









One of her proudest moments was a very successful effort to involve more women in political life and in her honour, we must work hard to bring more women candidates to the next general election.

Dianne passed away gracefully, courageously and humbly, knowing in her heart that, with the support and cooperation of so many in this Party and this province, she had indeed made a lasting difference in the lives of others.

I know that she would want me to pass along to each and every one of you just how grateful she was of such an amazing team of individuals, working by her side to make our province a better place.

As friends and partners, let's re-dedicate our efforts in the year ahead to the principles that Dianne shared with us, and continue building on the foundation that all of us have so effectively laid down.

Now, I want to do something a little unusual here this evening, because it is traditional in convention speeches – especially given we are less than a year away from an election – to come down hard on the opposition. And there will certainly be a time for that over the next twelve months!

But as political as we all are, we also recognize that all of us, first and foremost, are human beings who face all sorts of challenges in our lives from time to time. The Leader of the Opposition is facing one such challenge right now as she battles a terrible disease that has affected so many; indeed many here in this room tonight.

I want Yvonne to know that we are all praying that she will get through this battle successfully and join the many others throughout this province who today are celebrating victory over this illness and the dawn of a new day in their lives.

Yvonne is a formidable opponent and I have every confidence that she will overcome and be there stronger and tougher than ever when we go to the polls next October.

Indeed, this fall has been a very difficult time for many families and communities in this province, in the aftermath of Hurricane Igor.

Not in living memory have we been impacted by a weather event so severe and so widespread in its devastating impact.

One man tragically lost his life, and we again express our deepest condolences to the Duffett family.

And even now, after a month of unprecedented relief efforts there is still much to be done to repair the extensive damage to our infrastructure but we are determined not to let up until the work is completed and the claims are settled and people whose lives were turned upside-down are back on a solid footing.

And I want to extend our deep appreciation to those whose efforts deserve our applause.

I want to begin by thanking our Minister of Transportation and Works who at the time was also the Acting Minister of Municipal Affairs and Fire and Emergency Services, Tom Hedderson.

Tom worked himself to the bone in the aftermath of that storm. But he always managed his work load with dignity and determination and even a smile from time to time.

As well, the team of remarkable individuals throughout our government departments whose round-the-clock relief and repair efforts were nothing short of phenomenal. The women and men involved in emergency response, clean up and repair was of incredible.



I want to thank those who raised money and acknowledge the media for telling the story of Igor in a way that was respectful and thorough.

I also want to thank the members of the Canadian Forces, volunteer fire fighters, municipal crews, Red Cross, Salvation Army and all of the volunteer efforts.

And let me especially thank those who reached out to help others even when they themselves were greatly impacted by the storm. That is the true nature of our people shining through – sharing whatever they have, and welcoming others into their own homes as members of the family.

That is who Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are.

That's the reason this province is **worth fighting for** and it's the reason we are absolutely confident that we have what it takes to endure whatever challenges come our way!

And goodness knows we have faced many challenges in the course of our history. Having witnessed that over the years was the driving force behind my entering politics.

And our team made a commitment to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2003.

We made a solemn pledge to do everything in our power – absolutely everything that a responsible government could do – to give this province a fighting chance at self-reliance and a fighting chance at a sustainable future for our families and our communities.

As I said earlier, this week marks our seventh year in office and what a seven years it has been. In that short time, for the first time in our history, we have thrown off the shackles of ‘have-not’ status.

And, just as importantly, we have thrown off the old stereotype that we were somehow less than equals in our own country.

Today – right here and right now – we are **leading** the country in growth, **leading** the country in confidence, **leading** the country in optimism and opportunity. We are heralded by the Governor of the Bank of Canada as an economic model for the rest of Canada and in a recent Globe article, Standard and Poors ranked **only** our province with a positive outlook.

Our transformation from have-not to have was neither an accident, nor was it inevitable.

We made it happen by the strength of our will, the power of our attitude, the effectiveness of our planning and the boldness of our actions.

**Together, we fought triumphantly** to achieve fair royalties and equity stakes in three monumental offshore oil projects.

**Together, we fought triumphantly** to return to our people the energy and timber resources of central Newfoundland.

**Together, we produced a national** model for Poverty Reduction. **And together, we developed** student aid policies that are the envy of the country.

I want you to know that it would have been difficult if not impossible for me to stand so strongly and draw those critical lines so clearly in the sand **without** the powerful and unyielding support of the people of this Party; **without** the people right here in this room.

Your uncompromising dedication is a true inspiration to me. It is what motivates me every morning.

And you have seen what we can accomplish when we act responsibly together. You are benefiting in your own lives from our successes.

Since 2007 alone, we have eliminated **1.2 Billion** in taxes right across this province. Our Low Income Seniors' Benefit amounts to 28.6 million dollars this year, compared to 7.5 million dollars in 2003. So don't let anyone tell you this government doesn't care about our seniors, who we do indeed value so much in this society.

Our multi-billion-dollar infrastructure strategy has dramatically improved our roads and highways, wharves and bridges, terminals and ferries, schools and hospitals, and has resulted in a resurgence of activity and opportunity in our rural and urban communities alike.

When the economic tsunami hit the world in 2009, we were not just good and ready, but in fact, better prepared than most. And when the foundations shook around the world in 2009, ours held firm.

Having a proven approach that worked, we simply ramped up our investments in basic infrastructure, got the money out early, got the cement trucks pouring, the road-workers paving and the buildings rising.

And now, we're prepping for phase two – our next eight-year plan that will build on the solid foundation we have spent our time securing since 2003.

But a solid foundation is not an end in itself. It is an invitation to build something great.

And as we move towards the election in 2011, we must stay the course.

As in 2003, our vision must be bold.

I am reminded again of the words of Dianne Whalen's maiden speech in the House of Assembly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2004 when she said, "I have been asked several times now, whether I am worried about getting re-elected. This is not about re-election, Mr. Speaker. It is about doing what is right and what is necessary. It is about putting the future of this province first."

She captured it! She knew that if we put people first, if we acted in your best interests and if we focused on our collective vision, we would succeed.

And although our successes have been great, great challenges remain.

From health care, to resource development to social programs and climate change - the challenges will always be there. This is why we can never bury our heads in the sand or coast along on past victories. We cannot go back to the old ways, but we must move ever forward as one people with one voice.

For us, a challenge is an opportunity to take the lead, to test our mettle and to win fresh victories for the greater benefit of Newfoundland and Labrador.

For example, just over a month ago we made a substantial and fair offer to the Federal Government for the purchase of the 8.5 percent share and net profit interest of the Hibernia project. And we are hopeful that their sense of fairness will kick in and restore this asset to the rightful owners, which are the people of this province.

As a government, we will also continue with the dozens of strategic plans that, since 2003, we have launched on everything from infrastructure to innovation, skills development to immigration, fisheries and aquaculture to agrifoods, energy to climate change, post-secondary education to poverty reduction, northern regional planning to air access, sports and recreation to healthy aging, and many more.



And of course, also looming large on the horizon right now is the development of the Lower Churchill project.

Right now, we are in discussions with Emera Energy and the folks in Nova Scotia who are anxious to be our partners as we move forward.

Imagine how exciting a day it would be if we could see that power avoid Quebec altogether and use the power ourselves or send it our neighbours in the Maritime Provinces and New England states. And it could happen my friends - just wait and see!

With this potential new and mutually beneficial partnership with Emera Energy which builds upon our existing partnership with them on our recall power from the Upper Churchill, we are embarking upon an exciting journey that has never before been seriously contemplated and pursued by those seeking to develop the Lower Churchill.

We are saying "thank you Quebec, but we simply do not need you to develop this project". We are going to bring that clean, green power down from Labrador to the island and then sending power across to Nova Scotia.

Ultimately, some of the power could also end up going into New Brunswick or the hungry United States market as Emera has assets in Maine as well.

How about that folks? Our power developed and managed by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and sold to market for the first time in history without having to beg Quebec for a piece of the pie!

This partnership with Emera would be based on another previously untested development option, and that is a phased development of the project. As you know the Lower Churchill River system is comprised of Muskrat Falls with 824 megawatts of power and Gull Island with 2250 megawatts.

Our discussions with Emera and Nova Scotia would result in a partnership that would see us proceed with the development of Muskrat Falls first. The power from Muskrat would be used to help us displace expensive, dirty power from Holyrood which in itself justifies the project, and then the remainder would be sold to our partners in Nova Scotia and beyond.

By using the Lower Churchill power here in the province, we will be able to provide stable rates for generations to come and an appropriate return to the treasury.

We would share the transmission with willing partners, unlike those in Quebec.

The larger Gull Island development would be a separate phase to follow, and would provide opportunities to attract industry to Labrador, should commercial partners be prepared to provide appropriate economic benefits.

Needless to say, there are still details to be worked out before and if a final agreement falls into place. But we are extremely excited about the prospects of developing this project in a way that brings real and meaningful benefits to the people of the province, to our partners and to our customers.

Of course, it is never over til it is over but we are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to announce something sooner rather than later.

I am hopeful that with your support we can finally see this project get off the ground.

But of course, we as politicians know that we can never take that support for granted – none of us – not ever.

And to that end we will never stop working to earn our privilege to govern.

And let none of us yield to the temptation to be smug heading into the next election, because there is no time for smugness when there is so much left to do for our province.

This is not the time after all of this hard work, to pass the reins of government back to those who mismanaged it in the first place.

This convention has given us the perfect opportunity to share ideas and approaches in preparation for the busy year ahead. When next we meet in a convention like this, the 2011 election will already be history.

In fact, in less than a year from now, on the evening of Tuesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, the people will already have spoken. Our window of opportunity to lay our case before the people for a third term is the time between now and that date – slightly less than a year.

A year seems like a long time to many people, but to all of us here who have been through campaigns before, it is not a long time at all. It is a flash.

That is why our preparations for 2011 already started in earnest some time ago and in the New Year, they will ramp up to the next plateau.

This weekend, all of you have been encouraged in your efforts to secure your teams and chart a critical path, mapping out the events on your election calendar.

And along with old pros like many here tonight, we are always eager to welcome new people to our team because we believe every person can make a difference.

I was a young lad when I got involved in my first political campaign, and as you can see, it left a lasting impact.

There is nothing that engages a Newfoundlander and Labradorian more than the future of our province, and knowing that by getting involved they are taking an active role in securing a brighter future for their loved ones and their communities.

Above all, as Party workers, challenge complacency wherever you see it.

There is a tendency, when a government seems popular and powerful, for people to think their involvement is not needed – and perhaps not their vote either.

We all believe that nothing could be further from the truth.

We need every single individual just as much now as we did before the elections of 2003 and 2007.

When we press forward on Lower Churchill development, **what strength we will have** with the people of our province standing with us as one.

As we continue to fight for our province's best interests in all sorts of resource developments, **what strength we will have** when it is clear that the people of our province are standing with us as one.

Never underestimate the power of solidarity to achieve spectacular results.

And now, as I conclude, let me ask you:

**Are you excited** about the year ahead?

Are you **really** excited about the year ahead?

***Are you ready*** to work hard in every District across this island and throughout the Big Land and to share our vision for the future?



**Are you willing** to get our there and earn the votes of the people we serve?

**Are you ready** to continue making a personal difference in advancing the best interests of Newfoundland and Labrador?

Do we still know what we're fighting for? You bet we do. The best is yet to come, folks.

So let's renew our resolve to continue doing all that we can do to usher in a bright and sustainable future of self-reliance for this place we know and love as 'home' – our one and only Newfoundland and Labrador. Thank you.

**Nomination for Jeff Paddock**

Served under Brian Peckford, Len Simms, Tom Rideout, Ed Byrne, Danny Williams  
(Get a list of all other leaders in the interim off party web site)

Written our government's Budget Speeches and Speeches from the Throne

Tireless worker

Creative

Ingenious speech writer

Incredible researcher

Impeccable work ethic

Fiercely loyal

Dedicated

Works literally around the clock if need be

Hired by Brian Peckford, worked with government every since