

Mr. John Leonard,
President
Trades NL

Feb. 9, 2021

Dear Mr. Leonard,

Thank you so much for your thoughtful letter and the questions sent on behalf of your members. The NL NDP is greatly appreciative of building trades unionists and the very important contributions they have made, and continue to make, to the province's economy.

We are grateful for the opportunity to read about, think on, and respond to your member's concerns. Attached are the responses to your questions.

I appreciate your invitation to meet with the Business Managers of your 16 Trade Unions and am hopeful we can set that meeting up for some time shortly after the election.

Thanks again for the opportunity to respond to your questions,

Alison Coffin
NL NDP Leader

**Responses to Questionnaire: Trades NL
NL NDP****1.*****A. What is your party's policy/approach to resource development projects?***

Our policy on resource development is that all such work must be done for the primary benefit of the people of the province. They must be the principal beneficiaries.

Initiatives related to major project work must also include significant worker engagement, an affirmative action component, and provisions that address inequality.

How this maximum benefit is achieved is less important than making sure it is achieved. This is especially true in the development of our non-renewable resources. It is essential that the people of the province get maximum benefit from these limited resources.

B. What process will your government adopt to ensure maximum construction jobs for our residents on future resource development projects?

Currently, benefits agreements are negotiated between the province and the private stakeholders in all mining and oil projects. These agreements specify minimum works hours to be spend in the province for various aspects of the design and construction. These agreements are required before the government will issue work permits. These agreements are a solid, binding, method to ensure local benefit from resource related construction projects.

C. Are you committed to ensuring the highest number of construction, fabrication and maintenance jobs for our residents in any future resource development projects? If so, please elaborate on your policy/strategy. If not, please explain your policy and commitment on this.

See above.

The NDP is fully committed to ensuring that construction on resource development projects is done in the province. If we are to be world leaders in resource development, we need the trained labour force that can work on our own projects and be ready to work in other jurisdictions as well.

This squares with our resource development policy that all such work must be done for the principal benefit of the people of the province.

2.***A. Will your government adopt a Newfoundland and Labrador Benefits Agreement strategy?***

In November 2019, all NDP MHAs supported a Private Member's Motion in the House of Assembly regarding the implementation of a community benefits policy. At that time, NPD Leader Alison Coffin said, "We know that the construction industry is volatile. It does not have regular labour; it is precarious employment. So it is very, very important that we ensure that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador do have first access and first rights to get jobs and procurement opportunities on any project here in Newfoundland and Labrador."

The NL NDP does believe that developing an NLBA must involve affected groups including Trades NL and its members, but also representatives of groups we would hope would benefit, including (but not limited

to) women, Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, municipalities, educational institutions which train apprentices, etc.

If the project is not going to primarily benefit the people of the province, particularly if it involves exploitation of non-renewable resources, then we believe it is not worth commencing. The NDP is confident that it's possible to negotiate Community Benefits agreements that will work for all stakeholders.

B. Employment of Apprentices – Will your government institute a requirement on public infrastructure for an apprenticeship ratio of 25%?

If we are to build a thriving skilled trade workforce, it is vital that people who receive training are able to progress through apprenticeships to be fully qualified.

Ratios of apprentices to journeyman fluctuate from project to project. 25% is an admirable goal, and one that would work in many situations. The NL NDP would commit to looking at apprenticeship ratios that are appropriate for any given project at any given time, consulting with the workers on the ground, the unions, and the employers about what that ratio should be. It should certainly be a component of any project based benefits agreement, as outlined in question 1.

For public infrastructure, the NL Benefits policy discussed above (2A) is relevant to this, as hiring requirements are a large part of any "CBA" purpose.

C. Employment of Women – Will your government institute a requirement for the hiring of at least 14% women on all public infrastructure?

The NL NDP's ultimate goal is 50% women in any publicly-funded activity. That said, we recognize the realities that the trades are dealing with as we strive to reach a more equitable society.

The Office to Advance Women Apprentices keeps a database of women in trades, to facilitate worker access to employers and vice-versa. Women in Trades and Technology works to break down workplace barriers for skilled trades women workers. We would work with both these groups, with unions, and employers to increase the percentage of women working in skilled trades jobs on public infrastructure and on other projects.

For resource development, this could be a component of any project-based benefits agreement, as outlined in question 1. For public infrastructure, the NL Benefits policy discussed above (2A) is relevant to this, as hiring requirements are a large part of any "CBA" purpose.

D. Indigenous Skilled Trade Workers – On a project-by-project basis, will your government institute a requirement that developers plan and execute the hiring and training of indigenous skilled trade workers?

The NL NDP believes in equity of all kinds. For too long, Indigenous skilled trades workers have had difficulty accessing work on projects, and even in accessing education in the first place. We would appreciate the opportunity to explore such a requirement. The training and subsequent hiring of

indigenous skilled trade workers could easily be a component of a project-based benefits agreement and/or a Newfoundland-Labrador CBA.

E. Hiring Priority – Will your government institute priority hiring for qualified Newfoundland and Labrador residents?

We would expect that priority hiring for qualified Newfoundland and Labrador residents (with appropriate allowances made for women and Indigenous workers) to be a foundational point of any CBA or NLBA.

F. Monitoring and Accountability – Will your government monitor all public projects for adherence to workforce provisions, public report results and hold developers accountable?

Yes. There is little point in have workforce requirements without monitoring and enforcing them. The model suggested by Trades NL could work well for this purpose. In regard to public infrastructure, P3s are the single biggest enemy of transparency recently. Government's complete divestment from the process means virtually all information about public projects run through P3s is locked away. We most recently drew attention to this in a Jan. 6, 2021 news release: "With the recent announcement of awarding another P3 contract for the building of the province's new mental health facility, Coffin has concerns about transparency surrounding the cost of these contracts that were recommended by P3 consultants."

3.

A. With the changing oil industry, particularly the possibility of increased deep-water development, please outline your plans for investment and development at Bull Arm, ensuring Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be positioned to avail of maximum work opportunities on current new projects.

As the oil industry evolves, particularly to project that can perhaps not be feasibly completed at Bull Arm, it will be important to ensure the facility remains operative and providing good jobs to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The province has lost too much in the way of shipbuilding and other major project sites in the last 15 years.

Nalcor put out a request for proposals for the site in 2018 and got 4 hits. G.J. Cahill & Company Limited, DFB Driver, Pennecon Heavy Civil Limited, and Canadian Supply Base Company. There has been no new information since an exchange between the Liberals and Pc's on the subject on Nov 1, 2018, where Siobhan Coady stated they were still evaluating the offers.

B. What is your plan to ensure Bull Arm remains a world class facility as part of our provincial infrastructure, available for major and minor project work for any industry sector?

Bull Arm has a first class global reputation for providing a highly skilled workforce in a stable labour environment, building durable platforms able to function in a hostile marine environment — possibly the most hostile on the planet.

It is a facility the people of this province have invested heavily in. It is essential that the facility be properly maintained in top condition, in readiness for the next international or national contract, with good jobs for our workers.

4.

A. Will you commit to implementing a provincial income tax deduction/benefit/credit for skilled trades workers as a means of offsetting some of the many personal expenses they incur in their trade?

The NL NDP recognizes that work-related expenses can mount up for skilled trades workers. Tools aren't cheap and travel can be costly. We are committed to a fairer tax system in our province system, and believe the current system needs a full review to ensure this fairness. We would welcome the opportunity to work with Trades NL and other stakeholders to look into the merits of providing a provincial income tax deduction/benefit/credit for skilled trades workers.