

make the difference



The Scottish Liberal Democrat Manifesto 1997

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'The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no-one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.'

Liberal Democrat Constitution



Every election has the potential to become a watershed event. Whether or not that happens depends on the choice that you make. However, there must be a party offering a real change.

The mood for change is in the air. But many people still have doubts whether politicians and the present archaic political system can really deliver it.

In Scotland, the Liberal Democrats are uniquely placed to offer you the opportunity to make a real difference.

Scottish Liberal Democrats know that to many people, Parliament and politics has become remote and detached from the reality of their everyday lives. So we offer a programme of reform, to make government more open, more accountable and more in touch with the people it serves.

The cornerstone of our reforms will be the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. Democratically accountable power will return to Scotland, and Scotland's domestic agenda will reflect the priorities and ethos of the Scottish people. We want home rule. This is not an end in itself. It is a means of achieving better government, delivering better education, health, and housing, and unlocking the full potential of the Scottish people.

Scottish Liberal Democrats' century-old commitment to the democratic renewal of Scotland and Britain, and our willingness to work across the party divide to achieve these reforms, make us pivotal in securing their delivery – intact – in the next Parliament.

However, changing political structures alone is not enough. We must change the way politics is conducted.

And so Scottish Liberal Democrats offer a unique choice because we dare to be different. We dare to say what is commonsense to most people.

People know that Scotland's future competitiveness cannot be built on a low-skill, low-pay economy. It will not be done solely on the back of foreign inward investment. Scotland will succeed through the skills and enterprise of its people – but

only if they have the opportunity to develop their skills and abilities in an education system fit for the 21st century.

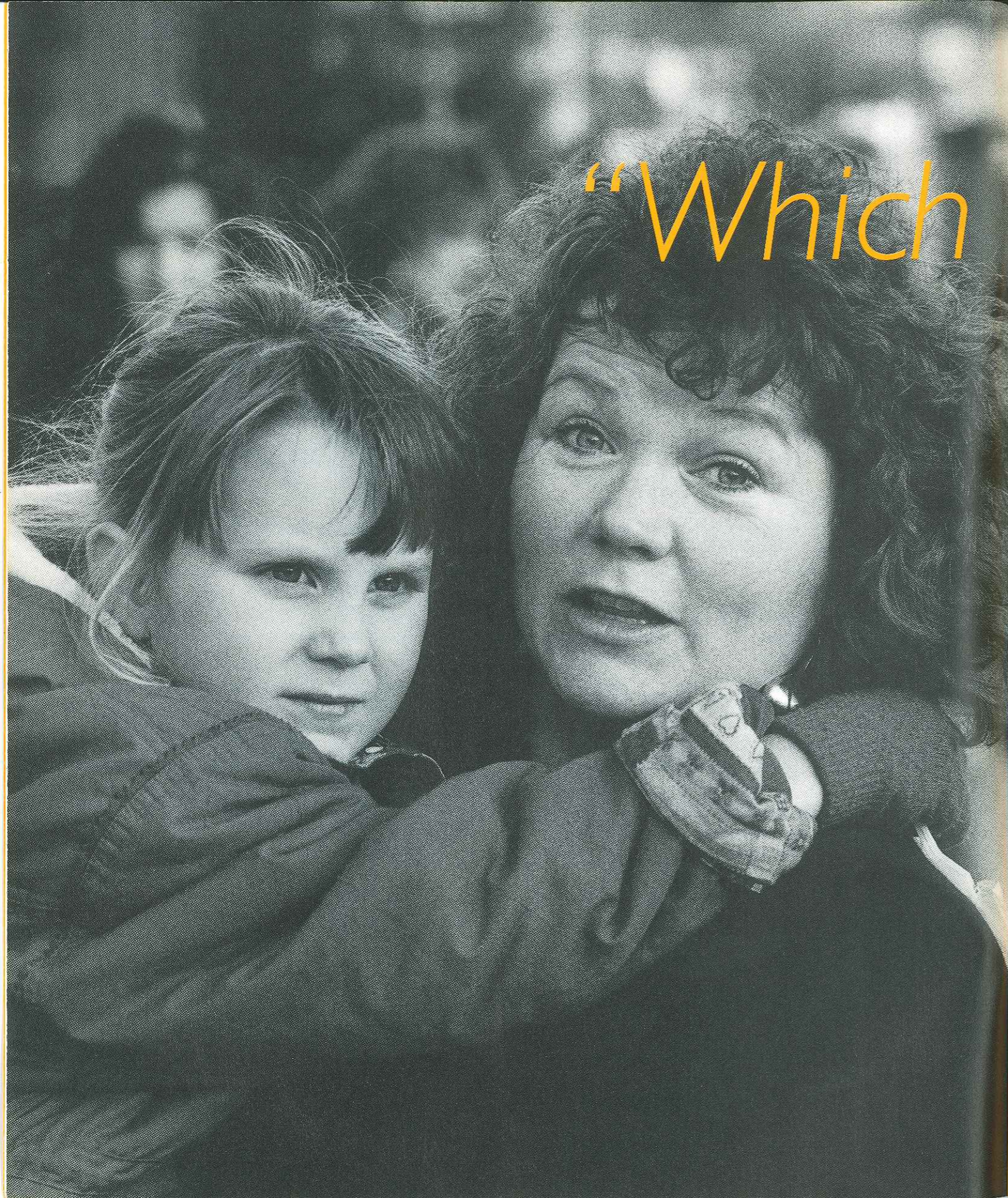
In this election, only the Liberal Democrats are committed to a programme of investment in education, paid for by a 1 penny increase in the basic rate of income tax.

Likewise, we alone propose costed commitments to safeguard a beleaguered health service. Tackling poor housing and conserving a clean environment are important objectives in themselves as well as in promoting good health. Today's housing cut can so easily be tomorrow's NHS cost. Whereas the other parties offer only timid, short-term solutions, Liberal Democrats offer clear, commonsense policies. We say what the cost will be and tell you where the money will come from.

This manifesto sets out a vision for a Scotland committed to a prosperous future through investment in education; a Scotland where enterprise flourishes and responsibility to others is willingly accepted; where the fear of crime is rooted out, and the natural heritage is protected. It is a self-confident Scotland playing a positive role in a United Kingdom and European Union, strengthened through diversity.

Scottish Liberal Democrats offer the chance to make a difference. And the more Liberal Democrat MPs there are after 1 May, the more real that difference will be.

Jim Wallace
Leader, Scottish Liberal Democrats



“Which

*party will make
a real difference
to my child’s
education?”*”

Which party will make a real difference to my child's education?

Our aim: To restore Scotland's world class education system.

The problem: Scotland's education has been underfunded. It has been undermined by repeated shifts in policy. Standards should be higher.

Our commitment: Liberal Democrats will invest in education, making education the top government priority. We will invest an additional £2 billion per year in education, funded by an extra 1p in the pound on the basic rate of income tax. As part of that investment, we will commit around an additional £200 million per year to education in Scotland. We will use the new Scottish Parliament to build on the best of the country's educational traditions to meet the needs of the 21st century.

Our first priority is to:

● **Give children the best start** by providing high-quality early years education for every 3 and 4 year-old child whose parents want it.

Key priorities are to:

● **Increase funding for books and equipment in schools.** In the first year, we will double spending on books and equipment to overcome the effect of recent cuts.

● **Reduce primary school class sizes** so that by the year 2000 no child between 5 and 12 will need to be in a class of more than 30.

● **Tackle the backlog of repair and maintenance to buildings** with £500m additional investment over 5 years across the United Kingdom.

● **Boost chances for all adults to improve their skills and get better qualifications.**

Making the best start

Early years education is the essential building block for higher standards and achievement later on. Every £1 spent on high-quality under fives education, raises standards in later life and adds up to £7 of value to the nation's economy.

We will:

● **Give children the best start by providing high-quality early years education for every 3 and 4 year-old child whose parents want it.**

This will be the first call on our £2 billion annual programme of extra investment in education.

● **Promote high standards in early years education.** We will uphold minimum standards for care and premises. We will make sure that those in early years education are supervised by qualified staff.

● **Provide choice in early years education.** We will put a stop to the bureaucratic voucher scheme. We will ensure a variety of

provision from a wide range of public, private and voluntary providers.

Raising standards in schools

Standards in schools, especially in literacy and numeracy, are still too low.

We will:

● **Improve teaching standards.** We will charge the General Teaching Council with improving teaching standards through a Staff Development Agency. We will provide more opportunities for professional development and reward excellence in teaching. We will help poor teachers improve but if they cannot, we will ensure that they do not continue to teach. We will establish an independent pay review body for teachers.

● **Encourage schools to succeed.** We will strengthen the school inspection system so that it helps to develop schools and extend its role to monitoring education authorities. We will reaffirm the independence of Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

● **Strengthen discipline in schools.** We will support teachers in maintaining discipline and provide them with the means to do so, for example, through special training. We will ensure that Education Authorities educate excluded pupils. We will require every school to develop a policy to tackle bullying and truancy.

● **Measure achievement in schools.** We will require schools to publish meaningful information on their standards, achievements and plans for the future.

● **Reform the curriculum.** We will build on the 5-14 Curriculum. We will target basic and citizenship skills including physical and environmental education. We will promote closer Primary-Secondary links and abolish S1/S2 national tests. We will allow enough time to implement 'Higher Still'. We will not make further major reforms in the curriculum

without adequate resources and full consultation with staff.

● **Boost literacy.** We will establish special literacy programmes involving parents with teachers in a drive to ensure that 90 per cent of all pupils reach their expected reading age by 2005.



Investing in schools

Extra investment in well equipped classrooms and better maintained buildings is essential if standards are to improve.

We will:

- **Increase funding for schools to invest in books and equipment.** In the first year, we will double spending on books and equipment to overcome the effect of recent cuts. Our aim is to ensure that each school is able to make full use of information technology and digital communications.
- **Reduce primary school class sizes** so that by the year 2000 no child between 5 and 12 will need to be in a class of more than 30.
- **Tackle the backlog of repairs.** We will invest an additional £500 million over five years across the UK in repairing crumbling and unsafe buildings. We will carry out a School Buildings Audit.

● **Support children with special needs.** We will introduce a new Code of Practice for children with special needs. We will simplify the procedures for drawing up a Record of Needs. We will give every local authority a separate Special Educational Needs allocation. Wherever possible, we will integrate pupils with special needs into mainstream schools.

A new partnership for schools

Involving parents in the education of their children and ensuring that schools are supported by local communities is essential to achieve higher standards and a better use of resources.

We will:

- **Increase the role of parents in education.** We will extend Home/School/Pupil Links, develop Home-School partnership arrangements and help parents help their child. We will promote Student Councils in secondary schools and student representation on school boards.
- **Promote arts education.** We will work in partnership with local Councils to develop a comprehensive arts curriculum in schools and local communities.
- **Open up schools to the whole community.** Schools, not least in remote rural areas, should become centres of education networks accessible to every age group. We will encourage schools, for example, to develop courses for parents to train and retrain, provide local leisure organisations with access to sports facilities and work with local businesses to provide computer education. We will clarify and constructively develop the role of School Boards. We will encourage partnership with the informal youth services and an integrated approach to wider community use of schools and other facilities. We will encourage more voluntary after

school, holiday and supported study schemes.

● **Give all schools more independence and allow them to develop their own style and strengths** – for example in science and technology, sport, or arts. This would widen parent and pupil choice. We will devolve as many powers as possible to schools and give them more control over their budgets. We will make education authorities responsible for those functions that cannot be undertaken by schools on their own, such as coordination, planning and monitoring standards. Liberal Democrats oppose selection in Scottish schools. We will legislate to stop any further opting out by local authority schools. We will abolish compulsory competitive tendering in schools and restore Councils' right to decide on the matter.

● **Forge a new partnership with the independent sector.** We will encourage independent schools to work with state schools. We will phase out the Assisted Places Scheme and use the money saved to enable Councils, if they wish, to enter into local partnership schemes. These could include assisting the funding of pupils at independent schools. Pupils currently covered by the Assisted Places Scheme would, however, be protected until they had finished their studies. We will extend charitable status to all schools without affecting total Council funding and maintain the VAT exemption on school fees.

● **Recognise the valuable role of the churches in education.** We will initiate a dialogue with all the major faiths about the role they wish to play in education over coming decades. We will ensure that religious education provides pupils with an understanding of the major traditions of religious belief in this country.

A new deal for Gaelic and Scots culture

Liberal Democrats will support and maintain

the diversity of Scotland's linguistic and cultural traditions.

We will:

- **Support Gaelic.** We will support and develop the provision of Gaelic medium education and Gaelic as a second language up to tertiary level wherever there is sufficient demand for it.
- **Promote a greater emphasis on Scottish culture** in the mainstream curriculum.

Extending lifelong learning

In the information age, education must be a lifelong activity from which people can benefit anywhere and at any time rather than being something that only happens in a school.

We will:

- **Maintain Scotland's distinctive Higher Education system.** We support the 4 year Honours Degree and the broad 3 year Ordinary degree. We will work to expand Scotland's role as a provider of University education to students from the rest of the United Kingdom and abroad.
- **Widen access to further and higher education.** We will give every person an Individual Learning Account, as the basis for lifelong post-school education with contributions made by the state, the individual and employers. Our aim is that the state contribution will be at least equivalent to the cost of fees on approved courses. We will replace the Student Loans Scheme with a fair repayment scheme linked to salaries in later life. Our aim is to ensure that students on approved courses (including part-time courses) up to first degree level are treated equally.
- **Promote flexible learning.** We will introduce new arrangements for post-14 education to enable people to build up a portfolio of recognised credits in a range of

academic and vocational courses. We will work with the private sector to link all schools to the Information Superhighway and to ensure that they have the equipment to use it effectively.

● **Promote training in the workplace.** To support companies that invest in education and training and to encourage others to do so, we will introduce a 2 per cent remissible levy on company payrolls, deductible against the cost of providing accredited training or contributions to the Individual Learning Account. Small businesses will be exempt. We will encourage Local Enterprise Companies to take a leading role in forging local partnerships to meet youth training and employment needs.

● **Expand training opportunities for young people.** Our aim is to ensure that 16-19 year-olds receive the equivalent of at least two days a week education or on-the-job training.

● **Boost chances for all adults to improve their skills and get better qualifications.**

We will ensure that all adults on approved courses or training have access to financial support, whether for improving literacy and numeracy or to get an extra qualification.

We will foster the development of new technologies to provide tertiary education opportunities more widely.

● **Improve the quality of tertiary courses.**

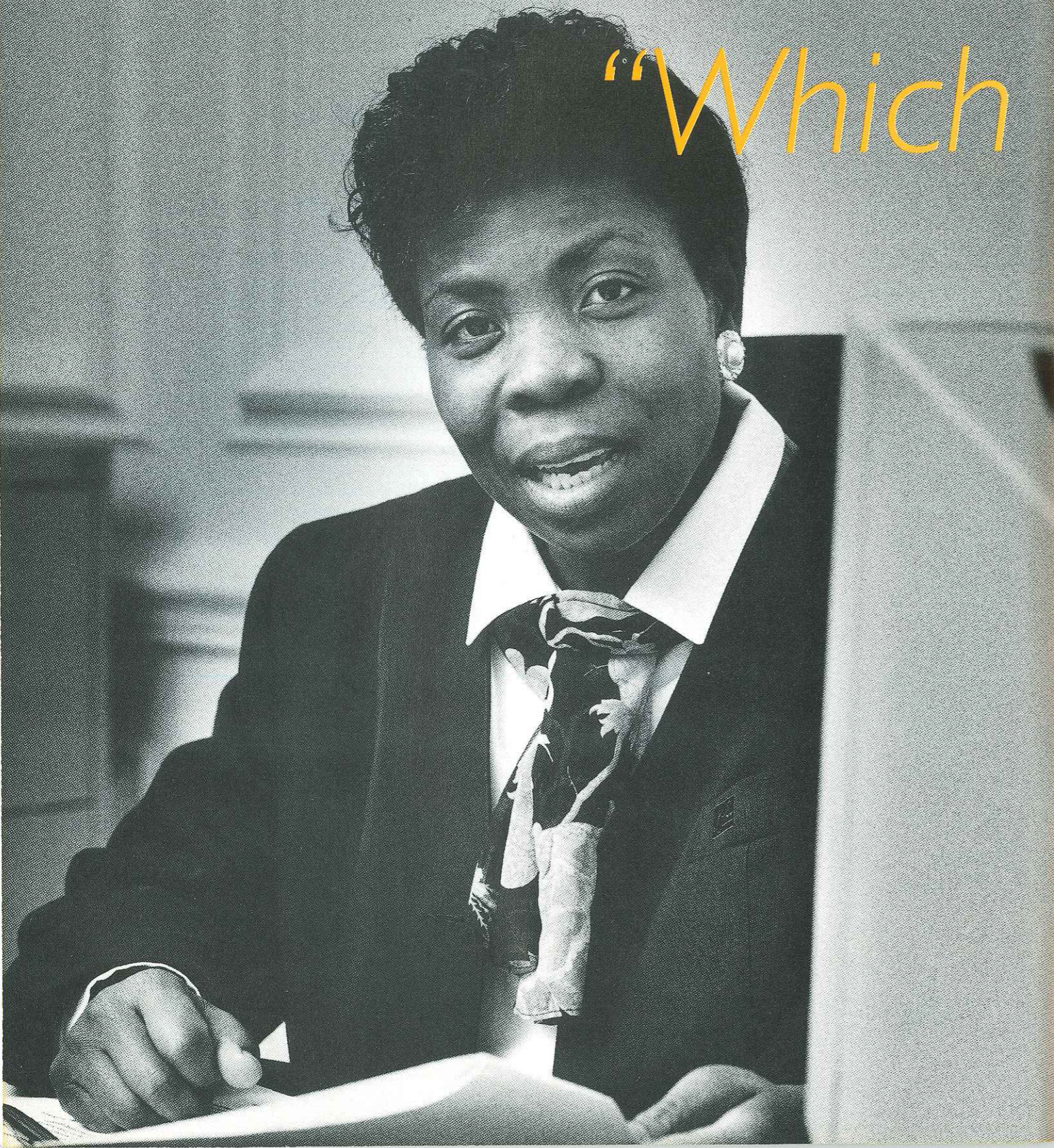
We will create a new Quality Council to ensure high standards and value-for-money in all post-16 education and training courses. We will promote closer links between business and universities and colleges.

● **Work to expand tertiary facilities.** We pioneered the establishment of the multi-campus University of the Highlands and Islands and support its continued development.

● **Support and motivate staff.** We will establish a new pay review body for academic and related staff.

Which

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Which party will be best for my job and our firm?

Our aim: To build a high-skill, high-employment, high-investment enterprise economy which will expand opportunity and create wealth for Scotland's people.

The problem: Scotland and the United Kingdom have suffered from short-term changes in economic policy, from the run-down of the traditional manufacturing sector, from an economy which is too narrowly based, from too many part-time, short-term unskilled jobs and too few skilled opportunities for people.

Our commitment: Liberal Democrats will encourage saving and promote public and private capital investment. We will raise the quality of Scotland's workforce through additional investment in education and training. We will use the new Scottish Parliament as a powerful player in the nation's economic regeneration. We will shift the burden of taxation from employment to the depletion of natural resources.

Our priorities are to:

- Provide stability in economic management to encourage long-term investment.
- Raise the skills of Scotland's workforce and get people back to work.
- Promote enterprise and small businesses.
- Decentralise economic power to Scotland and its communities.

Investing in Scotland's future

Long-term investment and economic stability are crucial to future economic success.

We will:

● Secure stable prices and low interest rates.

We will turn the Bank of England into a UK Reserve Bank, free from political interference. We will charge the Bank with keeping inflation low and make it accountable to Parliament for achieving this goal. Lower inflation and greater exchange rate stability can better be secured by working with Britain's European partners and the best framework for this would be a European single currency. It is in Britain's interests to take part in such a single currency. However, three conditions must be met before this can happen. First, the single currency must be firmly founded on the Maastricht criteria. Second, Britain must meet those criteria. Third, the British people must have said 'yes' in a referendum. If these conditions for a single currency are in place, Britain should join.

● Ensure responsible economic management.

We will keep to the 'golden rule' of public finance: over the economic cycle, total borrowing should not exceed total investment. We will make the government accountable to Parliament for keeping to this rule and subject it to independent monitoring. We will cut wasteful spending and ensure new expenditure delivers value for money.

● Build up the nation's capital assets.

We will distinguish between capital and current

spending in the national accounting system. We will promote effective public/private investment partnerships at both the national and local levels, with Councils' borrowing carefully controlled.

● **Put Scotland's people back to work.** We will enable long-term unemployed people to turn their benefits into 'working benefits' paid to an employer to recruit and train them. We will break open the poverty traps that stop unemployed people from working. Our plans for boosting investment in public services, infrastructure, promoting small businesses and encouraging energy conservation will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

● **Invest in a highly-skilled workforce.** Our investment of an additional £2 billion a year in education and training in the UK will improve skills and increase the nation's knowledge base.

● **Promote environmental sustainability.** We will begin a long term shift in taxation, reducing taxes on jobs, people and goods and shifting them to pollution and resource depletion. We will use new national indicators of progress which include measures of quality of life and environmental sustainability.

● **Encourage people to save.** Our aim is to extend the advantages of TESSAs and PEPs to a wider range of savers by developing a new save-as-you-earn scheme. We will encourage personal and portable pension plans.

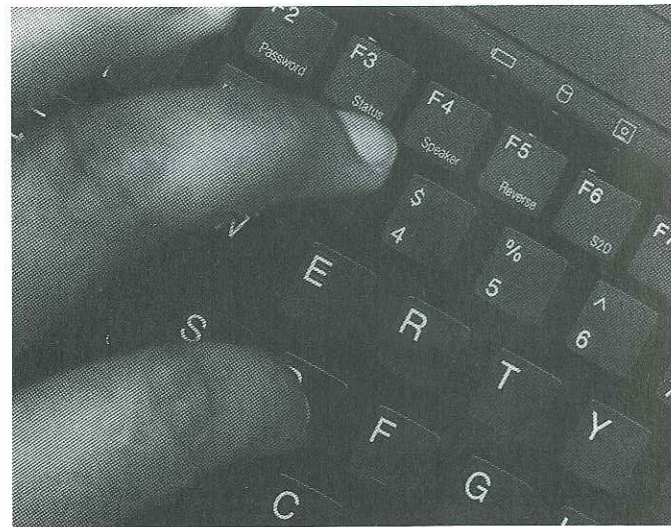
Investing in enterprise and partnership

Small business, enterprise and self-employment are the engines of a modern dynamic economy and a vital source of new jobs and growth.

We will:

● **Support small and medium-sized businesses.** We will encourage financial institutions to develop new sources of private finance, including grants, equity finance and mutual guarantee schemes. We will provide

new sources of 'seed-corn' capital. We will legislate for a statutory right to interest on late debt payments. We will encourage Scottish banks to provide improved, competitive and local services to small businesses. We will cut red tape, for example by stopping European institutions interfering where they shouldn't and by preventing Whitehall departments 'gold-plating' European regulations with extra rules. Our aim is to abolish the Uniform Business Rate and bring in a new, fairer local taxation system. We will ensure that government purchasing gives special emphasis and easier access to small and medium-sized firms. We will ensure that a Small Business Ombudsman is appointed to investigate and act on the grievances of small business. Our energy conservation programme will create thousands of jobs in small businesses.



- **Boost local economies.** We will use the Scottish Parliament to help build effective links for small businesses with the EU, Government, local councils, academic institutions of business development and local Chambers of Commerce. We will reform Local Enterprise Companies to make them more relevant and accountable to local business and the local

community. We will enable local councils to raise capital for local infrastructure investment, where they work in partnership with the private sector. We will promote industrial development by encouraging geographical centres of industrial excellence.

- **Invest in research and innovation.** We will expand support for science and research by shifting government funds away from military research and development into civil science and research, and improve specialist research facilities for industry. We will encourage regional technology transfer centres to bring together the resources of industry, universities and government laboratories.

- **Promote tourism.** We will improve coordination of the marketing and infrastructure work of government, local Councils and tourist boards. We will ensure that local communities are involved in the planning of tourist developments from the earliest stages.

- **Develop Scotland's energy resources.** We will use the Scottish Parliament to support sustainable, locally-based developments of the oil and gas industry in the North Sea and off the West Coast, particularly through encouragement of smaller companies and more marginal fields, and through technical support and supply industries located in Scotland.

- **Build new partnerships for prosperity.** We will give employees new rights to consultation and participation in decisions and give companies and their employees access to advice on the forms of partnership which best suit them. We will promote profit-sharing, mutual structures and employee share ownership schemes. We will extend the benefits of the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty to all UK employees, while resisting the adoption of new rules that unnecessarily harm job opportunities. We will improve school and business links to promote within the education

system a better understanding of enterprise.

- **Encourage a culture of long term business investment.** We will require companies to publish information on their long-term investment achievements, including environmental performance, research and development and training. We will ensure greater shareholder control over directors' pay and appointments.

- **Promote British exports.** We will make export promotion and commercial activity a higher priority for British Embassies.

Making Britain more competitive

A competitive domestic economy is essential if Scottish companies are to succeed in the global market.

We will:

- **Strengthen the law on competition.** We will tighten the rules on monopolies and adopt a pro-competition stance on take-overs and mergers. We will combine the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and Office of Fair Trading into a single powerful body, independent of government and charged with promoting competition.

- **Give consumers more power.** We will promote the establishment of industry-wide Ombudsmen schemes to improve complaints procedures and consumer redress. We will strengthen customer guarantees, improve product standards and labelling, especially for environmental purposes and encourage products that are easier to repair, reuse and recycle. We will insist on clear labelling for food products which include genetically modified ingredients.

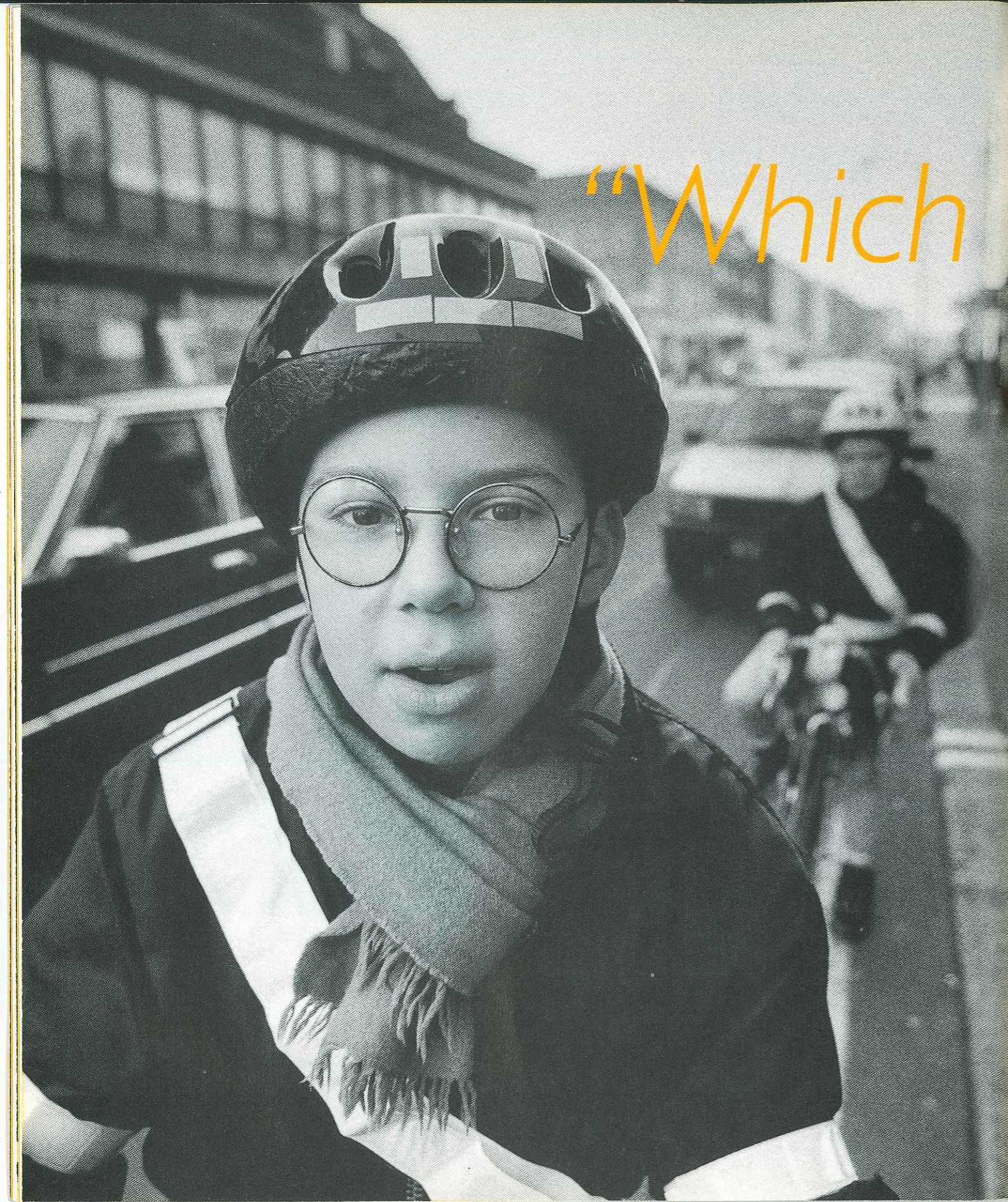
- **Reform the privatised utilities.** We will combine the existing regulators into a single Office of Utility Regulation reporting to a cabinet minister responsible for consumer affairs. This new office will contain a regulatory board for each industry and will be charged

with protecting the consumer and ensuring that excess profits are used to reduce prices and increase investment in improved services. We will encourage utilities to involve their consumers in ownership and control of the company, through mutual structures.

- **Reinforce consumer and investor protection.** We will introduce independent regulation of financial services and improve processes for redress (for example for mis-selling). We will protect pension and life assurance savings from fraud. We will work to maintain the City of London's pre-eminence as a financial centre and to enhance and develop Scotland's important financial sector. We will promote effective international banking standards.

“Which

*party is serious
about making
our environment
cleaner and
safer?”*



Which party is serious about making our environment cleaner and safer?

Our aim: To make clean air, pure water and a decent environment a central priority of Government.

The problem: For too long, the environment has been damaged by greed and indifference. This cannot go on. From global warming to polluted rivers and asthma in children, everyone is already paying the cost of environmental damage. The longer action is delayed, the higher the cost will be.

Our commitment: To save energy, cut traffic congestion, stop the unnecessary destruction of the countryside and stem the tide of pollution.

Our priorities are to:

- Cut taxes on things we want to encourage, like jobs, by taxing pollution instead. This will not mean more tax; it will mean taxing differently.
- Build environmental objectives into every government policy.
- Set tough targets to cut energy waste, reduce traffic congestion, tackle fuel poverty and control pollution.

A greener economy

Environmental protection must be built into every economic and political decision.

We will:

- **Set tough new targets for the reduction of pollution and waste.** This will help reduce global warming, cut air pollution and prevent waste. Our targets include cutting carbon dioxide emissions, the main cause of climate change, by 30 per cent from the 1990 level over the next 15 years.
- **Cut VAT and taxes on jobs, paid for by taxing pollution instead.** This will help create more jobs – and a better standard of living.
- **Adopt a Green Action Programme.** We will set targets for sustainability and biodiversity to be met by central and local government. We will measure these using new indicators of quality of life, progress and wealth. Annual reports will be made to Parliament and the Scottish Parliament on how far environmental targets are met.
- **Protect the local environment.** We will work to conserve the countryside in partnership with Scotland's rural industries. We will cut road congestion and help local Councils make Britain's towns and cities healthier and cleaner places to live.
- **Improve the way environment policy is made.** We will create a new Scottish Department of Natural Resources, responsible

for protecting the environment.

- **Improve environmental education.** We will make environmental education part of the core curriculum in Scottish schools.

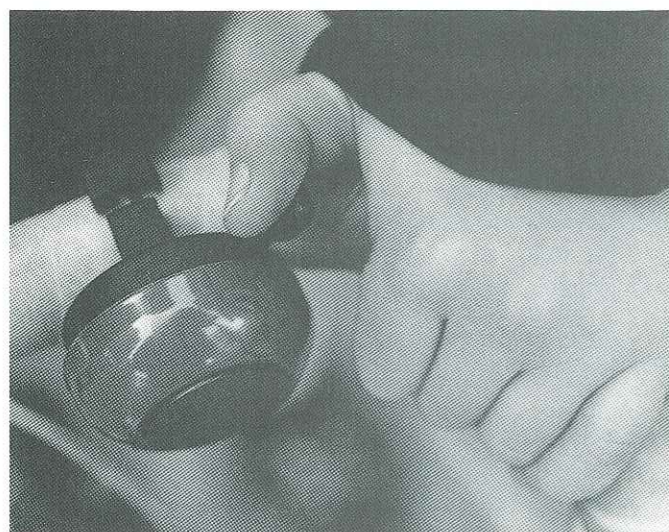
Transporting people, cutting congestion and pollution

Scotland needs an integrated transport strategy to tackle the growing problems of road congestion and provide attractive transport choices for passengers and freight, in both urban and rural areas.

We will:

- **Invest in public transport** by building new partnerships with the private sector. We will create new Passenger Transport Executives for Highlands and Islands, Grampian, Forth Valley and Tay Valley to ensure integrated transport services. We will introduce a Bus Regulator to improve bus service standards. We will give priority in local transport strategies to maintaining existing roads, park and ride schemes, traffic calming and road safety measures. We will allow the use of road pricing in congested urban areas. This will enable councils to pay for clean, rapid local public transport and improved cycle and pedestrian access.
- **Treble the freight and double the number of passengers carried on Britain's railways by the year 2010.** We will strengthen the powers of the rail regulators. We will require Railtrack to invest in an efficient high quality rail network and to work to develop efficient rail links to the Channel Tunnel. We will uphold public subsidies from Railtrack if targets for greater investment and increased passenger and freight traffic are not met. In case of persistent failure, we will use the funds to reacquire a controlling interest in Railtrack.
- **Encourage people to drive more fuel-efficient cars** by cutting the annual car tax

from £145 to £10 for cars up to 1600cc, over the period of the next Parliament, funded by gradually raising the duty on fuel by approximately 4 pence per litre. A person with a typical family car could drive up to 23,000 miles per year and still be better off. Even in rural areas, the average motorist drives only 11,700 miles a year. We will reform tax relief on company cars to encourage smaller cars and give people new incentives to use public transport for getting to work.



● **Review strategic transport and road provision.** Our aim is to ensure that Scotland has a basic network of high-quality, well-engineered, safe roads. We will abolish the toll on the Skye Road Bridge and review tolls on other road bridges in the light of our local and national transport strategies. We will consider reintroducing the crofter counties road scheme to improve communications to Scotland's remoter areas. We will work to ensure that there is a modernised air traffic control centre at Prestwick and to develop European ferry links direct from Scotland.

Warmer homes, saving energy

Half the energy used in Britain is wasted. This pushes up fuel bills, worsens pollution and speeds up global warming.

We will:

● **Cut fuel bills and make homes warmer.**

We will launch a national homes insulation programme, starting with the 2 million lowest income households in the UK, to end fuel poverty. Our proposals will be funded by the Energy Saving Trust and the energy supply companies. This will save these households an average £85 per year and reduce global warming emissions. By contrast, cutting VAT on fuel bills to 5 per cent would save the average household only £19 per year.

● **Cut taxes on people by taxing pollution instead.** To encourage energy saving, we will gradually introduce a 'carbon tax' on fossil fuels, using the funds raised to cut VAT and employers' National Insurance Contributions (the tax on jobs). This is a tax switch, not a tax rise, and will be phased in gradually.

● **Improve energy efficiency.** We will bring in new minimum standards for the energy efficiency of products, buildings and vehicles. We will cut VAT on energy conservation materials to 8 per cent – the same as for energy supplies.

● **Promote renewable sources of energy and combined heat and power schemes.** We will shift funds from nuclear research into decommissioning, nuclear waste management and support research for renewable energy sources. We will not provide any government subsidies for nuclear generation. We support on-site dry storage of nuclear waste, pending the evaluation and long term development of safe alternatives. Nuclear stations will not be replaced at the end of their design life.

Protecting Scotland's heritage

There must be constant vigilance to protect Scotland's natural environment and heritage.

We will:

● **Keep Scotland's rivers and beaches clean.**

We will establish a Scottish Coasts and Firths Action Plan for co-ordinated coastal zone management and protection of sensitive marine areas. We will retain Scottish Water in public ownership and restore water and sewerage to local authority control. We will create a fair mechanism to provide the necessary investment in improved water quality. We will set targets for the Water Boards to reduce leakage and promote efficient water use.

● **Implement a Flood Prevention Programme.**

We will work to ensure that effective flood prevention schemes are in place.

● **Reform land use planning.** We will make protection of the natural environment a major feature of the planning system. We will ensure that rights of way are protected. We will improve the effectiveness and accountability of Scottish Natural Heritage.

● **Green the Countryside.** Our proposed Countryside Management Contracts will help farmers to protect vital habitats and convert to more environmentally-friendly farming methods. We will use tax and planning reforms to protect rural areas, encouraging development on derelict land sites rather than green fields. We will continue to protect the greenbelt.

● **Tackle oil pollution.** We will take effective measures to prevent major oil spills and combat smaller illegal discharges. We will establish Marine Environmental High Risk Areas and re-route ships accordingly. We will establish an independent scientific body to assess the best option in each case for disposal of off shore installations and fund this from the industry as a condition of licences.

Promoting green lifestyles

Most people understand the importance of thinking globally and acting locally. They want to play their part in protecting the environment. Government should help them do so.

We will:

● **Encourage the manufacture of products that are easier to repair, reuse or recycle.**

We will introduce deposit refund schemes and back EU-wide standards for product design, energy efficiency and reuse.

● **Help people to choose environmentally friendly products.** We will press for comprehensive and understandable EU-wide eco-labelling and energy efficiency labelling schemes.

Promoting animal welfare

The way a society treats animals is a measure of its civilization.

We will:

● **Promote animal welfare.** We will set up a compulsory dog registration scheme. We will halt the trade in endangered species as pets and the import of products derived from threatened wild animals. Within the EU, we will insist on the enforcement of maximum time limits for transporting live animals (with an exemption for remote areas), a stricter timetable for banning veal crates and improved rearing conditions for pigs and chickens. We will create an Animal Protection Commission to enforce and improve animal welfare standards. We will ban animal testing for cosmetics, weapons and tobacco and reduce other animal experiments.

● **Protect wild animals.** We will ban snares. We support a free vote in the House of Commons on the issues of hunting with hounds and coursing.



“Which

*party will make
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on the streets
and secure in
my home?”*

Which party will make me feel safe on the streets and secure in my home?

Our aim: To make sure that every person in Scotland has a warm, dry, secure home without the fear of crime and that the quality of life of rural and urban communities alike are enhanced.

The problem: Crime, poor housing, homelessness and insecurity now threaten the very fabric of Scottish society. The country is becoming more and more divided, the sense of community is being lost and our shared values have been undermined. Investment in housing and community support has been slashed. The structures of rural and urban society have decayed.

Our commitment: Liberal Democrats will pursue practical measures to rebuild Scotland's communities, tackle the causes of crime, invest in good housing, reduce homelessness and make people safer in their homes and streets.

Our priorities:

- Reclaim Scotland's communities as places where people can live and walk safely, share local responsibilities, have a good quality of life and find fulfilling work.
- End the scandal of people being forced to sleep rough on the streets.
- Create more decent, affordable and secure housing.
- Cut crime and the fear of crime by tackling the causes of crime.

Scotland's towns and cities

Poor housing and environment, a shortage of decent homes to rent, lack of choice and of mobility in housing have wrecked the lives of millions and damaged Scotland's economy.

We will:

- **Build and renovate more homes.** We will encourage long-term partnerships with the building industry, the private sector and housing associations to develop high-quality and affordable rented housing. We will, within strict borrowing controls, give local authorities appropriate powers to go directly to the market to raise finance for building or renovating homes. We will let Councils use receipts from sales of council houses for their capital programme. We will lift 'capping' restrictions on local authorities to meet local housing needs. We will reform the Right to Buy in order to help maintain a diverse housing stock in rural and urban communities. We will develop new schemes to maintain, modify and improve housing stock, reduce dampness and enable people to stay in their homes as their needs change.
- **Give financial security to all, whether they rent or own their own homes.** We will introduce a new Mortgage Benefit for first time buyers. They would receive this instead of Mortgage Interest Tax Relief. Those holding

current mortgages will retain Mortgage Interest Tax Relief. Our aim is, over time, to merge the new Mortgage Benefit and the current Housing Benefit into one system of housing cost relief, available to those who buy or rent and focused on those most in need.

- **Reduce homelessness.** We will require and, where appropriate, oblige Councils to bring empty properties back into use and give the Housing Court power to refuse unnecessary repossession orders. We will fund more short-stay hostel places as the first rung on the ladder to permanent secure accommodation. We will require every council to set up a self-funding rent deposit scheme to help homeless people who want to take up private tenancies. We will require Councils to rehouse priority applicants permanently and to restore rights to refugees and asylum seekers. We will end discrimination against those under 25 by scrapping the 'shared residency rule' when assessing their housing benefit.

- **Build a new partnership to tackle the housing crisis.** We will create a Scottish Housing Ministry under the Scottish Parliament. We will abolish Scottish Homes and split its functions between the Scottish Housing Ministry and local Councils. Scottish Homes tenants can choose to transfer to an alternative landlord or to the Council. We will carry out a Scottish Housing Needs Assessment to provide an accurate planning base for our housing programme.

- **Raise housing standards.** We will establish a Housing Court to enforce the housing rights of all householders and deal with anti-social behaviour quickly and effectively. We will crack down on illegal evictions, unsuitable multiple occupancy and poor standards in unfit housing.

- **Bring confidence back into the housing market** by targeting low inflation and low interest rates.

Scotland's city and urban communities

Scotland's urban communities suffer from chronic lack of opportunity. We will concentrate on building up their economic independence, particularly for existing communities.

We will:

- **Boost local economic development and job opportunities.** Our priority is to protect areas from sliding into decay. We will link local training to local jobs.

- **Promote community enterprise and empowerment.** We will encourage the establishment of local community banks and credit unions, local enterprise training schemes, and self-help and co-operative initiatives. We will encourage the use of 'planning for real' strategies, in which local people can make a direct input into major planning projects in their community.

- **Enhance urban environments.** We will give Councils the powers they need to tackle speedily environmental eyesores on both private and public land, and to make sure that repairs and graffiti removal are done promptly.

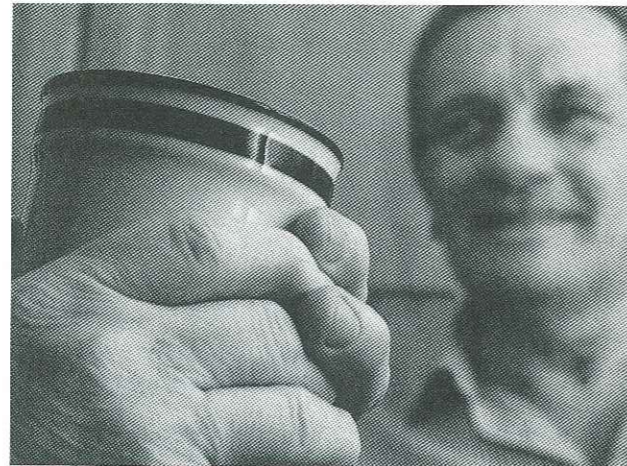
Scotland's rural communities

Scotland's rural economy and communities must be preserved and strengthened. The challenge is to protect and enhance the richness of the countryside, while developing a thriving rural economy and effective services that meet community needs.

We will:

- **Promote a modern and locally-based farming sector.** We will seek to replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which currently subsidises production, with Countryside Management Contracts - a targeted system of direct payments to support economic, social and environmental goals in

rural communities. Countryside Management Contracts will enable farmers and landowners to choose a wide range of options to improve the rural environment, maximise food quality, protect natural habitats, and move to extensive and organic farming methods. We will review the funding arrangements for agri-environment programmes and expand the designation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas.



- **Help rural economies through a period of change.** We will press for the progressive lifting of the export ban on British beef through a certified herds scheme, and an additional selective cull. We will, in partnership with the agricultural industry, draw up a national strategy for farming in order to provide a framework for public policy and private decision-making over the next 10 years. We will boost agricultural research and development and advice to farmers. We will promote local processing of agricultural products. We will help landowners meet the environmental costs of increased access to the countryside.

- **Retain public control of forestry.** We will keep the Forestry Commission in public ownership. We support the long-term aim of doubling the area of the UK under forestry, but this must include a higher proportion of

broad-leaved hardwoods. We will create more community forests near large towns and maintain public access. We will seek to make the private woodlands grants schemes work effectively.

- **Enhance rural services.** We will support the smaller village schools through greater use of information technology and specialist teaching teams. We will encourage schemes that enable local communities to make use of school buildings and equipment. We will promote small community hospitals and use them for more outpatient consultations.

- **Promote education in Scotland's rural areas.** We will focus resources to provide mobile teams of qualified staff to support early years education, both in rural schools and other settings. We support the Highlands and Islands University. We will improve the provision for Gaelic education.

- **Provide a new deal for rural housing.**

We will work to tackle rural housing disrepair and to build up Scottish Homes' existing programme. We will urgently identify and target communities at crisis point and provide enterprise capital to enable Councils, Housing Associations or the private sector to build affordable rented or low cost homes for first time buyers in rural areas where there is an identified social need. We will reform the Right to Buy to reduce the loss of housing available for local people.

- **Improve rural transport.** We will give local authorities the power to improve coordination of local bus services and to re-open closed railway stations, in cooperation with Railtrack. We will set up a Passenger Transport Executive for the Highlands and Islands. We will strengthen the powers of the rail regulators, in order to develop quality rail services (including sleeper and Motorail) to the Highlands. We will make fairer the imposition of VAT on petrol sold in Scotland's more

remote rural areas. We will initiate an official review of the structure of petrol pricing throughout Scotland. We will abolish the toll on the Skye Road Bridge. We will work to provide Scotland's island and more remote mainland communities with secure, adequate and affordable sea and air links.

- **Reform the system of land ownership and management.** We will abolish the relics of the feudal system and complete the Land Register. We will protect the rights of crofters and encourage the establishment of new crofts and the filling of vacant crofting tenancies. We will enhance opportunities for young people to start up farms and crofts, by, for example, channelling financial assistance through Local Enterprise Companies. We will promote crofting community trusts. We will facilitate the public or community acquisition of land where necessary to prevent damaging changes of ownership or, by agreement, to promote development. We will give crofting tenants on both Crown and private land an option of first purchase in the event of sale. We will prune the powers of the Crown Estate Commissioners in relation to the foreshore and seabed.

- **Transform the Highlands and Islands Convention** into a body comprising elected representatives from the area.

- **Strengthen the network of rural sub-Post Offices and village shops.** We will require the Post Office to invest in new point of sale technologies, in order to provide access through sub-Post Offices to a wide range of customer services. Where Post Offices and village shops which are vital to their local community are threatened, we will enable local councils to support them with up to 100 per cent rate relief.

- **Work to preserve fish stocks and protect the livelihoods of local fishing communities.** Our aim is to scrap the Common Fisheries Policy and replace it with a new Europe-wide

fisheries policy based on the regional management of fish stocks. We will take firm action to end quota-hopping, begin the phased abolition of industrial fishing and strengthen decommissioning incentives. We will press for EU action to combat the dumping of farmed salmon on the European market.

- **Promote safe food.** We will set up a Food Commission, independent from MAFF and accountable to Parliament, maintain strict controls on the use of biotechnology and press for higher common food standards across the European Union.

Crime and policing

Crime and the fear of crime now affect almost every person and community in Scotland. There are no quick fixes. Reducing crime and fear will only be achieved by building new partnerships between communities and well trained, well-resourced police, and by tackling the underlying factors leading to more crime.

We will:

- **Give top priority to preventing crime.** We will require every local council to set up Crime Prevention Task Forces and take the lead in establishing local cross-community partnerships against crime, setting specific targets for crime prevention. We will give councils the powers and resources to support high quality, targeted crime prevention initiatives. We will appoint community police officers on a more permanent basis and develop the role of community policing in association with local Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Prevention Panels. We will reduce the opportunities for crime by supporting the installation of home security devices, better lighting and supervision of vulnerable areas. We will strengthen the Scottish Crime Prevention Council.
- **Keep enough police on the beat.** We will keep the police service up to full strength. We

will increase the time the police can spend on preventing and detecting crime by reducing unnecessary police paperwork and making use of new technologies.

- **Retain the traditional balanced Scottish system of policing** between Government, the Chief Constable and local Councils. Police objectives and priorities will be set in consultation with local communities. We will make the National Criminal Intelligence Agency accountable for its Scottish activities both to the Scottish Parliament and to local Chief Constables.

- **Tackle youth crime.** We will develop schemes that require offenders to repay their debt to society. Our voluntary Citizens Service will enable young people to get directly involved in preventing crime. We will support based initiatives such as Youth Action Groups and action on truancy, together with 'peer led' education techniques. We will promote family support measures such as pre-school education, out-of-school care (for holidays and after school hours) and parenting skills training. We will work with youngsters at risk to develop their life and social skills.

- **Strengthen the criminal justice system.** We will stop the waste of resources in the present court system. We will, over time, improve the resourcing and training of the Procurator Fiscal service. We will restore an accused's full 'right to silence', and retain the 'not proven' plea.

- **Reform the prison system.** We will keep the Scottish prison population as low as possible, work to improve prison officers' morale and rehabilitate offenders where possible in the community. We will encourage the use of community sentences and other alternatives to prison where the result is likely to be less reoffending, using prison sentences where they are essential to protect the public or to make punishment effective.

- **Wage war on drug abuse.** We will give the

Police and Customs and Excise the support they need to prevent drugs coming into Britain. We will set up a Royal Commission charged with developing policies to tackle the drugs problem at its roots.

- **Give victims a new deal.** We will promote restorative justice, under which offenders can be required to compensate victims for the damage they have caused. We will ensure that the Victim Support movement and the Witness Support schemes play a full role in the criminal justice system. We will provide victims with the practical support they need to prevent repeat attacks.

- **Build public confidence in the police.** We will make police authorities more responsive to local communities. We will improve co-operation between police forces. Instead of standing on the sidelines, we will work with our European partners through Europol to combat crime, especially terrorism, drug trafficking and fraud.

Arts and media

Flourishing arts and a diverse culture are essential for a lively and open society. They can be engines of innovation that bring life to the economy. At the same time, the world is experiencing an information revolution as vital and far-reaching as the Industrial Revolution. Britain must maintain a free and effective media capable of being a check on the abuse of power and of giving people the information they need to make informed decisions.

We will:

- **Tackle the concentration of media power.** We will act to prevent media mergers or take-overs, except where these can be shown to advance quality, diversity and access. We will require the Independent Television Commission to protect the position of smaller regional ITV companies within the network

supply agreement.

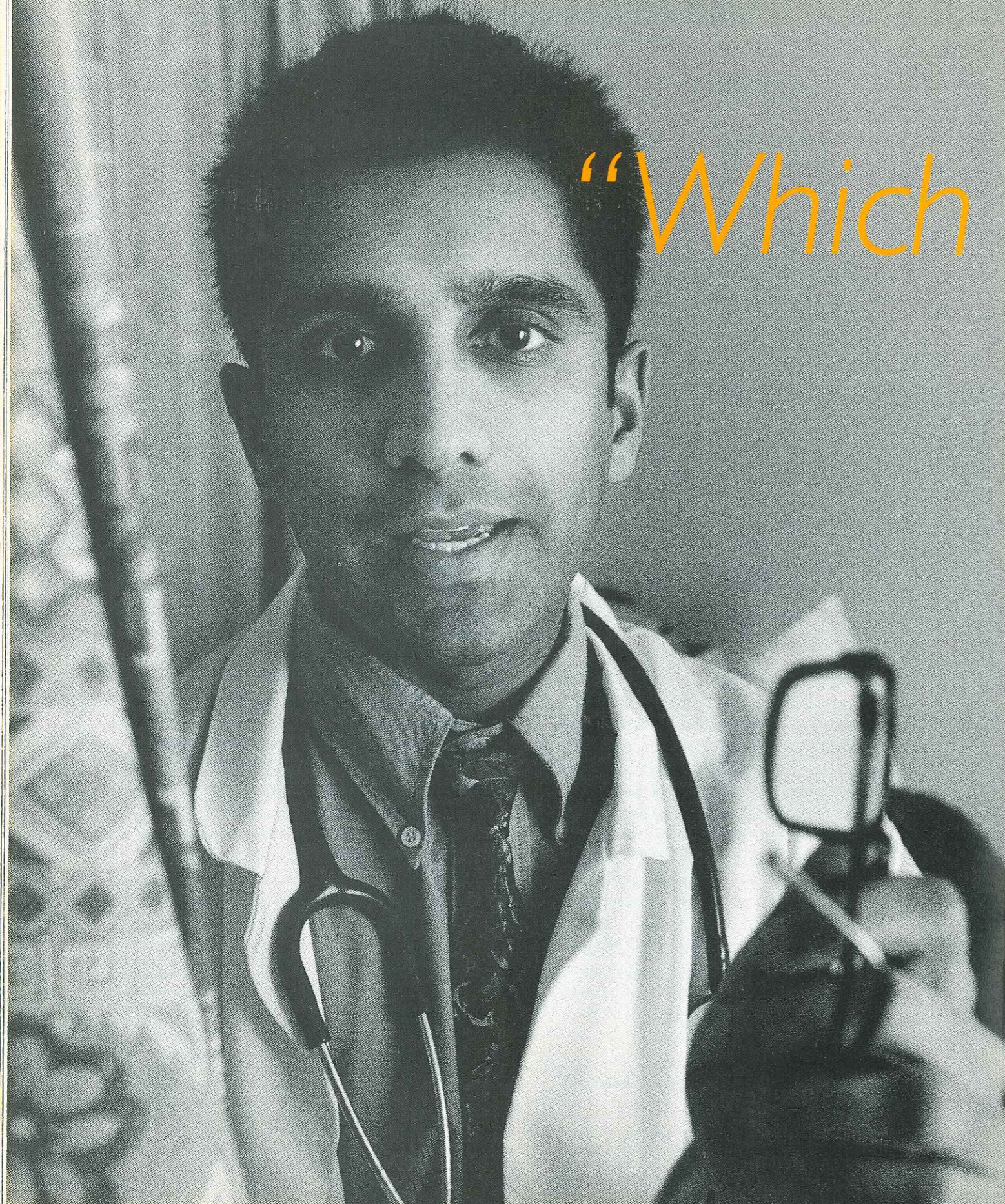
- **Maintain the role of the BBC** as the benchmark of public service broadcasting, committed to quality, diversity and universal access. We will protect the independence and impartiality of the BBC through its Board of Governors and its licence fee. We will decentralise the structure of the BBC.

- **Improve access to information technology and the Internet.** We will ensure that everyone in Britain can have access, either individually or through a wide range of public access points, to a nationwide interactive communications network by the year 2000.

- **Increase access to the arts.** We will use the National Lottery to endow, house and improve access to the arts. We aim to move towards the European average for public funding of the arts. We will uphold the principle of free access to national museum and gallery collections. We will develop the role of libraries as a community resource involving greater use of technology, particularly of the Internet for the study and enjoyment of the heritage of Scotland. We will work to restore the network of local authority music and drama advisers.

- **Promote and encourage Scotland's distinct cultural identity.** We will set up a Scottish Ministry for Sports, Art and Heritage under the Scottish Parliament. We will encourage the development of the Scottish film industry.

- **Promote Britain's culture.** We will actively support the British Council and rejoin UNESCO. We will enhance the BBC World Service as a national asset.



“Which

*party will care
for the NHS
and put my
patients first?”*”

Which party will care for the NHS and put my patients first?

Our aim: To make year-on-year improvements in the health of Scotland's people and the quality of the National Health Service.

The problem: The NHS has been squeezed between rising demand and government underfunding and disrupted by the ideological obsession of government policy. Morale amongst NHS professionals is falling, bureaucracy has grown at the expense of frontline patient care and numbers of nurses and hospital beds have fallen.

Our commitment: Liberal Democrats will increase funding for the NHS and secure funding for the future. We will maintain the NHS as a comprehensive service, free at the point of need and funded primarily from general taxation. We will tackle the crisis in the hospital sector now, make the NHS more accountable and develop a comprehensive health promotion strategy.

Our priorities are to:

- Target resources to health promotion.
- Place an immediate 6 month halt on all finance-driven closures pending an independent audit of needs and facilities available.
- Invest £200 million each year to recruit more staff for frontline patient care. This would be enough for 10,000 extra nurses or 5000 extra doctors across United Kingdom.
- Cut hospital waiting lists to 6 months within 3 years.
- End the two tier system in the NHS.
- Shift resources from bureaucracy into patient care and make the NHS more responsive to patient needs.
- Recognise and reward the vital work of NHS staff.

Raising standards in the NHS

Whilst some of the recent reforms to the NHS have been beneficial, they have resulted in the creation of a two tier health service. The standard of health care a person receives is increasingly becoming a lottery. The length of time people have to wait, the chance of treatment being postponed and the quality of health care vary enormously from one part of the UK to another.

We will:

- **Match NHS facilities to needs.** We will place an immediate six-month halt on the chaotic, finance driven closure of beds and wards and set up an independent audit of needs and the facilities available to meet them.
- **End the built-in two tier service in the NHS.** We will treat all GPs equally, with a common basis for funding. We want all GPs to have the benefits of flexibility and access to services currently enjoyed by fundholders. We will significantly revise and extend the fundholding mechanism and encourage GPs to

manage their own affairs in groups of local practices. This means that treatment will not depend on the type of GP people go to. We will encourage the commissioning of primary health teams comprising various professionals operating out of local health centres.

- **Raise standards of care in all areas.** We will set up a Scottish National Inspectorate for Health and Social Care to improve standards and promote patients' interests. It will work with the Audit Commission to ensure that spending is monitored and that real improvements in patient care result. We will allow local Health Boards to make provision for salaried GPs in areas of need. We will ban 'gagging' clauses that prevent staff from speaking out against unsafe standards. We will expand training of the 'shortage professions' such as chiropodists, speech and occupational therapists.

Funding the NHS

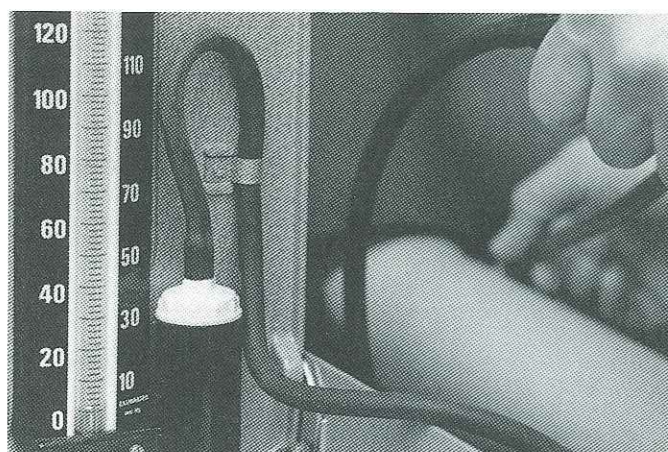
The NHS is underfunded. Too much goes into bureaucracy and not enough into patient care. There is a crisis in the NHS, especially in the hospital sector. Morale is dropping, standards of care are at risk from underfunding and highly qualified doctors and nurses are leaving the profession.

We will:

- **Invest more in the NHS.** We will invest at least an extra £540 million every year in the NHS across the UK. This will be paid for by closing the loophole that allows employers to avoid paying National Insurance contributions on certain benefits in kind and by putting 5p on to the price on a packet of 20 cigarettes. We will use these extra funds to tackle the crisis in staffing, especially in the hospital sector, and begin a shift to preventive care. We will ensure that the NHS budget keeps pace with increasing cost pressures. We will stop the use

of the Private Finance Initiative for the running of NHS services.

● **Shift money from unnecessary bureaucracy into patient care.** We will abolish the divisive and expensive internal market in Scotland. We will move from annual to 5 yearly contracts between Health Boards, the new Scottish Parliament, GP practices and trusts and shift the money saved into frontline patient care. We will replace time-consuming local pay bargaining with a new national pay structure for all NHS staff. There will be a single NHS-wide Pay Review Body that covers all pay, from the cleaner to the chief executive.



Building on the best of the NHS

The NHS needs to be strengthened and improved.

We will:

- **Cut waiting lists.** We will cut operation waiting times between diagnosis and treatment to a maximum of 6 months within 3 years.
- **Improve the quality of care and raise morale.** We will recruit, train and retain more professional staff. Our carefully costed plans would, for instance, pay for the equivalent of around 1,000 more nurses or 500 more doctors for the NHS in Scotland.
- **Tackle the crisis in NHS dental care.** We

will require Health Boards to ensure that the public has access to NHS dentistry in all areas.

Promoting good health

Scotland has a health service that concentrates too much on curing illness rather than trying to prevent it. A healthier nation and a more cost-effective NHS depends on shifting the emphasis towards prevention, tackling the root causes of ill health (eg., poverty and homelessness) and making people more responsible for their own health.

We will:

- **Make prevention a priority.** We will immediately abolish charges for eye and dental check ups as the first step in a radical shift of policy that emphasises the prevention of illness rather than simply treatment.
- **Encourage people to take more responsibility for their own health.** We will improve health education to help prevent illness and promote healthy living. We will ban tobacco advertising and promotion and increase the duty on tobacco products. We will give the Health Education Board for Scotland sufficient autonomy to criticise Government policy and run hard hitting campaigns
- **Ensure that food is healthy and safe.** We will create an independent and powerful Food Commission, separate from the agricultural ministries, responsible for food quality and safety.
- **Put health promotion at the heart of government policy.** We will require each Government department to assess the impact of its policies on health. Each year, there will be an independent report, to be published and debated in the Scottish Parliament on the state of the nation's health.
- **Encourage participation in sport.** We will set up a Scottish Ministry for Sports, Arts and

Heritage. We will carry out an audit of sports facilities and usage and identify shortfalls. We will establish a Scottish Institute of Sport to support Scottish sportsmen and sportswomen to the highest standards, and to develop a network of regional centres of excellence. We will establish community sports plans and encourage sports clubs to share facilities and coaching resources with local schools.

Bringing health services closer to people

The local institutions of the NHS must become more accountable to those they serve and more responsive to patients' needs.

We will:

- **Make health services democratically accountable to the Scottish Parliament.** We will set up a separate Scottish Department of Health and Social Services accountable to the Scottish Parliament and responsible for national health and social work policy and strategy. The Parliament will monitor the effectiveness of the service, and the progress made in improving the nation's health.
- **Implement a Scottish national health strategy** through the Scottish NHS Management Executive. Commissioning of centrally supported NHS Trust services, major capital investments within NHS Trusts and revenue funding for primary and community care services will all be the responsibility of the Executive.
- **Establish a partnership between residents, GPs and other health professionals** and local Councils to plan and deliver local health and social care services. We will strengthen local control of the NHS and investigate bringing health service commissioning and health promotion together with Council social services within the framework of Scotland's elected Councils.

- **Give local people a stronger voice on local trusts.** We will end the right of the Scottish Secretary to appoint members. We will require at least half their membership to be elected from the population they serve. We will open up meetings of NHS Trust boards to the public and press and give local people, staff and professionals speaking rights. We will guarantee direct representation from the staff of the Trust. We will encourage Trusts to provide more services on a decentralised, local basis. We will require all Trusts to publish their development plans and auditors' reports
- **Improve the representation of local residents.** We will give Health Councils improved rights to consultation and greater access to information and meetings.

Giving patients more choice

Patients should have more choice over the type of treatment, who delivers it and when.

We will:

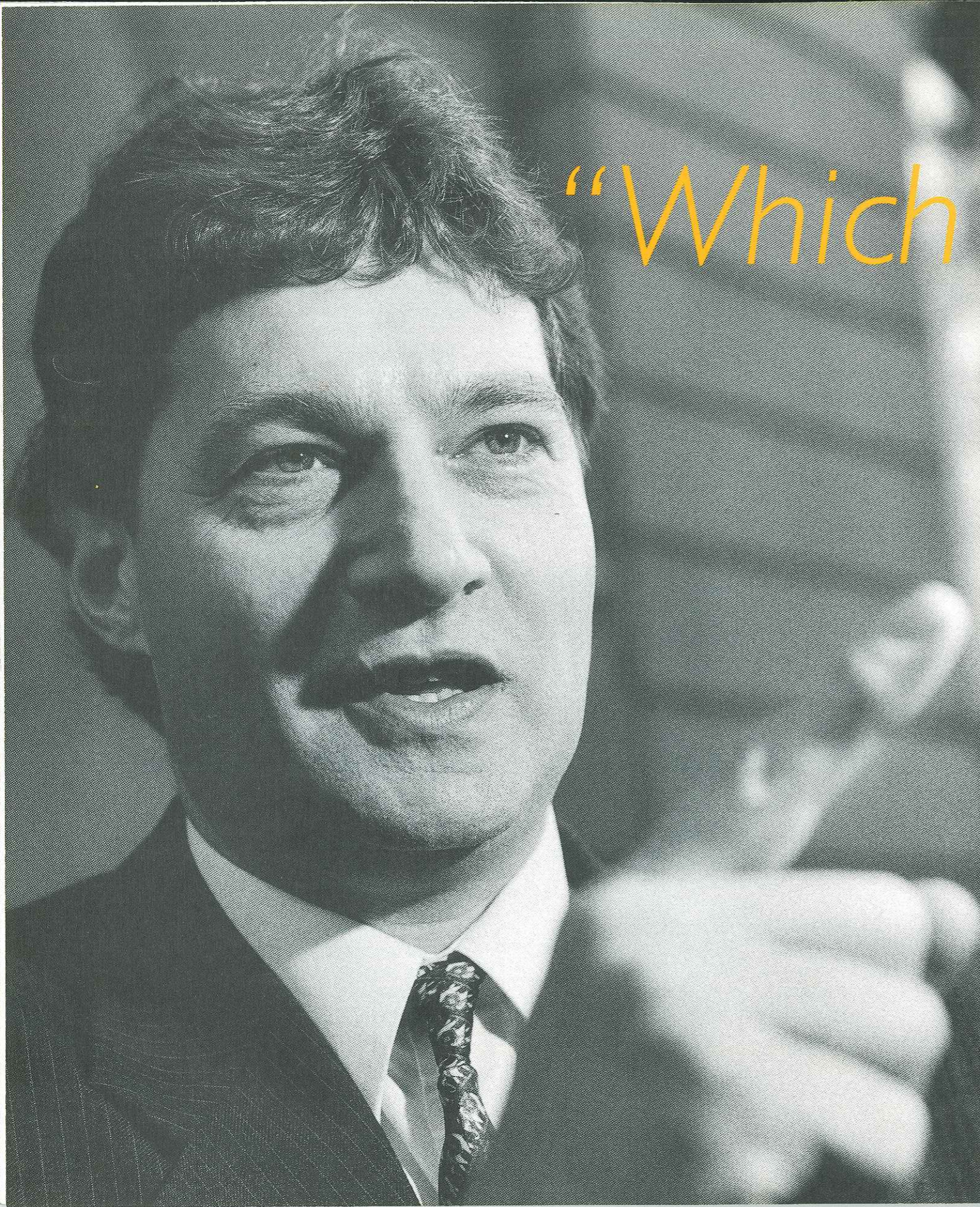
- **Secure the rights of patients.** We will strengthen the Patients' Charter including rights to treatment within a specified time, selection of timing, choice of GP; full information about the options for treatment, (including, where appropriate, the option of complementary and alternative medicine), guaranteed access to health records and better redress.
- **Ensure that action is taken to improve poor quality services.** We will enable patients and staff to request our new Scottish National Inspectorate of Health and Social Care to make inspections.

Community care

Our aim is to create a society in which people, whatever their needs, can live their lives with dignity.

We will:

- **Give people choice** in the services they use and the way they are provided. We will build effective partnerships between Local Authorities and carers in setting a proper Care Plan – including adequate provision for respite care. This will promote independence and provide better value for money.
- **Care for carers.** We will introduce a new Carers' Benefit, in place of the Invalid Care Allowance, in order to meet more of the financial cost of caring. Our aim is to extend the Carers' Benefit, as resources allow, to those over retirement age and to improve advice, information, training and counselling for carers. We will seek to increase carers to respite care and ensure that carers are involved in decisions about care. We will draw up a Charter that sets out carers' rights and responsibilities including the specific position of young carers.
- **Establish high national standards for all community care services.** Our new independent Scottish Inspectorate of Health and Social Care will publish codes of practice for residential and nursing homes and have the power to close any home that consistently falls short of national standards. We will introduce national charging and eligibility guidelines to ensure a 'level playing field' of provision and charges.
- **Protect people from the excessive cost of care.** We will, as resources allow, raise the threshold at which older people are required to make a contribution to their long term care. We will work for a fair, long-term system for funding care services that does not penalise thrift.



“Which

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renewal for
Scotland?”*

Which party will guarantee democratic renewal for Scotland?

Our aim: To establish a representative Home Rule Parliament for Scotland, and renew the United Kingdom and its democracy.

The problem: Scotland has long been badly served by the present constitution. An unfair voting system has given Scotland a Conservative government and programme unsuited to the nation's needs. Local communities and individuals have been stripped of power and rights. Basic public services are threatened. The very future of the United Kingdom is under threat.

Our commitment: Liberal Democrats will create a Scottish Parliament within the United Kingdom as a first step to a modernised Scottish and British democracy. We will create a fair voting system, guarantee individual rights and rebuild trust between the people and those who govern them.

A Home Rule Parliament for Scotland

Scotland is in a unique position. Home Rule for Scotland will both renew democracy in Scotland and clear the log jam to reform across the United Kingdom as a whole. It will provide a new focus for tackling the crucial problems of education, health, crime and jobs. The plan for a Scottish Parliament, as agreed in the Scottish Constitutional Convention, reflects a consensus amongst nearly every major civic and political organisation in Scotland (except the Conservatives and the SNP).

Liberal Democrats were successful in securing a fair voting system which will prevent the domination of Scotland by the central belt – or by one party alone.

This Scottish Parliament scheme represents 'the settled will of the Scottish people'.

Scottish Liberal Democrats, as the only Scottish political party to have supported Scottish Home Rule consistently, are in the pivotal position of having been the main brokers of the scheme, and are the best guarantors of its implementation.

We will:

- **Set up a Home Rule Parliament in Scotland** in accordance with the 'Convention Scheme' as a first step to a Federal United Kingdom, with a fair and proportional voting system, powers to raise or lower income tax and fair representation of women. We would also establish a Welsh Senedd, create the framework to make existing regional decision-making in England democratically accountable and enable the establishment of elected regional assemblies.

- **Use the Scottish Parliament to promote Scottish interests** in the European Union, in modernising the Scottish economy, increasing individual opportunity, rebuilding public services such as education and health, and restoring the

social cohesion of Scottish society.

- **Make the present functions of the Scottish Office democratically accountable to the elected Scottish Parliament.** We will abolish the office of Secretary of State for Scotland and reduce the number of Scottish MPs at Westminster. We believe that, following these reforms, Scottish Members of the UK Parliament should not participate or vote on matters where there is no Scottish interest.

Restoring trust in politics

British politics remains far too secretive. We cannot rebuild trust in politics without making government more open and accountable.

We will:

- **Safeguard individual liberties** by establishing a Bill of Rights. As a first step, we will incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law so that it is enforceable by Courts in the UK. We will set up a Human Rights Commission to strengthen the protection of individual rights. We will create a Scottish Ministry of Justice, responsible for protecting human rights and overseeing the administration of the legal system, the courts and legal aid. We oppose the introduction of Identity Cards.

- **Break open the excessive secrecy of government** by passing a Freedom of Information Act, which will establish a citizens' right to public information.

- **Cut back the quango state.** We will scrap unnecessary quangos, handing their functions over to elected bodies, either local Councils or the Scottish Parliament. We will require those that remain to meet in public and to list their members' interests. We will establish a fair, open and more representative appointment process for all quangos.

- **Give people more say in decision-making.** We will make greater use of national

referendums for constitutional issues, for example changing the voting system or any further transfer of power to European institutions. We will enable referendums to be held on specific local issues where there is public demand.



Renewing democracy

Britain's political institutions are outdated and unrepresentative.

We will:

- **Modernise the House of Commons.** As part of our policy for decentralisation, we will reduce the number of MPs by 200 (a reduction of a third) and introduce tougher rules for their conduct, behaviour and outside sources of income. We will improve drafting and consultation on legislation to strengthen MPs' ability to hold the government to account.
- **Create an effective and democratic upper house.** We will transform the House of Lords into a predominantly elected second chamber to represent the nations and regions of the UK and to play a key role in scrutinising European legislation.

- **Bring in a fair system of voting.** We will introduce proportional representation for all elections to put more power in the hands of voters and make government more representative.
- **Clean up party funding.** We will reform the way political parties are funded and limit the amount that they can spend in national election campaigns. We will make each party publish its accounts and state the sources of all large donations.
- **Make politics more stable.** We will establish a fixed Parliamentary term of four years.

Giving local government to the people

Local Government is in a mess. The results of reorganisation, one party control in most areas and a tax base almost entirely controlled by the Scottish Office have been calamitous, and threaten the proper delivery of vital local public services.

We will:

- **Make Councils fully accountable to the people** through a fair and proportional voting system for all local elections that enables the people more readily to remove unsuccessful Council administrations and Councillors.
- **Make local taxation fairer.** Local Government finance is in such chaos that it can only be rescued by fundamental reform. We will replace council tax with a fairer local income tax. We will establish a Royal Commission to review the present system of financing of Scottish Councils which would report urgently to the Scottish Parliament. The Royal Commission would be given the following principles of reform: local taxes should be buoyant, broadly based and raise the bulk of local revenues. Any direct taxes, including tax on business, should be fair, related as far as practicable to ability to pay, and locally determined.

- **Strengthen local government.** Once full accountability is in place, we will establish a 'power of general competence' giving local councils wider scope for local action. We will free councils of excessive interference by Government and allow them, within limits, to go directly to the market to raise finance for capital projects.
- **Bring local government closer to the people,** through a system of decentralised area committees and stronger Community Councils with real power. We will enhance the role of the voluntary sector by requiring Councils to carry out a full evaluation to prioritise voluntary groups providing a social service and provide the sector with adequate resourcing.

Northern Ireland

Peace in Northern Ireland depends on containing and ultimately removing the entrenched hostility between the two main communities in Northern Ireland.

We will:

- **Establish a power-sharing executive for Northern Ireland** elected under a fair and proportional system of voting. We will press for a new constitutional settlement based on the protection of individual rights through a Bill of Rights, incorporating the European Convention.
- **Give individuals more power and political responsibility.** We will introduce a fair and proportional voting system for all elections, and reform and strengthen local government in the province.
- **Ensure respect for civil liberties.** We will introduce an independent procedure for investigating complaints against the security forces and reform the Diplock system so that three judges instead of one preside over non-jury trials. We will urgently implement the North recommendations for an independent

commission to supervise parades and marches.

- **Promote economic growth.** We will strengthen the all-Ireland economy through the creation of effective cross-border agencies. We will invest in education and promote inward investment.
- **Build on the Joint Declaration and the Framework Document,** by working with the Irish Government to create agreement between as many of the constitutional parties as possible. Sinn Fein can only be admitted to this process if, in accordance with the Mitchell principles, they and the IRA turn their backs on terrorism. Meanwhile, we must remain vigilant and keep in place the present means for countering terrorism.

Which

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Which party will give me the opportunity to make the most of my life?

Our aim: To widen opportunities for everyone in Scotland to make the most of their lives.

The problem: Poverty, lack of training, low pay and discrimination deny too many people the opportunity to make the most of their lives. Meanwhile, the welfare system no longer meets the needs of a modern society. It locks too many into dependency and, too often, it penalises those who wish to work and save.

Our commitment: Liberal Democrats will promote individual self-reliance, strengthen equality for all before the law and in employment, and work for a society that cherishes diversity.

Our priorities are to:

- Ensure that, by the millennium, every young person has the opportunity to work, learn, train and make a positive contribution to society.
- Give women greater opportunities to play a full role in work and in society.
- Ensure dignity in retirement.
- Break open the poverty trap that makes people better off on the dole than in work.
- Modernise Britain's welfare state for the twenty-first century, building a new cross-party partnership for reform.

Breaking the poverty trap

Unemployment wastes the talents of people who could contribute to the well-being of their families and Scotland's wealth.

We will:

- **Help long-term unemployed people back to work.** We will establish a self-financing Benefit Transfer Programme allowing those who have been unemployed for a year or more to turn their unemployment benefits into an incentive for employers to recruit and train them. The value of the benefit to employers will gradually be reduced.
- **Break open the poverty trap.** We will take nearly 500,000 low earners across the UK out of income tax altogether by raising tax thresholds. This will provide new incentives to work, while cutting the benefits bill and reducing tax for 99.5 per cent of all income taxpayers. This will be paid for by introducing a new top tax rate of 50p on taxable income of over £100,000 per year. We will replace Income Support and Family Credit with a simpler, more efficient Low Income Benefit that encourages and increases financial incentives for people going back to work.
- **Modernise Britain's welfare system.** We will initiate a comprehensive review of the

welfare system, to build a new framework for welfare and opportunity, on a cross-party basis. Our aim is to provide a more effective safety net for the disadvantaged, to encourage work, without compulsion, and to widen opportunities.

- **Help parents to return to work.** We will develop a national childcare strategy, drawing on public and private provision. We will, over time, extend tax relief on workplace nurseries to other forms of day nursery care.
- **Establish a voluntary Citizens Service** to give people, especially young people, up to 2 years' work on such projects as environmental conservation, crime prevention, housing renovation, social services, etc.
- **Encourage a flexible labour market,** while protecting the low paid from exploitation with a regionally variable minimum hourly rate.
- **Crack down on social security fraud and tax evasion** and shift the money saved into new policies to enhance opportunities. We will tackle the very high levels of fraud and overpayment in the social security budget. We will stop tax evasion and close off tax avoidance loopholes.

Older people

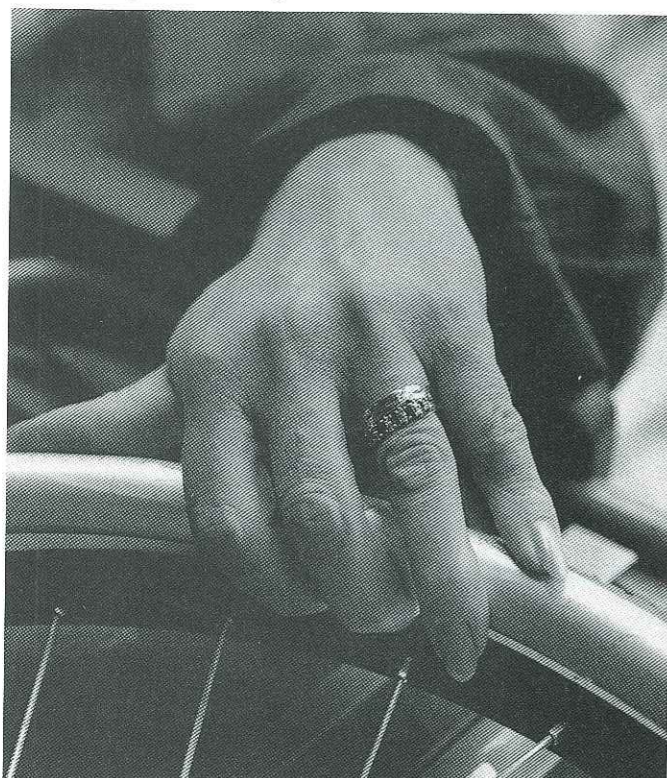
Everyone in Scotland should be able to look forward to a retirement of security, dignity and opportunity. Old people feel that they are fast becoming Scotland's forgotten generation.

We will:

- **Guarantee everyone an acceptable minimum standard of living in retirement.** We will create an additional top-up pension for pensioners with incomes below the Income Support level. This will be indexed to earnings and tapered as outside income increases. The basic state pension will remain indexed to prices. We will start to phase out the expensive, unfair contributory system and

base the right to a state pension on citizenship and residence. We will maintain payment of state pensions through the existing network of sub-Post Offices.

- **Enable people to choose when to start drawing a pension.** We will bring in a flexible 'decade of retirement', between the ages of 60 and 70.
- **Protect the rights of older people.** We will legislate against discrimination on the grounds of age.



- **Expand private pensions and give people more control over their pensions.** We wish to see more people making provision for their old age. We will replace the State Earnings Related Scheme (SERPS) with a scheme under which all employees have personal or occupational pensions. Existing accrued SERPS will, however, be preserved. We will expand occupational and personal pension schemes by

giving all employees an entitlement to participate in a pension scheme of their choice, funded by contributions from employers and employees. Pension rights will be fully secured if people change jobs. We will treat pensions as deferred income over which pension-holders have full rights of security, control and portability.

Young people

We propose a new deal for young people, in which new rights and new responsibilities go hand in hand.

We will:

- **Expand opportunities.** Our aim is that every young person between the ages of 16 and 19 will have the opportunity to either work, learn, train or take a place on our new Citizens Service.
- **Restore security to excluded young people.** The withdrawal of benefit rights has condemned thousands of young people to life out of work and on the streets, at great long-term public cost. We will restore access to benefits for 16 and 17 year olds. In the longer term, we aim to scrap the lower rate of income support for those under 25.
- **Ensure that young people can learn their rights and responsibilities,** with citizenship classes in every school and parenting classes for young adults. We will give children and young people access to information about their legal rights and obligations, review the age of majority and ensure that young people are represented on bodies that especially concern them.
- **Expand local youth services.** We will require local Councils to provide a statutory youth service in partnership with the voluntary sector.

Families

Families, in all their forms, are a basic building block of society. But the nature of families is changing. This has brought new stresses which must be addressed. But it has also brought new attitudes, such as the sharing of family responsibilities, which should be encouraged.

We will:

- **Give families more security.** We will take nearly half a million low earners out of tax altogether, by raising tax thresholds. We will replace Income Support and Family Credit with a simpler, more efficient Low Income Benefit that helps people back to work. We aim to improve the support for those caring for older people and people with disabilities.
- **Introduce fair and workable child support legislation.** We will repeal the Child Support Act and abolish the Child Support Agency. We believe that parents should financially support their children at an appropriate level. Where there are disputes between the parents, these should be decided by the courts, not by an inflexible formula. We will create a new system of unified family courts and leave them to decide these questions, after they have heard all the evidence.
- **Promote good parenting.** We will encourage the provision of parenting classes for young adults. We will increase the role of parents in education by extending home/school/pupil links and develop home-school partnership arrangements and the needs of the child.
- **Expand parental rights.** We will introduce a statutory right to parental leave and develop Maternity Benefit into a new, flexible parental benefit that can be shared between partners. We will ensure that fostering and adoption law is based on the suitability of prospective fosterers and the needs of the child.
- **Help parents to return to work.** We will,

over time, extend tax relief on workplace nurseries to other forms of day nursery care. We will develop a national childcare strategy, drawing on public and private provision.

- **Encourage flexible working patterns.** We will encourage job sharing and family-friendly employment practices, especially in the public sector. We will give private sector employees approaching retirement age, or with responsibilities for young children, the right to negotiate reduced hours or a career break.

Women

There is still a long way to go before women have equal opportunities.

We will:

- **Promote equality in the workplace.** We will, over time, extend employment and pensions rights to part time employees, on a pro rata basis. We will bring in tougher obligations on employers to establish equal opportunities procedures and pursue the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.
- **Make pensions fairer to women** by working to replace the contributory system with pension rights based on citizenship and residence in the UK. We will bring forward the introduction of pension splitting on divorce.
- **Improve the services that women receive from the NHS.** We will promote equal treatment of the sexes within the health service. We will set targets for the expansion of facilities which enable women to consult female health professionals.
- **Make the legal system fairer to women.** We will strengthen the civil law remedies for domestic violence and improve the treatment of rape victims by the court system. We will seek to improve the provision of refuge places for victims of domestic violence.
- **Enhance the role of women in public life.** We will tackle the under-representation of

women on public bodies by setting a target that within a decade, at least one-third of all those on all public bodies should be women. We will reform the procedures and facilities of the House of Commons to make them more suitable to needs of women and families. We will ensure that, from the outset, the Liberal Democrat team in the Scottish Parliament has equal numbers of men and women and that the Parliament is suited to the needs of women and families.

Disabled people

Progress in ensuring equal opportunities for disabled people remains patchy and unacceptably slow.

We will:

- **Guarantee the rights of disabled people.** We will ban discrimination on the grounds of disability and pass comprehensive legislation securing the civil rights of disabled people. We will draw up a Charter of Rights setting out what the Bill of Rights means for disabled people.
- **Give disabled people more independence.** We will introduce a Partial Capacity Benefit building on the Disability Working Allowance to assist those in work who cannot fully support themselves financially. We aim to increase financial support for disabled people who cannot find work and to make provision for the real costs of disability.
- **Improve access.** We will publish a code of practice to improve access to buildings and transport. We will require government departments, local Councils and public organisations to make their key public literature available in Braille and tape, where appropriate.
- **Make education inclusive.** We will draw up a faster procedure for establishing a record of needs and develop a code of practice for children with special needs.

Ethnic minorities

Despite progress over recent years, members of ethnic minorities are too often denied equal opportunities and have to face racism and discrimination on a daily basis. Diversity, pluralism and a multicultural society are sources of strength for Britain.

We will:

- **Strengthen action against discrimination.** We will create a new Human Rights Commission, combining the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission. We will give statutory force to the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice in employment and ensure that Britain plays a leading role in strengthening anti-discrimination legislation throughout the European Union.
- **Ensure equal opportunities for all.** We will require local authorities and housing associations to ensure equal opportunities in housing allocation. We will expand access to mother tongue teaching for both adults and children, where this takes place through self-help and community groups.
- **Free immigration laws from racial discrimination.** We will ensure that immigration policy is non-discriminatory in its application. We will reform current immigration laws so as to enable genuine family reunions. We will restore benefit rights to asylum seekers and ensure that asylum claims are dealt with swiftly.
- **Increase ethnic minorities' confidence in the police.** We will encourage the recruitment of ethnic minorities into the police force and require action to be taken against discrimination within the force. We will tackle any discriminatory use of police powers, such as stop and search, and enhance police action to deal with racial attacks. We will encourage the use of aggravated sentencing for racially motivated crimes.

Lesbians and gay men

In a free and tolerant society, discrimination on any grounds is unacceptable. Diversity is a source of strength.

We will:

- **Ensure equality before the law for lesbians and gay men** through our new Human Rights Commission and the Bill of Rights. We will create a common age of consent regardless of gender or sexual orientation.
- **Stop discrimination.** We will outlaw incitement to hatred and from discrimination in housing and employment, including the armed forces, on grounds of sexual orientation. We will repeal 'section 28' of the 1988 Local Government Act. We will reform the law and ensure that the police and local authorities deal more effectively with homophobic attacks and encourage police forces to be more representative of the communities they serve.



“Which

*party has the
vision to build
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to live in?”*

Which party has the vision to build the kind of world I want to live in?

Our aim: To recast Britain's foreign policy to enable this country to play a leading role in shaping Europe and strengthening international institutions.

The problem: For too long British foreign policy has looked backwards to our imperial past. Britain's interests have been damaged by an attitude to Europe that has been, at best, ambivalent and, at worst, hostile. This attitude has also cost Britain opportunities for influence and advantage.

Our commitment: Liberal Democrats will ensure that Britain plays a leading role in shaping Europe, democratising its institutions and strengthening its role as a framework for prosperity, peace and security. Britain, with its world experience, expert armed-forces and permanent membership of the UN Security Council, has a unique role to play in reforming international institutions for the next century.

Our priorities are to:

- Make the European Union work more effectively and democratise its institutions.
- Widen Europe to include the new democracies of central and eastern Europe.
- Create a strong framework for Britain's defence and security through NATO and European co-operation.
- Give Britain a leading role in reforming and strengthening the UN and other international institutions.
- Promote an enforceable framework for international law, human rights and the protection of the environment.

Positive leadership in Europe

Britain's interests can be pursued best through constructive participation in an enlarged European Union. Our vision is of a European Union that is decentralised, democratic and diverse. A strong and united Europe, but one that respects cultural traditions and regional identities.

In seeking to reform the EU, our priorities are to:

- **Give the British people a say.** Reform that fundamentally changes Britain's place in Europe should only proceed if it has the explicit support of Britain's people. If there is any substantial change in Britain's relationship with the EU, the British people must give their consent through a referendum.
- **Make EU institutions more democratic and accountable.** We will give the House of Commons, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Senedd an effective role in scrutinising European policy. The Council of Ministers and the EC Commission need to be more accountable to the elected European Parliament. We will introduce a fair and proportional voting system for British MEPs in time for the 1999 European Parliament elections. We will

provide for effective Scottish representation on UK delegations to the EU Council Ministers.

- **Make EU decision-making more efficient and effective.** Europe cannot effectively enlarge without improving its decision-making. We therefore favour wider application of majority voting. But we will keep the veto on all issues relating to the constitution, budgetary matters and regulations on pay and social security. We support the use of the 'double majority', especially on matters such as foreign and security policy. Each member state must retain the unfettered right to take its own decisions on the commitment of its national troops.

Pursuing Britain's interests in Europe

Britain has much to gain from EU membership, but this will take new leadership, a new approach and a renewed sense of national confidence.

Our aims in Europe are to:

- **Enhance economic prosperity** by promoting the freedom of movement of people, goods, services and money throughout the EU and by completing the European Single Market, particularly in the areas of financial services, pensions and air travel.
- **Participate in a successful single currency.** Being part of a successful single currency will bring low inflation and low interest rates. Staying out will result in less investment and a loss of influence. However, three conditions must be met before Britain can join. First, the single currency must be firmly founded on the Maastricht criteria. Second, Britain must meet those criteria. Third, the British people must have said yes in a referendum.
- **Strengthen the European framework for peace and security.** Britain's security and national interests are best pursued in partnership with its European neighbours. We will work to strengthen European Common

Foreign and Security Policy, to enable greater scope for united European action. Individual member states must be free to decide whether or not their national forces will take part in any particular action.

- **Fight crime and protect citizens' rights** through more effective co-operation between EU states' police and customs forces with greater democratic accountability. We will work to improve European co-operation against cross-border criminal activity and allow free movement for Britain's people throughout Europe. The administration of border controls should remain with individual member nations



until they can be confident that the EU's external borders are secure.

- **Reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**, converting it into a system of direct payments to support economic, social and environmental goals in rural communities.
- **Reform fisheries policies**, scrapping the Common Fisheries Policy and replacing it with a new Europe-wide fisheries policy based on the regional management of fish stocks. We will take urgent action to end quota-hopping and begin the phased abolition of industrial fishing. We will

press for EU action to combat the dumping of farmed salmon on the European market.

Strong defence in an uncertain world

The first decades of the next century are likely to be turbulent and unstable both within and around Europe. Britain must maintain an effective security capability. This will best be achieved through NATO and European co-operation. This country must continue to play a full part in both.

We will:

- **Maintain a strong defence at home and enable the UK to play a leading role in keeping international peace.** We will maintain Britain's overall defence capability at its current level, whilst ensuring UK forces meet current needs and are appropriate to potential threats.
- **Retain Britain's basic nuclear capability** through the Trident submarine force until such time as international multilateral nuclear disarmament can be achieved. We will restrict the number of nuclear warheads on Trident to the same number as previously deployed on Polaris.
- **Resist the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.** We will press for the conclusion of a verifiable Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. We will ensure that Britain plays an active part in talks to reduce the holdings of strategic nuclear weapons.
- **Support the principle of common security.** We support the extension of the security guarantees from which western Europe has benefited to the new democracies of central and eastern Europe. We support NATO and its enlargement.

Working for peace, security and sustainability

In an increasingly interdependent world, the security of a medium sized nation like Britain is best preserved within a framework of

international law that is effective and enforceable.

Reforming the United Nations

Playing a leading role in strengthening and reforming the United Nations should be a central aspect of Britain's foreign policy over the next decade.

We will work to:

- **Strengthen the UN's peacekeeping capability** so that it can take earlier and more effective action to prevent or suppress conflict. This should include establishing fast-track machinery for negotiations, and permanent, on-call, peacekeeping forces made up from high calibre troops made available by member states; the reinstatement of a Military Staff Committee; the establishment of a UN Staff College to train officers and improvements to the UN's command and control, communication and intelligence capabilities.
- **Support the establishment of an International Criminal Court** to deal with genocide and war crimes.

Protecting the global environment

Pollution and environmental degradation do not respect national borders. Countries must work together if the world's environment is to be protected.

We will:

- **Take a lead in international environmental negotiations.** We will press for tough and legally binding international targets for greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants.
- **Develop a global system of environmental protection.** We will work for the creation of a global environmental organisation. We will promote an environmental equivalent of the Geneva Convention, to outlaw gross acts of environmental destruction in time of war.

Tackling world poverty

The elimination of global famine, pestilence and poverty is not only a moral challenge, it is also essential for the world's long-term stability and peace.

We will:

- **Increase Britain's contribution to overseas aid.** We will set out a timetable for sustained progress towards achieving the UN target for overseas development aid of 0.7 per cent of GNP within the next 10 years.
- **Promote a timetable for debt relief to the poorest states** including a programme for cancelling debt and the creation of new and additional resources for debt relief.
- **Target Britain's bilateral aid where it is most needed.** We will focus Britain's bilateral aid on the least developed countries and end the practice of tying aid.
- **Require states that receive UK development assistance to respect the fundamental human rights of their people** and suspend UK programmes where these standards are breached.

Controlling arms sales

The global arms trade fuels conflicts, hinders prosperity and robs the world's poor of resources. Its growth must be diminished.

We will:

- **End the sale of British arms, war material, and 'dual use' technologies** to regimes which abuse human rights, and strictly control sales to regions of tension or potential conflict.
- **Seek a new international regime to control the arms trade.** We will support tighter EU-wide restrictions on transfers of military technology to non-democratic regimes and press for the establishment of a mandatory UN register, in which all arms sales and transfers must be listed.

● **Ban landmines.** We will place an immediate and total ban on the production, stockpiling and export of anti-personnel landmines and work towards a global ban on landmine production.

Free and fair trade

Free and fair trade benefits all. The GATT Uruguay Round has successfully lowered barriers to international trade, but further reforms are needed.

We will seek action to:

● **Enhance free trade by further reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers,** especially against the poorest countries.

● **Improve global labour standards** by permitting countries to discriminate against goods produced by nations that maintain practices such as child, slave and forced labour. We will support the work of the International Labour Organisation in raising labour standards throughout the world.

● **Advance environmental objectives.** We support the addition of an environmental sustainability clause to the GATT, setting out agreed principles of environmental policy against which trade measures can be judged.

● **Reduce transnational corporations' ability to abuse market power,** through the development of a framework for global competition policy.

The Liberal Democrats and your tax

A copy of our Annual Tax Contract will be delivered to each UK Household following the Budget each year. Some of the information which would be included is provided on the next page.

This Annual Tax Contract will be in keeping with our four Tax Pledges:

1.) No taxation without explanation

Central Government should inform taxpayers of the ways in which their money is raised and spent, just as local councils now do.

2.) No promises unless the bill is attached

People have the right to know the Government's priorities and how much they will cost. When we make significant changes in our tax and spending priorities we will tell people where the money has come from. We will ask the National Audit Office to make sure that additional expenditure earmarked for specific projects is spent accordingly.

3.) No more tax without tackling waste

Each year we will set out the measures which we plan to implement in order to reduce wasteful expenditure and deliver best value for money to taxpayers. We will never raise taxes without first scrutinising Government expenditure for waste.

4.) Fair tax for all

Tax bands, rates and reliefs should ensure that everyone contributes according to their ability to pay and that the tax burden is fairly shared. We will aim to take more of those on low incomes out of tax completely. We will clamp down on tax avoidance and evasion. We will provide a mechanism for people to give their views on tax and spending priorities.

Costing our commitment

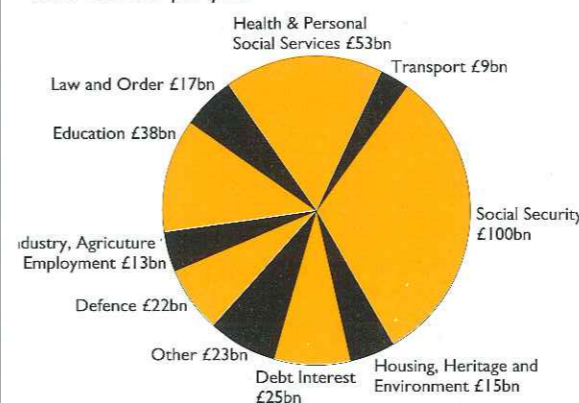
- We have issued alongside this manifesto a Costings Supplement to show in detail how our proposals will be financed.
- We will raise the basic rate of income tax by one penny in the pound – from 23p to 24p – to help finance our £2bn per year programme of Education investment.
- We will increase the amount of income which people can receive before they start to pay income tax by £200 per year to £4,245. This tax cut will be paid for by introducing a new rate of income tax of 50%, payable on taxable income of over £100,000 per year.
- We will put 5p on a packet of cigarettes and use the money to restore free eye and dental checks for all and freeze prescription charges.

How the proposals in this manifesto would alter your tax and the Government's spending

Current spending

How this Government is spending your money (Current Government Spending Plans 1997-98)

Total=£315bn per year



How these proposals would change Government spending

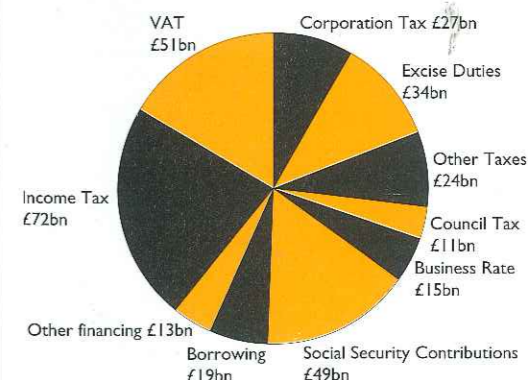
Liberal Democrats would <u>increase</u> spending on:	
Education	+£2,050m
Health	+£565m
Pensions	+£265m

Liberal Democrats would <u>decrease</u> spending on:	
Private consultants	-£120m
Publicity	-£50m
Empty properties	-£25m

Current taxation

Where this Government's money comes from (Current Government Revenue Plans 1997-98)

Total=£315bn per year



How these proposals would change your income tax

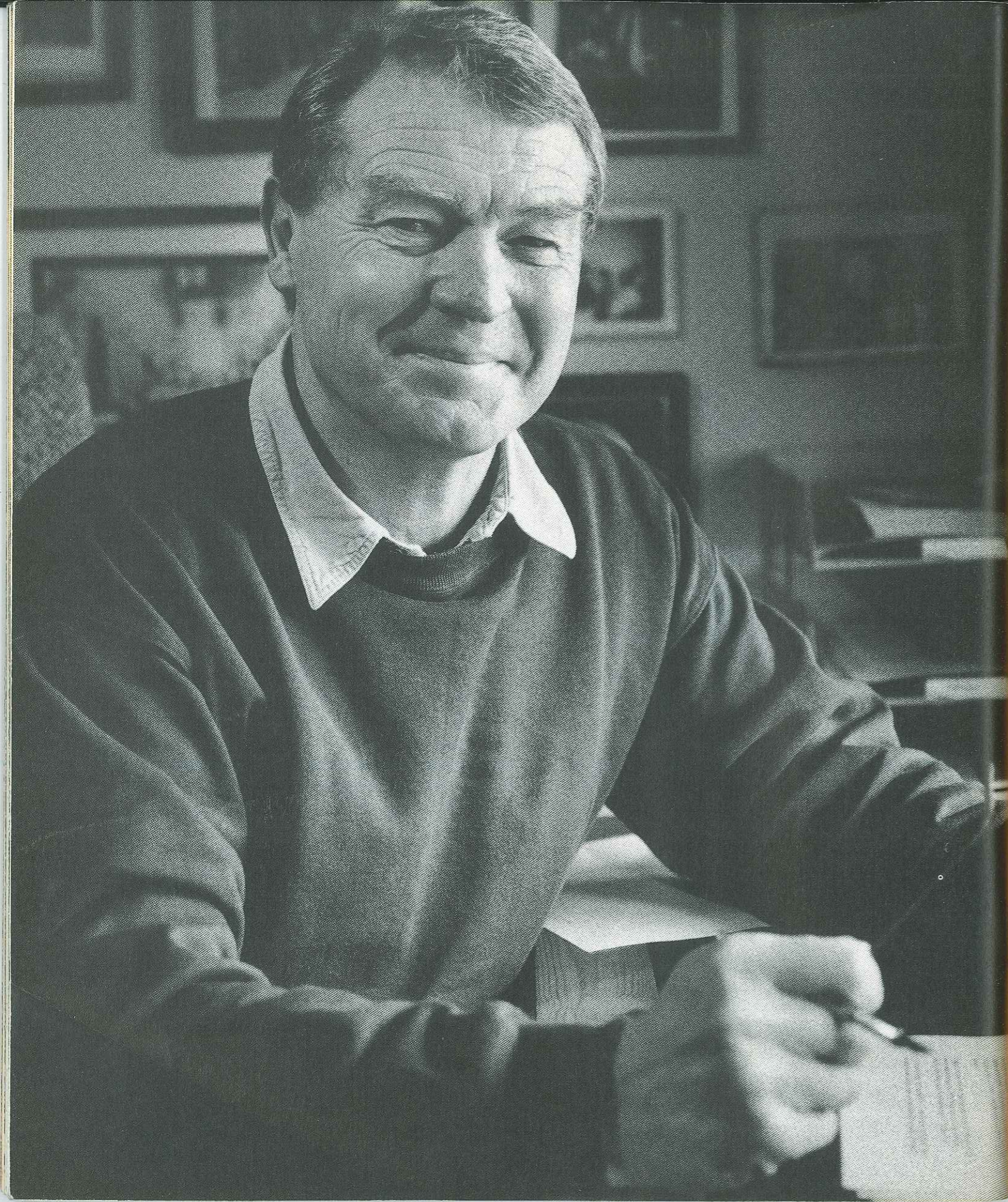
We would generate money from:

Income Tax Changes for 1997/98	
New Personal Tax Allowance	£4,245
New Basic Rate	24p
New rate for Income over £100,000	50%

Main income tax changes

- Around 70% of Adults will pay lower or unchanged income tax under our proposals.
- Around half of all income taxpayers would be better off or no worse off under our income tax proposals.
- Excluding those earning over £100,000 per year, the average income taxpayer will pay only around 45p extra per week in income tax under our plans.

FOR FULL DETAILS OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS 1997 MANIFESTO COSTINGS, PLEASE SEE OUR COSTINGS SUPPLEMENT



In this manifesto, we have set out a practical, forward-looking programme to modernise Scotland and Britain. Its central theme is the widening of general opportunities. And its aim is to make Britain a nation of self-reliant individuals, living in strong communities, backed by an enabling government.

We do not duck the choices that have to be faced in this election.

And we do not pretend that they are easy – or free. High-quality education has to be paid for. As do decent public services and a more secure society.

You cannot, in the present climate, have these and tax cuts as well.

You have to choose.

We ask you to do so.

Your vote can make a real difference in turning our country away from short-term politics towards a more constructive long-term approach.

And with your support we believe we can make a difference too. Every vote we receive is a vote for better education, the modernisation of our politics, a cleaner environment, a better health service and more crime free communities.

Above all, it is the guarantee of an effective Scottish Parliament as the means to unlocking the potential of Scotland's people.

Every vote we get and every seat we win will ensure that in the next parliament the United Kingdom can be modernised and can at last face up to this challenge, as we enter the next millennium.



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