people of our province.

My First Minister asked Dame Moya Greene to bring her world-renowned expertise and experience to bear on the immense fiscal and economic hardships facing her home province. Dame Moya will be presenting the recommendations from the Premier's Economic Recovery Team in short order. She will set out the facts and suggest a course of action to remedy the structural problems that have troubled Newfoundland and Labrador for too long.

Using this foundational report and broad consultations, My Government will, together with the people of this province, determine the right direction forward. Understanding the full magnitude of the challenges will allow this province to choose the right solutions for the future. My Government will ensure that the cure is not worse than the disease. It will strike the right balance in navigating the necessary transformative change for all people in this province. My Government will focus on responsible debt management while investing in our exciting growth industries.

Newfoundland and Labrador will not be left to solve its problems alone. My Government will continue to build on its solid relationship with the Government of Canada. Negotiations are already advancing toward a renewed financial structure for the Lower Churchill Projects, toward the realization of the Atlantic Loop, and toward the end goal of affordable power rates. Newfoundland and Labrador will bring its surplus clean energy solutions to help its partners across the federation meet their global climate objectives.

My Government will address climate change with a dual sense of responsibility and opportunity. In order to reduce its environmental footprint, Newfoundland and Labrador will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This green transition will drive the economy with clean growth.

Demand for renewable energy solutions is growing around the world. This province's abundant renewable and non-renewable resources are needed to drive technologies that people around the world increasingly rely upon. My Government will seize these opportunities to redefine the province's traditional industries for the future – including sustainable developments in the renewable energy and mining industries. Through collaboration with the private sector, the province's clean resources will be developed in

a responsible, sustainable fashion. My Government will engage with investors from around the world to promote Newfoundland and Labrador as the global destination of choice for clean energy investment.

While this transition is underway, there is still a significant demand for Newfoundland and Labrador's oil and gas resources, which are some of the lowest carbon footprint oilfields in the world. My Government will continue to make strategic investments in oil and gas to ensure it supports the women and men working in the industry, and realize the opportunity before us to position our products during this time of transition.

Our traditional industries will enjoy modern successes. All segments of the fishing industry, including the wild caught fishery, secondary processing and aquaculture, will benefit from collaborative opportunities with our growing technology sector and efforts to ensure it offers a prosperous and inclusive career path for Indigenous peoples, women, and young people.

My Government will invest in important infrastructure projects and prioritize the hiring of qualified workers based in Newfoundland and Labrador. It will help companies and entrepreneurs reach global customers and investors through the creation of innovative



platforms. In order to provide companies and entrepreneurs access to customers and investors around the world, My Government will launch InvestNL. This one-stop online portal will highlight the province's priority sectors and showcase Newfoundland and Labrador, both as a prime location for business expansion and a hotbed for investment in innovative high growth companies.

By supporting TechNL's new Innovation Centre, My Government will help develop shared work space, networking initiatives, investment and incubation services, research, and mentorship.

Technology has dissolved borders, and My Government is using the lessons learned from the pandemic to expand its presence in the world. My Government will also bring the world to this province by tripling current immigration targets and increasing retention rates.

To address the province's aging and shrinking population, and stimulate the economy, My First Minister has established a Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills. My Government will collaborate with the Government of Canada to add more immigration categories aimed at addressing specific labour market shortages in Newfoundland and Labrador. This will cultivate growth industries, thereby creating more employment

opportunities. This province will welcome more people – including returning ex-pats – and grow its population.

Through regular discussions and engagement with the Premier’s Youth Council, My Government will incorporate their advice into a strategy to retain more young leaders. Our demographic challenges will be addressed with investment, focus, and vision.

My Government will continue to support and respect this province’s greatest resource: the people. Indigenous communities will know that reconciliation is action, not rhetoric. Building on commitments made to strengthen relationships between elected representatives, their staff, and public servants, My Government will ensure all receive training on Indigenous perspectives and culture. Sound policies and programs are founded on mutual understanding and respectful relationships.

My First Minister has established a Minister for Women and Gender Equality, and work will continue to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador is a safe, accessible, and inclusive place for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations. My Government will remove barriers and empower women and girls to achieve their full potential, both socially and economically. Inclusion must become a foundational characteristic of this province.

My Government is working to achieve a vibrant, healthy Newfoundland and Labrador. By 2031 and through culturally-sensitive, inclusive, and progressive policy initiatives both at the community and provincial level, My Government will work with the people of the province to make Newfoundland and Labrador the healthiest place in the country. Its focus will be on making healthier choices more accessible to all residents by building on the work of Sister Elizabeth Davis, Dr. Patrick Parfrey, and Health Accord NL. This 10-year health transformation plan will reimagine and revitalize the province's health care system by using a value-based approach to healthcare across the board.

Action on addressing mental health and addictions services in this province is evolving and will continue to be innovative, responsive, and adaptive. My Government will oversee the completion of the new mental health and addictions facility by 2024.

As part of the plan to address the social determinants of health, making affordable, fresh, healthy, and nutritious local food choices accessible to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is a priority of My Government. The agriculture industry will be supported and will meet the goal of 20 per cent provincial food self-sufficiency by next year.

My Government remains committed to addressing inequality and supporting vulnerable residents of Newfoundland and Labrador. Reinvigorated poverty reduction measures will combat housing and food insecurity. Government services must be provided in an accessible, modern, and efficient manner.

The community sector is vital to a healthy, vibrant, and prosperous province. My Government will provide holistic support for volunteer and non-profit organizations and the development of social infrastructure, including through the creation of an incubator and accelerator to maximize the social and economic impacts.

My Government will also increase access to fertility treatments in the province and provide free period products in schools.

This province's students will also benefit from My Government's modernization of education and childcare. New computer science and coding programming, as well as a focus on entrepreneurship, will prepare the next generations for success in the new economy. My Government will also integrate restorative justice principles into schools and update the health curriculum.

This vibrant province will continue to grow and share its legendary artistic talents with the world. My Government will expand its support for creative and cultural industries through leadership, collaboration, and leveraging technology to amplify the province's messages. The burgeoning entertainment sector continues to outperform its own successes. Enhanced infrastructure, tax incentives, and continued promotion will only solidify this province as the place for productions of all sizes. The talent is already here and waiting.

Newfoundland and Labrador is a must-visit travel destination for so many tourists and countless others who have a cultural or spiritual connection to this place. My Government will build on the province's strong tourism sector as it emerges from the pandemic, and will bolster this and all other industries even more. We look forward to hosting Come Home Year 2022 and the Canada Summer Games in 2025.

My Government realizes the importance of sustainable communities and local governance. Modern municipal legislation will be introduced, and opportunities for regional collaboration explored to further enhance the province's resilience. My Government will continue to improve on Labrador's equitable access to services, including improving access to medical transportation and the hard surfacing of the Trans Labrador Highway.

At this moment in Newfoundland and Labrador's long history, Honourable Members, you have a choice to make – a choice between complacency or action. You must choose between the status quo or change. Yes, our economic situation is difficult, but it is up to everyone in this room to build our bright future. That is the expectation for each and every Honourable member of the House of Assembly here today. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve your best.

Speaker and Honourable Members of the House of Assembly:

Estimates of expenditure will be laid before you in due course and you will be asked to grant supply to Her Majesty.

I invoke God's blessing upon you as you commence the work of the First Session of the Fiftieth General Assembly.

May Divine Providence guide you in your deliberation.



