



FROM PROVINCE HOUSE TO HOME

Leo Glavine, MLA

Kings West

When it joined Confederation in 1867 Nova Scotia was the richest province in the country. Unfortunately, a lot has changed since those first days of Canada... and, for Nova Scotia, some of those changes have not been for the better. Since 2003, Nova Scotia has consistently been at the bottom of the list for economic performance in Canada. That's a long, slow slide for a region still rich in natural and human resources.

As a province we have what it takes to be an economic leader. We have 10 degree granting institutions, our shoreline gives us access to a vast ocean and all that lies beyond it, and our soil is home to an abundance of resources be they agricultural or industrial.

The problem, I am convinced, lies in leadership. Harnessing this potential requires long-term planning. This about more than just looking to tomorrow or next year, we need plans that set out what this province will look like in 10 years or even 50 years. True success comes with vision and passion... and a willingness to look to the future.

Liberal leader, Stephen McNeil, recently travelled to Newfoundland to meet with Premier Danny Williams. He was impressed with what he found – not because of the man's politics but because of his vision. Williams is looking beyond his time in office as Premier and trying to lay out a map for his province's future.

Here in Nova Scotia we're mired down in the detail of day to day politics. We have organizations that can't even set a plan for the coming year because the Conservatives refuse to set a firm date for the provincial budget. It seems a simple thing to set a fixed budget date but it can accomplish so much. Real leadership is about governing, not playing politics with people's lives. Our schools, hospitals and local governments have to have certainty in their budget planning to offer us the services we need.

Leadership is also about leveraging the present to ensure sustainability in the future. It's not just about make-work projects designed to ride out a recession, it's about creating an environment that will provide work now, but will also promote new ideas and technological innovation to set a path for the future. The brain power in our schools and technical institutes can be harnessed with a little foresight. I believe setting up research parks is a chance to create long term value. These would use the intellectual power already at work in Nova Scotia in combination with private industry to develop and commercialize the research already being done in educational institutions. With just a three million dollar investment, it is estimated that every job in a research park would create two and a half more.

Long-term vision isn't just limited to economic investment. True leadership looks ahead to solve problems like doctor shortages. As a condition of our support for the budget, we forced the government to set aside spots in our medical schools for students willing to stay and practice in our rural communities. We're also encouraging the government to create an energy plan that will develop Nova Scotia as an energy corridor, creating sustainability in the energy sector and, at the same time, developing home grown green energies. The world is changing and Nova Scotia cannot afford to be an energy island and we cannot afford to continue to produce 89% of our power from fossil fuels.

This is a rich province in so many ways but translating that human and resource wealth is a job that takes vision and a commitment to planning long beyond just one premier or one party's time in power. We need leadership and if our current government can't stand up for this province, we need to find someone who will.

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