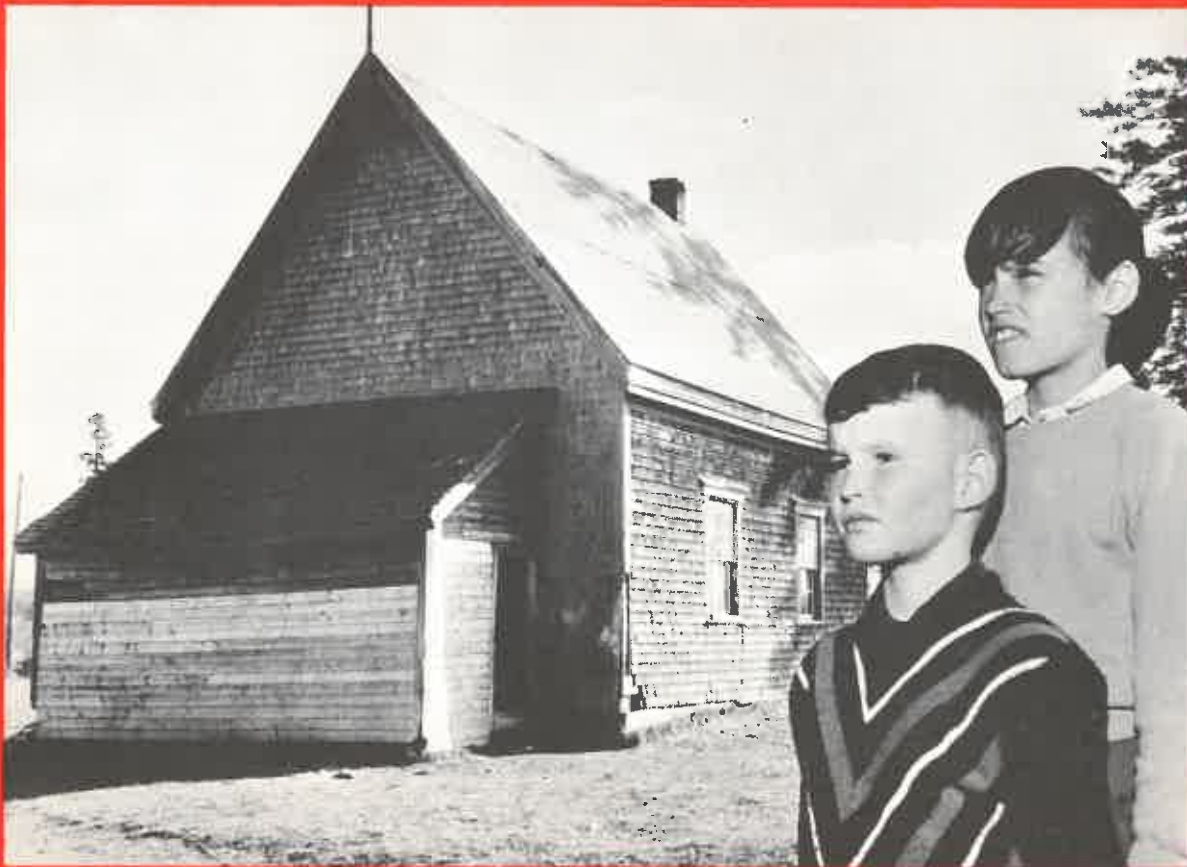


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*"A program for
Equal Opportunity"*

A SPEECH BY

Hon. Louis J. Robichaud, Q.C.

Legislative Assembly

November 16, 1965

"A PROGRAMME FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY"

A SPEECH BY

HON. LOUIS J. ROBICHAUD, Q.C.

TO

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

NOVEMBER 16, 1965

MR. SPEAKER:

ON MARCH 4TH of this year I tabled in this House a White Paper on the responsibilities of Government.

At the conclusion of the White Paper, the following is stated, and I quote, "The principle calls for an acceptance of minimum standards of services and opportunities for all citizens, regardless of the financial resources of the locality in which they live.

"This is the principle which must be accepted, or rejected, before any meaningful discussion of ways and means can be undertaken. If it is accepted, then traditional ways and means, traditional institutions and patterns, must be re-examined.

"The Government of New Brunswick is prepared to accept this principle. We are prepared to accept, from this point on, the full responsibility for acceptable minimum standards of education, health, welfare, and justice for all New Brunswickers. The Byrne Report provides one path towards the implementation of that responsibility. We are not yet satisfied that it is the only path."

Mr. Speaker: The concluding paragraphs of that White Paper urged all citizens, all members of this House, all local governments, and all interested groups to determine in their own mind the acceptability of this principle.

The implications of the acceptance or rejection of the principle are such that the government wished the people of this Province to have an adequate opportunity to state their views.

Eight months have passed since that White Paper was tabled in this House. The Government of the Province of New Brunswick accepts the principle that a minimum standard of services and opportunity must be available for all citizens regardless of the financial resources of the locality in which they live. The Government of New Brunswick is now prepared to present to this House legislation which will give life to this principle.

The problems referred to in the White Paper on Government Responsibilities, the specific concern of several Royal Commissions and that of the Royal Commission on Municipal Finance and Taxation in particular, are still very much with us. With our expanding economy and growing prosperity many of these problems have been compounded rather than improved.

The disparities which are evident among the nations of our World and among regions of our nation exist in equal measure within our own Province.

We expect people in a municipality where many lack dependable incomes to provide the same level of services as municipalities where incomes are steady and high.

We can no longer close our eyes and hope for a God-given miracle to end these disparities which are contributing to an irreplaceable waste of our most treasured possession — our people.

Our present school system provides evidence of some of the most shocking inequalities within New Brunswick.

In too many rural areas, our children are compelled to attend ill-equipped, ramshackle school buildings constructed a century ago.

In one room, as many as 30 children in eight grades are taught by one over-worked and often under-trained teacher. Is this House willing to let this continue or are you, as we are, prepared to accept the future of these children as the responsibility of the province as a whole?

These children have the right to the same educational opportunity available if they lived a few miles away in a consolidated school district with its modern educational complex. We intend to give them this opportunity.

While education offers the most glaring examples of inequalities, they can be found in other areas where the province will assume responsibility. Our court houses are generally of 19th century vintage, our system of ad-

ministering justice has not kept up to the times, our people lack equality of hospital facilities, our Municipal Homes for the most part are inadequate, we lack cohesion and equality in our welfare programs.

Members on both sides of this House are fully aware of the inequalities that are present in our Province.

If the present provincial-municipal relationship continues unchanged, the situation can only worsen. Our municipalities lack the resources to continue the existing programs. How could they possibly hope to meet the huge expansions of essential services so necessary in the years immediately ahead if our people are to have an equal opportunity to share in New Brunswick's prosperity?

The problems of local government are not new problems nor is the situation as bleak as the Royal Commission would have us believe. However, they cannot adequately be solved through the simple traditional expedient of providing more money. There is a theory of public administration that any problem can be solved with more money, more men, or a combination of both. This government does not subscribe to this theory at any time. It is particularly inappropriate considering the present problems of our local government institutions.

As indicated in the White Paper a revision of our local government institutions and the division of responsibilities between the provincial government and local governments is necessary.

Although there is disagreement with many of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, it must be and indeed, I think, is recognized that the conclusions of the Royal Commission are valid. Their Report is an amazingly well documented statement of the problems and needs of local governments and an indictment of the present institutional organizations. Reading this report brings quite forcefully to one's attention the need for immediate reorganization.

It is regrettable that while there is great public concern for the problems of local government, there is, at the same time, little public debate.

The Government wishes to thank all who have expressed their concern and publicly stated their opinions in briefs to the Royal Commission on Municipal Finance and Taxation and in subsequent comment on the Royal Commission's Report.

The Government is concerned that citizens who were interested enough in the affairs of the community to prepare briefs to the Royal Commission should have an opportunity to comment upon the legislation developed and has taken the step of recommending the establishment of a Law Amendments Committee. I trust that those who have commented to the Commission and, subsequent to the publication of its report, have presented briefs to the Government, will avail themselves of the opportunity to present their case as the Law Amendments Committee allows.

I would hope that the creation of this Committee of the House will assist in developing public debate and understanding. The Committee has been so established that it can receive comment from any citizen or group that is sufficiently concerned to present a written commentary.

The opinions expressed in the briefs to the Commission and the Government have been borne in mind during the Government's deliberation on the recommendations of the Royal Commission. However, many of these briefs are naturally limited in their concern — that is, they have reflected the opinions of affected groups over only those recommendations affecting their area of interest. Due to the intricate interrelationship of the responsibilities of local government, it must be considered in a total context and not just a part at a time.

This, we believe, is what the Royal Commission referred to when it stated that its recommendations were a "package plan". To

assume that such changes could be effected at one time is to ignore the administrative facts of life. As well, many elements of the Commission's proposed system of local government would have to precede others if a logical, understandable system were to be installed.

However, we have learned that the recommendation cannot be successfully understood without a full understanding of the entire pattern. The individual parts are often incomprehensible, disagreeable, and seem little more than mental exercises when studied separately.

It is the Government's responsibility to view the problems of local government as a total system. The Government has examined the problems of local government and reviewed these in light of the Royal Commission's examination. Bearing in mind the goals to be achieved, coupled with the resources available, a program has been developed.

The legislation which will be presented to this House in the days immediately ahead represents the government's conclusions after gathering and considering all the opinions expressed over the past several years.

It is a program of change — change for the better. Changes in many of our institutions of government, and changes in the quality of government services. Changes in the location of the burden of taxation, changes to effect greater equality in taxes paid and services received. But, this is not a program of change for its own sake. Change, in itself, has no inherent value.

Many of our institutions of government, designed with the knowledge of the nineteenth century, are no longer reasonable in the sixth decade of the twentieth century. We are proposing a break with the past to enable us to accept the challenge of the present and the future.

Many of the problems we will be discussing are not problems only of recent years, but problems of decades. Their solution cannot await decades, or even years. They must be tackled now!

The financial resources of many of our communities are severely limited and must be relieved. The standards and equality of our education system are, at present, directly dependent upon those limited resources and must be raised significantly, otherwise our economic future is dim. The tremendous daily developments in communications and the world of work necessitates a re-examination of the role of local government.

We must all, I suggest, begin to think and act like a Province of 600,000 people rather than continuing to segregate ourselves according to economic advantage or precise geographic location. We must all realize that our economic success or failure is as a united province; and our loyalties to our community can only make sense within our loyalty to our province and nation.

Let me stress that this is the heart of the whole program that we are placing before the Legislature. Our economic success or failure is the responsibility of a united province and all programs and policies must be concerned with the well-being of this Province as a whole.

The Government has undertaken an extensive review of the responsibilities of government in New Brunswick — both provincial and municipal levels. Policies to chart a new course for our government institutions have been developed. These policies are:

1. The Provincial Government maintains that a basic minimum level of service should be made available to all citizens of the Province in education, health, welfare, justice, and "local" services, regardless of their ability to pay.
2. The Provincial Government maintains that every effort should be made to raise the minimum level of services, as economic conditions and revenues permit.
3. The Provincial Government should encourage every local community, and

voluntary organizations, to supplement the basic provincial minimum level of services to the community.

4. The Provincial Government maintains that the greatest share of the costs of providing a basic minimum level of service in education, welfare, health, justice, and local services, should be borne by the Province.
5. The Provincial Government maintains that the tax system used to raise the required revenues should be based on the ability to pay.
6. The Provincial Government recognizes the need and agrees to establish the appropriate organization structure for efficient administration of basic minimum programs.
7. The Provincial Government also recognizes the value of strong local government institutions in the maintenance of a democratic society. Therefore it agrees to ensure that local government and voluntary organizations have the opportunity to participate in the administration of the basic minimum program, and particularly in its supplementation, to the extent that this is feasible.

Based upon these policies, legislation will be presented to this House over the next several days enabling that:

1. The Province will assume the full responsibility for the provision of elementary and secondary education.
2. This will be accomplished in approximately thirty-four school districts, under the immediate direction of elected and appointed school boards, in which the elected members are in a majority.
3. All costs of education will be paid by the Province; however, the administration of the expenditures in school districts will be the responsibility of the school board.

4. Although the Province will assume full responsibility for the provision of basic curricula of elementary and secondary education, supplementation by local school boards will be possible under certain conditions.
5. Steps will be taken to increase the numbers of qualified teachers, bring their salaries into close relationship with their value to the community, and create the modern facilities our students and teachers require if the youth of this Province are to prosper.
6. The Province will assume the full responsibility for the provision of welfare services and, in conjunction with the Canada Assistance Plan, place welfare services on a basis of need rather than means.
7. The Province will assume the full responsibility for the provision of justice, except for purely local requirements which will remain the responsibility of the municipalities, such as the enforcement of local bylaws.
8. The number and locations of courts will be revised to reflect modern needs.
9. A system of crown prosecutors and sheriffs as full-time public employees of the Province, will be established.
10. A modern system of penal institutions will be developed to replace the present gaols.
11. The Government rejects, at this time, a recommendation of the Royal Commission that the hospitals of the Province become provincially owned. The problems within the hospital system which were recognized by the Royal Commission are to a great extent still present. However, the Government would prefer to work with the hospital boards towards achieving a satisfactory system rather than resort to

provincial ownership. To this end, more stringent regulatory controls will be exercised under the present legislation.

12. The Province will assume the full responsibility for the provision of public health services which are currently carried out by the municipalities.
13. The Province will assume such capital hospital construction costs as are currently carried by municipal governments.

In summary, the Province will assume those responsibilities presently carried by municipalities for:

Education,
Welfare,
Justice, and
Public Health.

The assumption by the Province of these responsibilities necessitates a re-examination of the position of our local government institutions.

Legislation will be presented with regard to local government to achieve the following:

1. The establishment of cities, towns and villages. County government, as we now know it, will cease to have a useful function. This, at first glance, is regrettable due to the long history of such councils and the many outstanding and responsible citizens who have given of themselves to serve on the fifteen councils. Many members of the Legislature have served on County Councils and are well aware of their value. However, the creation of a large number of villages will, we feel sure, place a great demand upon these same citizens to serve the people in what we expect will be a most vital aspect of local government. There are 278 communities of 300 or more population in New Brunswick. A tremendous number of these communities will require leadership in forming new

villages. Such leadership should come from those who presently are County Councillors.

2. The assignment to municipal units of the responsibilities for:

Streets
Sidewalks
Street lighting
Fire protection
Police protection
Water supply
Storm sewerage
Sanitary sewerage
Sewage disposal
Garbage disposal
Parks
Community planning
Recreational facilities
Tourist development and promotion
Industrial development and promotion
Maintenance of community property
Licensing powers
By-law powers to administer these responsibilities.

3. A uniform assessment of the province at real market value is the goal.
4. Forest lands, assessed at a standard rate, during an interim period, while machinery is established to assess such property relative to its productive value.
5. A fair and equitable assessment appeal system, which will remove the present cost barriers in assessment appeals and also place the onus of proof upon the assessor.
6. No tax concessions will be allowed in the future. Those firms and individuals holding tax concessions will be treated fairly and equitably. Due to the complexity of concessions presently in effect and the intricate changes

- proposed in taxation, no single or simple procedure for their disposition is possible. Negotiations will be entered into with all affected parties towards achieving a fair and equitable solution.
7. The responsibility for assessment and tax collection to be assumed by the Province.
 8. Municipal units administered by locally elected councils.
 9. Such councils to have powers of taxation over real property and businesses within established maximum limits.
 10. Provincial property and that owned by Crown corporations and commissions subject to local taxation.
 11. Provincial grants to municipalities based upon an equalization formula, designed to assist communities in the provision of local services with realistic and equitable tax rates.
 12. Voting in Municipal council and school board elections open to citizens 21 years of age or more who have been residents of the community for more than 3 months.
 13. The creation of larger, more logical and efficient units of local government will be undertaken with the drawing of new boundaries for our cities and towns, to include all populations in the "logical" geographical area.

The Provincial Government has observed, for many years now, the continuing pressure for annexations, amalgamations, and expansions of our cities and towns. There have been several reasons for this:

- (a) Community population growth.
- (b) The recognized growing inter-relationship of bordering communities.

- (c) The need for greater community planning.
- (d) The present illogical system of municipal grants.
- (e) The recognition that some services can only be provided economically within the largest possible community group.

The Royal Commission recommended a complicated system of metropolitan councils and plebiscites to effect unified local government. This government does not think this is workable or efficient given the size of our communities. It would create vast confusion among our local government institutions with no positive gains in either representation of individual interest or efficiency in the provision of government.

Since the obvious need is for a more unified community, the legislation will provide for a re-definition of community boundaries by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council upon the recommendation of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

It should also be pointed out that the Tax and Grant provisions of the proposed legislation will remove many of the traditional reasons for maintaining our vast proliferation of bordering municipal units.

This step will have its major effect on our cities where the problems of community planning and the provision of community-wide services is greatest. Discussion of amalgamations and annexations, and concern over future growth patterns, have been entered into from time to time by each of our cities and their neighbours. I would hope that the present city and town councils would immediately enter into new discussions in a spirit of good will to make the creation of new municipal units a successful step towards better government for the people.

These are, in summary, the basic provisions of the proposed legislation. It will be expanded upon in detail as the enabling bills are presented to the House. I would caution everyone not to make any hasty, negative conclusions regarding this program until the full body of legislation is available. It is a sweeping program and difficult to summarize.

There are a number of aspects of the Royal Commission's report and the programme being presented which I would like to comment on at this time.

The Provincial Government is deeply conscious of the unsettling effect the forthcoming discussion of legislation is likely to have on many municipal and provincial employees concerning their personal future. The Government recognizes this and wishes it to be *clearly understood that the personnel needs of putting this programme into effect will require the services of municipal employees presently engaged in duties to be assumed by the Province.* Every effort will be made to effect their transfer to the employ of the Province on a satisfactory basis and with a minimum of disruption.

This inclusion of such personnel in the Civil Service with its benefits and protections for them will, in most cases, be an improvement over their present terms of employment.

This transfer will not be easy — some will be asked to move from their present location; many will be placed in the difficult position of relating to new responsibilities. This will often be in groups larger than in their previous experience. The Government gives these men and women, today, its guarantee of fair and equitable treatment.

This program, which I have outlined briefly and which will be explained in detail in the days ahead, cannot be implemented immediately. The assumption by the Province of the administrative responsibility of education, for example, cannot be organized in a month, but it can be well started within a year. The construction of the over one hundred million

dollars of capital facilities needed for the next ten years will take that long to build, but can be started within a year.

Such changes as are planned are not administratively or financially possible over night.

This House, Mr. Speaker, is breaking with tradition in the concluding period of this session. The adjournment itself was extraordinary. The size of the legislative program is immense. The establishment of a committee to review public bills is an innovation. These are challenging and extraordinary times in New Brunswick's history and they call for extraordinary steps.

Traditionally, a government does not refer to tax changes or financial plans prior to the presentation of specific tax or financial bills. However, the full discussion of this legislation requires that the Government's general financial plans be known. The Minister of Finance and Industry, will, as his duty, speak on this subject in detail later. However, it will be the Government's intention to follow the advice of the Royal Commission and:

1. Abolish personal property taxation.
2. Abolish poll taxes.
3. Abolish the Wildlands Tax Act.
4. Remove such other discriminatory and miscellaneous taxation as exists at the local level.
5. Base the costs of education upon a standard tax on real property and a business tax.
6. Permit local government to tax real property and business for local purposes.
8. Permit local government to charge fees for services, permits, etc.
8. Institute a system of equalizing provincial-municipal grants.
9. Raise the provincial social services and education sales tax.

In addition to these financial measures, Mr. Speaker, it is anticipated that, with improved federal-provincial shared cost programs, such as the Canada Assistance Plan, and with the conclusion of the analysis of the National Taxation and Expenditure needs by the Federal-Provincial Tax Structure Committee, a formula for federal-provincial tax sharing arrangements will yield additional funds to assist the Province in achieving the national levels of service our citizens expect as Canadians.

Although there will be changes in the burden of taxation carried by individual citizens, there will be no reduction in total taxation. Tax reductions can be made possible in only two ways — the reduction or elimination of public services, or increased efficiency in the provision of these services.

Our society rejects the reduction of public services. In support of this, one need only tabulate the endless requests for their extension, creation, or improvement which come before the Government in public briefs and submissions. The demand for new or extended public services is far in excess of the Province's resources and beyond what any provincial or municipal government could, with integrity, provide.

As for increased efficiency, this Government has submitted itself to a series of examinations to constantly strive for ever increasing efficiency. The study of government services by the Royal Commission on Municipal Finance and Taxation is but one example. The organizational structure of all departments has been examined and revised. We have experimented with new methods and approaches. We have placed the Civil Service on a sound basis and have taken steps to improve the quality of the service. We have expanded the coverage of the Civil Service Act towards ultimately eliminating the possibility of so-called "political" interference and appointments in any area. Public opening of tenders has been instituted. Modern budget analysis and budget formulation procedures have been established.

This Government is committed to efficiency in the public service as no other Government in the history of the Province. It will continue to be so committed. A study is being launched to review the organizational and personnel requirements, given the responsibilities assigned by the proposed legislation.

The Minister of Finance and Industry will be proposing a completely new Financial Administration Act incorporating, among other measures of equal concern, an Auditor-General. This Act, we are confident, is a model for all provinces.

One point must be stressed, and I would hope that no one in New Brunswick has any misconceptions concerning this — the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Municipal-Finance and Taxation do not yield a reduction in total taxation. The Royal Commission recognized a disparity in tax burden — who paid the taxes, all types of taxes — and who gained what level of service for those taxes. This was then compared with the needs of the province as a whole and pointed up the folly of continuing with the present relationship of tax capacity, taxation, expenditures, and levels of service.

The recommendations of the Royal Commission and the program the government has developed from them do mean a re-allocation of tax burden for our citizens. Some of our people who are now, by almost any criteria, paying taxes that are too high, will have a reduction. The alternative is, of course, also true.

All citizens will be taxed fairly in relation to their ability to pay. As citizens they all have an equal right to public services. This program will remove many of the discriminations against both those whose economic position is good and those whose position is bad.

In a province which has, regrettably, a per capita income only two-thirds the national average, the so-called rich are few and far between. This Government is committed to improving the economic position of all New Brunswickers as the tax and expenditure policy

of recent years so clearly shows. Government efforts have substantially been responsible for the boom conditions which now exist.

This is not a program to create a uniform province, nor to drag down some areas in an effort to raise others. This is a program to raise the levels of public services in all parts of the province to the goal of a new minimum — a new acceptable standard. It cannot be accomplished immediately, but it will give us all a target at which to aim.

Areas which wish to exceed the minimum, which wish to have levels of services in excess of those felt necessary and desirable, will have the freedom to do so.

We must not fall to the lowest common denominator but strive for the highest possible goal.

I would hope that those citizens who have a concern for, and an interest in, local government and local problems will pause to inspect just how well the job is being done and if any of us are adequately prepared for the job which is ahead. In the provision of local services we have become immersed in the problems of dollars and cents for the provision of the traditional local services such as streets, water, sewerage, and transportation. These are important and, I am sure, will continue to demand attention.

However, I would ask that some thought be given to a major problem that is quickly approaching us — the rapidly reducing work day and week, coupled with rising income. This, at first glance, is hardly a problem. It has been our goal for centuries. Now that it is being achieved, it is creating problems which are new, but which must be met — and can only be met by local effort.

When a man worked 12 hours a day, six days a week, for very low wages, he had little time to be concerned about his surroundings and little energy for interesting relaxation. Today, our citizens for the most part, work 8 hours a day, five days a week, at ever improving levels of income. This will further improve in the years ahead.

Is his community a pleasant place in which to live? Does it assist him to learn to use his leisure time? Does it provide him an opportunity to use it? What is the quality of life in New Brunswick?

New Brunswickers have always been proud that this is a fine place to live, a fine place to bring up a family. I would hope that it will continue to be so.

Attractive homes, pleasant streets, many parks, libraries, recreational facilities of all types, cultural and artistic facilities and opportunities must be the goal of the future. Such items should — *must* — be the subject of local concern and action.

The responsibilities of local government are becoming greater rather than being diminished, they are expanding in new fields rather than being reduced.

The program we will present to you will give the municipalities the structure they need to face these present and future challenges of municipal government. Their local responsibilities are actually becoming greater and they must not be hindered by responsibilities beyond their capacity in their effort to meet new challenges.

Do the proposals we are making truly reduce local autonomy? I contend that they do not. I contend, rather, that we are giving them greater scope, greater authority and greater financial soundness to cope with the true functions of local government.

Education accounts for approximately one-half of all local government expenditure. Under our present system of local government, these expenditures and the taxation to provide the revenues for them are not a direct concern of most of our municipal governments. *Education is large in municipal dollars spent, but not in municipal authority exercised.*

Municipalities will lose two purely administrative responsibilities — those of assessment and tax collection. Both services will continue to be provided for municipalities at no cost to

them. The loss of two such purely administrative responsibilities cannot be called an erosion of local authority.

Municipal governments will still retain their taxing power.

The assumption of the welfare responsibility by municipalities has been, I suggest, a state of necessity rather than local desire. The bulk of the costs of welfare services are presently being carried by the provincial and federal governments. The growth of welfare services, and to some extent their efficiency, has been determined by the ability and desire of municipal governments to participate. The assumption by the province of the full responsibility for the provision of welfare services surely cannot be considered an erosion of municipal authority, if one bears in mind the needs of our citizens who must turn to welfare agencies if they are to survive; and, if they are to survive, must receive an adequate level of assistance.

Present municipal involvement in the fields of justice and health are quite minor. By far the larger responsibility in these fields has been carried by the Province for many years and if we are to eliminate such discrepancies of service as presently exist, it is only reasonable for the Province to assume the full responsibility for justice, other than that which is purely local, and for the provision of all public health services.

The seats of policy formation will not change. Those areas where policy is now, in fact, set by the Province (and I need only point to welfare and public health) will have this responsibility clearly defined and understood. In those areas where policy is locally determined, such as local services and education, the policy-making power will remain in broader, more local hands than ever before.

Adjustments are obviously necessary, as I think is recognized by everyone. The adjustments proposed place the responsibilities for the various levels of policy formation and administrative action at their most logical, efficient, and democratic location.

Local government will be gaining an opportunity to focus attention more firmly on the truly "local" problems, without often "false" parochial concern created by financial pressure. The barriers to progress, created for tax reasons only, should disappear — this is particularly so in the more urban areas.

As can now be readily understood, the Government is not "implementing the Royal Commission Report". As was noted in the White Paper, the Royal Commission Report provides one path towards the implementation of the responsibilities of government today. We were *not* satisfied that it was the only path. It is *not* the only path.

The Royal Commission proposed a system of extreme centralization, a system of less local government, narrower voting rights, and a restricted voice by the people in their affairs. This Government, Mr. Speaker, has rejected these aspects of the Royal Commission Report.

It was contended by the Royal Commission that the people must be protected from themselves; that their elected representatives, acting under a parliamentary system which evolved over centuries, are not fit to administer the affairs of the Province they were elected to govern. As was stated in the Speech from the Throne, we see no place for additional administrative commissions in the Government of New Brunswick.

These commissions were to somehow improve the efficiency of the administrative process, remove the presence of political pressures (and there I use the term "political" in its broadest sense) and at the same time remain responsible to the people through their elected representatives.

The commissions were to be drawn from a wide variety of vested and non-vested interests. The people were to be at the mercy of "experts" on the one hand and complete novices on the other.

This Government believes in responsible government. This Government believes in democracy!

The Royal Commission reduced school boards to pieces of powerless window-dressing. This Government proposes that their power be strengthened *and* that they become elective and responsible to the people.

The Royal Commission recommended that only the owners of real property have the right to vote. This Government recognizes that, today, all citizens, whether they own property or rent, have an equal interest in public affairs and pay an equal share of the costs. They deserve an equal voice.

The Royal Commission contended that efficiency could only be attained through centralization. This Government contends that centralization, through often a necessary evil, is not necessarily efficient. The ownership of a hospital system by the Province does not automatically make it more efficient. The administration of schools by civil servants does not automatically make the system more efficient.

This is not, Mr. Speaker, to say that all that the Royal Commission has done or said is wrong for New Brunswick. This Commission, and those that preceded it, have done a great service to this Province. Many of their recommendations are sound and we have incorporated them in our legislation. Many of the recommendations of interested parties who submitted briefs are sound and have been incorporated in our legislation.

We are presenting to this House a programme of evolution, not revolution; a programme for efficiency with democracy; a programme of equality.

The Government has proposed, and this House has established, a Law Amendments

Committee. This Committee and those interested citizens who wish to express their views to it must have ample opportunity to review the forthcoming legislation.

It had been my hope that this House could have been reconvened in mid-October. If so, time would have been available for the fullest discussion prior to Christmas. This has not been possible. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I wish to state, now, that it is not the Government's intention to force their legislation through during this session. Such bills as have not had full and adequate debate, both within and without this House, such bills as continue to attract interest to the Law Amendments Committee will be permitted by the Government to die at the close of this session.

They will be re-introduced during the regular winter session of 1966. If implementation of our program of equality — for all citizens — is to begin in 1967, this legislation must pass in 1966.

Mr. Speaker, this programme represents the logical evolution of our institutions of government to best serve the needs of the people during the latter portion of the 20th century. It is a strongly democratic program.

The world has approached the problem of disparity and developed means to reduce it.

Our nation has approached the problem of disparity and our Confederation is adjusting to alleviate it.

Our province and municipalities must approach this problem squarely and be prepared for the adjustments to achieve equality of opportunity, equality of taxation and equality of services.

