PM Paul Martin and the Legacy of Paul Martin, Finance Minister

Friday, November 21, 2003 – "What kind of social policy can we expect of Paul Martin?" the pundits ask, as if it were a bit of a riddle.

Some reply that the answer lies in his record as Finance Minister throughout much of the nineties. They expect fiscal conservatism to rule his policy choices. But, as Jane Jenson points out in a recent presentation to a Carleton University School of Public Administration conference last month, Martin is also the author of the Chrétien era's main social policy reforms.

Martin's 1995 budget completely redesigned the financing and delivery of social programs. His subsequent budgets reinforced those new principles. So, there is plenty on the record to demonstrate his past social policy choices.

But Martin made much of his intention to bring about change in his acceptance speech at the Liberal leadership convention last weekend in Toronto. Taking him at his word, Jenson argues that his biggest social policy challenge, then, is confronting the effects of his own post-1995 legacy as Finance Minister.

In ***New Prime Minister…..New Era: Policies and Priorities for Canada***, Jenson reviews Finance Minister Paul Martin's social policy legacy and suggests directions a new and innovative Prime Minister might take to undo some of the damage and to advance policy in three key areas; governance, access to work, and ensuring equity.

You can access or download her remarks by clicking here.

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