

Fighting against Poverty

Propositions by the Common Front for Social Justice

Basic Rates

-That the increases planned for October 2013 and April 2014 also apply to single persons with no employment barrier, and

-That the basic rates be gradually increased to reach an income level that allows people on social assistance to live in dignity.

Food Banks

-That the report on food banks and soup kitchens commissioned by the current government and authored by Debbie McInnis from United Way of Greater Moncton and Southeastern N.B. be released to the public;

-That a tax on junk food be instituted to reduce consumption of non-nutritive foods that have a detrimental impact on health, including obesity and diabetes, two illnesses that are on the rise in this province. Revenue from this tax could be invested in supplemental benefits for persons living below the poverty line, and

-That a provincial breakfast program be implemented in all schools in the province.

Employment, Income & Unemployment

That the minimum hourly wage be increased by \$0.25 per year for the next four years, to reach \$11.00 an hour in 2017. As shown in Table 1, this increase will yield a \$520 increase in yearly income, an amount not likely to cause hardship to employers who pay only minimum wage, and

-That minimum wage be increased each year in April based on Statistics Canada's Poverty line, as is currently being done in Nova Scotia.

Social Assistance - Wage exemptions

-That single employable persons be allowed to keep their monthly earnings up to a total of \$1,000, over and above their regular social assistance and medical card, and that this exemption be reviewed periodically, especially if basic assistance rates are increased, and

-That lone parents with one child be allowed to keep their monthly earnings up to a total of \$1,500, over and above their regular social assistance and medical card, and that this exemption be reviewed periodically.

Pay equity

- That our provincial government adopt pay equity legislation that includes all private sector employees;

- That an independent organization be created to promote pay equity and process complaints. This organization should be mandated to conduct its own inquiries and empowered to enforce its decisions;

- That government improve the methodology used to assess pay equity, working in collaboration with the NB Pay Equity Coalition, and

- That government absorb the extra costs to employers that accompany the disbursement of pay equity adjustments.

Child care services

-That the provincial government take the steps needed to transform our current child care system into a public child care network for the children of New Brunswick.

Seniors

-That the federal government roll back to 65 the age at which Canadians can receive Old Age Security benefits;

-That the federal government gradually implement a twofold increase in Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Québec Pension Plan (QPP) benefits;

-That the federal government increase Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) benefits for all retirees;

-That the provincial government implement strict legislation penalizing companies that fail to contribute adequately to their employees' pension fund, and

-That the provincial government implement legislation that places pension funds among the first liabilities to be satisfied when an employer declares bankruptcy.

Tax Revenues

- That the taxation levels for individuals and corporations be established at those in effect in 2008;

- That a fifth level of taxation in the amount of 21% be applied to those whose earnings surpass \$150,000 per year.

Social Assistance Policies in Need of Change: Disability

- That the Medical Advisory Board be abolished and replaced by two travelling boards, made up of three persons each, including a psychiatrist, a general practitioner and an expert in human sciences;

- That the applicant must have the right to be heard in person;

- That the right to appeal must be respected. When applications are rejected, applicants must be able to present an appeal before a doctor acting as a referee.

Home-Care Workers

- That the Province change its long-term care policies by increasing the maximum number of hours of care in order to promote home-care and to allow a greater number of citizens to receive care and to remain in their homes as long as possible;

- That the Government move to regulate this area of activity in order to avoid all forms of exploitation and so that home-care workers can expect better working conditions;

-That home-care be made a public service, totally funded and managed by the provincial government.