

QUESTIONNAIRE

for the leaders of Newfoundland and Labrador's
three provincial parties in the 2015 election

Over the last two decades our province experienced dramatic economic growth, but the very richest among us have harvested most of that growth. The poor and the middle class have not seen much benefit. From an urban perspective, as per the National Household Survey of 2011, St. John's competed closely with the main cities in Canada, standing shoulder to shoulder with Ottawa-Gatineau, trailing narrowly behind Vancouver and Regina and was marginally ahead of Montreal in percentage of residents in the top 1% of income earners in Canada.

We recognize that most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians do not live in urban settings. Looking at income tax data for the entire population, we see other disturbing trends. Recent StatsCan's data on income tax filers showed that the top 1% of earners in Canada took home 10.3 % of all income in 2012 down from 10.6% a year earlier. This percentage may have further come down marginally in 2014. However, a close look at the data revealed that the inequality in the income of the earners has been growing at an alarming rate among the energy exporting parts of the Country.

This is comparable for our province. Newfoundland and Labrador's top 10% earners took home 31.5% of all income in the province in 2012, compared to just 22.4% in 2006. In our province this has happened despite the efforts of the Poverty Reduction Strategy's efforts to alleviate the plight of the vulnerable population. Now that the oil revenue has plummeted, the brunt of the reversal in fortune is being born by the low wage earners in this sector more than the people at the other spectrum, increasing the gap further.

Poverty in our 'land of milk and honey' is failure of our community. We became a 'have' province recently, but the plight of our 'have-nots' has lagged way behind. Our food banks are seeing growing demand from working families and students. Middle-income families are suffering from the fact that the cost of living has been increasing much faster than the marginal raise in their income.

1. What do you propose to do to close the growing gap between the rich and poor in Newfoundland and Labrador?
2. Would your party work to create well-paying stable jobs at the lower end the spectrum either through public sector or through private sector or through their partnership, to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor?
3. Would you create a Fairness Test or Fairness Impact Study (akin to Environmental and Gender Impact Studies) as one method to close the gap between rich and poor in Newfoundland and Labrador, and designate the Poverty Reduction Strategy to oversee this?
4. Will your party work towards implementing a progressive tax policy to close the gap between the wealthiest and the remainder of the population?
5. Would your party work to implement, at the least, Government's own recommendation of 2012, to index minimum wages of the worker in the province?
6. Following in the foot prints of municipalities and businesses in other provinces of our Country, would your party work towards passing a Living Wage Law that would require all provincial and municipal contracts and

subcontracts to pay every worker sufficient income to live decently?

7. Will your party work toward creating a universal Early Education/Child Care program such as in the province of Quebec?
8. What will your party do to make housing more affordable for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians?
9. Will your party create Universal Pharmacare as an effective way to strengthen health care, reduce health care costs and eliminate poverty?