

**Speaking Notes
Premier Kathy Dunderdale
Swearing-in Ceremony
Government House, St. John's, NL
Friday, December 3, 2010**

On November 25th, after dedicating seven years of his life to rewriting the future of Newfoundland and Labrador, Danny Williams announced he would be stepping aside as Premier and entrusting the responsibility for governing our province, first to me as Interim Leader and then, in the spring, to the individual who will lead our Party into the general election next fall.

On behalf of our province, I thank Danny Williams from the bottom of my heart for his enormous contribution and his unwavering dedication to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

And I thank the people of our province for their unwavering dedication to our Premier and our government these past seven years, because – as Danny so clearly stated last week – it is because you were there when he needed you most that he was able to deliver for Newfoundland and Labrador.

In his words: “We have come this far together, and the best is yet to come.”

Our foundation today is rock-solid.

And that foundation is just the beginning. It is the bedrock – the cornerstone – the promise of something greater still to come.

Never before in our history have we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians been stronger, or better positioned, or better prepared than we are right now to achieve the full measure of our potential.

Never have we been more determined to succeed.

And never have we been more confident that we can.

As we chart a course forward, let us never forget what got us here.

Let us never forget those uncertain days before the Atlantic Accord.

Let us never forget those uncertain days before equity stakes or top royalty rates in Hebron, Hibernia South and the White Rose extension.

Let us never forget those uncertain days before the agreement on the Lower Churchill - because it was in those days when so much was uncertain that two things were never in doubt.

The first was the unwavering resolve of the leader.

And the second was the unwavering support of the people.

If both are secure, there is nothing we cannot achieve.

Today, I pledge to you no less than my complete and unwavering commitment as I step forward to serve you as your Premier during the months to come.

I thank each one of you for sharing this day with me as I accept the responsibility and the privilege of dedicating myself to this province I so dearly love as its tenth Premier.

All my life, I have been driven to try to make a positive difference in the lives of those around me – to fix what was broken, and to lift those who'd fallen upon hard times.

In the fisheries, in community development, in social work, I have held people's hands and shared with them the heavy burdens that were holding them down.

In our rural communities, I've worked with families and for families to find a way forward to something brighter.

Seven years ago, I was given the honour of representing the people of Virginia Waters in the House of Assembly and the people of our province in Cabinet.

I first served as Minister of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, and then I served as Minister of Natural Resources during pivotal years for mining, forestry, offshore and onshore oil, and Churchill power.

I was Minister of Natural Resources when we unveiled our province's first comprehensive Energy Plan; when we announced the White Rose extension, Hebron and Hibernia South; when we announced significant improvements to the Voisey's Bay project; when we secured the people's valuable water and timber rights in Central; and when we announced – just two weeks ago – a groundbreaking agreement to develop the Lower Churchill – a project that promises to establish Newfoundland and Labrador as a green-energy superpower in North America.

I enjoy the challenge and satisfaction of being engaged in these significant pieces of work – of being able to take hold of the promise of natural resource development for the benefit of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and make it a reality.

In the months to come, I am determined to ensure that, as we prosper economically, we will continue to be wise stewards of the people's finances, investing responsibly to sustain vital investments in regional infrastructure, health care, social supports and solid education for our children.

I have an unfailing commitment to our province's children – our most-precious treasure of all.

I am delighted to have my family here today – (my brothers and sisters) and especially my children, Sara and Tom, their partners, Matthew and Jillian, and my grandchildren, Jack, Nathan and Liam. They are my motivation to take on this enormous challenge.

It is to our children that we owe our service, knowing the future they inherit tomorrow is in our hands to shape today.

How grateful I am to know that I am not carrying this responsibility alone. I am surrounded by exceptionally-capable and dedicated colleagues throughout our Cabinet and Caucus.

And in communities throughout our province, there are thousands upon thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who share the dream that propelled me forward since I was a young woman in Burin. I am so grateful for all the messages of support I have received over the last eight days.

As I see my grandchildren smiling at their Mimi here today, I am reminded of how different life was for my own grandmother. Until 1925, a woman could not even vote in Newfoundland and Labrador, and today, for the very first time in our province's history, a woman serves as Premier. Imagine that!

Few changes of any consequence happen just by accident. They happen when good people resolve to make things better.

With my heart and soul, I pledge to the people of our great province that we will not lose focus, nor will we lose steam.

We will defy any critics who would deny our children the opportunities that are theirs.

We will defend the best interests of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians wherever they are challenged.

And we will spare no effort to advance our province forward to the bright future of self-reliance that we have clearly in view.

As the pillars of our new economy rise tall and proud and strong on the Canadian landscape, let us together today pledge boldly, with confidence and unshakable resolve, that we as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians will work as one, with steadfast determination, to complete the task we've started, building ever upward to reach the full height of our magnificent potential.

And may God continue to guard thee, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Thank you all very much.