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FAST FACTS

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Manitoba Election 2007

CCPA- Manitoba Blog
<http://ccpamb.wordpress.com>

Sorting Through the Smoke and Mirrors

The race is on. Over the next month, the political parties contesting the Manitoba election will strategically unveil their policy platforms as they compete for our votes. This is a time for critical reflection on the issues facing Manitoba.

The CCPA-Manitoba Election Blog will provide the opportunity for critical reflection, and help Manitobans think out loud about the complex issues of our time.

The CCPA-Manitoba Election Blog will provide Manitobans with an opportunity to share their ideas and their insights into what they see as important election issues.

When sorting through the policy snippets put forward to lure our votes, it is critical that we look at what each party says in the context of what they have done. While analysis of the policy positions of all political parties vying for

votes is informative, it is also important to look at the records of the two parties that have held power in recent history. What have they actually done when in power? Which policies have held the test of time? Whose interests have these policies served? How consistent are the words of politicians with their actions?

Hugh McFadyen, leader of the Conservative Party, was quick to release his five-point plan for Manitoba. He promises to re-attract young people, refresh our environment, restore front-line services, reclaim our streets and renew our communities. His claims will have to be measured against his performance as a senior policy advisor to the Filmon governments of the 1990s. So it is relevant to recall what happened then.

Public services were critically compromised. Manitoba's publicly owned telephone service was privatized. MTS is now primarily owned



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***FASTFACTS* continued ...**

by foreign investors. Health care was put in a shambles with what turned out to be ill-advised privatization schemes. Promises to improve homecare through privatization failed and were later dropped when it became clear that there would be no savings nor better services, and that the American company that won the contract had faced court charges in the USA for their work there. Cuts resulted in critical shortages of nurses that have taken years to reverse. The Tory solution to improve the welfare system was to establish a snitch line that proved to be a waste of tax payers money.

The Tory record on renewing communities is also worth recalling. The 1990s saw decline in the inner city as a result of the Conservative government's neglect, and their damaging cuts to many effective community-based organizations. Although challenges continue to exist, Winnipeg's inner city has since moved beyond its former reputation as the arson capital of Canada, to being an example of community revitalization admired by practitioners and policy makers across the country. As CCPA-Manitoba's *State of the Inner City Report* shows, recent investment in the inner city is beginning to pay off, and some neighbourhoods are showing marked improvement.

In spite of their promise to restore front-line services, early in the campaign the Tories stole a page from the Harper plan book by promising a 1% cut to PST. While this may save a family of four up to \$250 per year, it will drain

\$190 million annually from the public purse and that means less money to spend on important public services.

Gary Doer's NDP is running a campaign on their record as 'builders'. Indeed, we have seen significant financial infusion in infrastructure development over the past eight years. This has helped to keep Manitoba's economy chugging along and the most recent budget commitments suggest this direction will continue. The NDP government has implemented initiatives that have seen some improvements in health care and have demonstrated a commitment to the recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry through reforms to the child welfare system. But more needs to be done. Many NDP supporters are concerned with aspects of the Doer government's economic strategy, including the focus on the hog industry. Many are hoping for more vision and leadership from an NDP government, including a deeper commitment to ensuring that all Manitobans, and in particular those most marginalized, are included in Manitoba's prosperity.

These are matters that we should be discussing and debating, and that is what we hope our blog will help do.

- Shauna MacKinnon

Shauna MacKinnon is the Director of the CCPA-Manitoba.

For more in depth analysis and discussion of the various policy platforms and election promises, check out the CCPA- Manitoba's election blog at <http://ccpamb.wordpress.com>



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