

# GERRY BIRT,

by: Jennifer Tweddle

Gerry Birt has entered the political sphere with full force. Running for the Liberal Party in Hillsborough, he has definite views on various issues. The following is an interview held on Jan. 28/80 at his headquarters.

Q: The Conservative Budget was brought down by your party and the NDP. What is your opinion of it?

Birt: The Conservative Budget was one of those budgets that made an election necessary.

The budget was totally unacceptable to the Canadian people. The Conservative Party, when elected, was given a mandate to bring in the best legislation they possibly could for the Canadian people. It seems to me that the goals they set for themselves in that budget, the measurer's wouldn't reach at all. The problems they were trying

to address wouldn't be solved.

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and this, I think, would have been a very recessionary budget. It would stifle employment and with that comes all the economic and social problems. Now I firmly agree that we have to do something to get rid of that deficit, but it can be done by a long term program. We can perhaps plug loop-holes in our tax laws that will save money

and bring in money to put towards the debt. Government can hold spending to the line. I would also like to see looked at very carefully, the area of government efficiency. I think there is a lot of money wasted in government that could be put toward more efficient operation, and the savings

penses that they have. I know these are many, and I personally feel that student loans should be used for that purpose. I would do everything in my power to make sure that any abuses would be looked into.

Q: Unemployment is a great concern to students. Does the Liberal Party have any policy on increasing the number of summer jobs and for graduates, permanent jobs?

Birt: Again, we come back to the business of the economy. If the economy gets moving, the way that the Liberal Party would have it more, and would move it, if elected, an industrial strategy would be used to create jobs; not only for students, but for everybody. I think one of the prime and crying needs of this community in Hillsborough and Canada as a whole, is jobs for students, but the economy is the important thing there. That's the key.

Q: You said the economy is not moving the way the Liberal Party would have it move. Could you elaborate on where the Liberal Party would have the economy go?

Birt: Well, the Liberal Party would like to see the economy as healthy as possible. It would bring in measures to

could be used against the debt. That, and other measures would be more acceptable to the Canadian public. There should be a little more selectivity in taxation. The 18¢ per gallon increase on gasoline is totally unacceptable to Canadians because all it does is increase inflation to the point where people in lower incomes cannot afford gasoline. Here in Prince Edward Island they have to have gasoline to operate their cars. We don't have public transit.

Q: University enrollment is declining across the country. Does the Liberal Party have any policy on attracting students back to universities?

Birt: What I would like to see is the economy stabilized and brought to a much more vital point than it is right now and has been over the past 7 or 8 months. I think by that alone, with opportunities in the work force for young people, there would be a great incentive for them to go to university and to complete their studies.

Q: Presently, some student loans are being misused. Would the Liberal Party implement safeguards to correct the misuse?

Birt: I personally don't go along with the idea of students getting student loans if they don't need them. I think student loans are for students who will use them properly. If I were elected, I would make every effort to make sure that student loans are not spent to buy cars, to buy things that students really don't need at this particular point in their lives. I think student loans are for their education, their tuition and any other ex-



stimulate the economy, not necessarily by stimulating the deficits as has been proposed by the Conservatives, but by allowing small business, the back-bone of any community, to do the things they can do best by not taking them out of existence and by not making road-blocks for them in expansion. What we're looking at really is for more productivity from people, we're looking at more money for people to spend and I think by that we do create a desire and a need in the market

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