

NDP plan takes from rich, gives to poor; Layton's \$29b health proposal dwarfs Liberals' \$9b pledge [CA] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The wealthy would face huge tax increases while poorer Canadians would get a break under a \$61-billion election platform outlined by the New Democrats on Wednesday that also promises billions more for health care.

The promise, which dwarfs the health-care pledge made this week by Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin, is part of a platform that commits to five consecutive balanced budgets.

Under the plan, the NDP would divert \$29 billion more over five years into caring for the country's ill and aging population.

As part of their platform, the Liberals outlined a plan Tuesday to boost the health-care budget by \$9 billion over 10 years.

Still, Layton accused Martin of being obsessed with cutting the national debt.

"I don't hear him speaking about prosperity for everybody in Canada and certainly he's done things to make life considerably worse for a great many people living in poverty or who are homeless."

The NDP's 63-page, orange-coloured platform document called *New Energy: A Positive Choice*, would reintroduce an estate tax, not seen in Canada since the early 1970s.

Up to about 40 per cent in tax would be paid on most inheritances over \$1 million, although farms and transfers to a spouse would be exempt.

Despite its potential to anger baby boomers, Layton said the better off would willingly pay because the \$3.1 billion the measure would raise when fully implemented by 2008-2009 would help pay for valuable social programs.

"Most affluent Canadians . . . realize that having homeless people in the streets of Toronto is unacceptable," said Layton.

"They want a society that works well."

Federal income tax would be eliminated entirely for people earning under \$15,000 a year but big banks, corporations and CEOs would also pay higher taxes.

The NDP plan also calls for more aggressive enforcement measures aimed at recovering up to \$2 billion a year in unpaid taxes.

He also pledged more money for affordable housing and a cut of 10 per cent to tuition fees.

The NDP plan also includes increases to the child tax benefit, more money for affordable child care and the GST would be scrapped on feminine hygiene products as the party proposes easing the burden on families.

- reprinted from the Canadian Press

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