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THE HONOURABLE BILL BARISOFF, SPEAKER

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LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR
His Honour the Honourable Steven L. Point, OBC

SECOND SESSION, 39TH PARLIAMENT

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Honourable Bill Barisoff

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MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2010

The House met at 10:02 a.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Prayers.

Orders of the Day

Hon. M. Coell: I call private members' statements.

Private Members' Statements

MINING: A NEW FUTURE FOR RURAL B.C.

J. Rustad: It is a pleasure to be back here. I just want to start off first by congratulating our athletes as well as the volunteers and all the people involved in the Olympics. I think it was an absolutely fabulous event that will be a showcase of our province and that will be talked about for many, many years.

[C. Trevena in the chair.]

This morning I rise to talk about mining and a new future for our province in mining, in particular for rural B.C. Mining has played a critical role throughout our history. As a matter of fact, we're going all the way back to the days when the gold rush opened up the north in terms of Barkerville and other events that have happened throughout the area. Rural B.C. has always been dependent upon our resources, whether it's forestry or mining or other activities.

[1005]

The future, however, on things like forestry is somewhat uncertain. I'm one of those people that believe we're going to have a strong future in forestry, but it will change. We will not necessarily do things the way that we used to.

Mining has an incredible opportunity to really bring the fabric of rural B.C. forward, to be able to create the kind of jobs and opportunities that, quite frankly, we need to be seeing in this province.

I'll just give you an example in my riding. My riding currently has two operating mines supporting jobs with an average wage now of \$112,000 a year. That's the average wage and benefit. I have two operating mines in my riding and the potential for three new mines. You think: "Well, okay, three new mines. What does that mean?" That means potentially a 35 percent increase in my workforce — over 5,000 direct and indirect jobs from those three mines alone.

It is unbelievable what mining can do, and not just short-term jobs or construction jobs. We're talking about jobs that have a length of 15, 25 or 35 years — jobs

that can transform an area, transform families and provide opportunities.

Throughout the northwest, when you look at Highway 37, the electrification along the highway and what that could bring, that could generate \$15 billion or more in capital investment and create tens of thousands of jobs. It's unbelievable what that would do to the northwest, to the future for the First Nations and for the people in that area — throughout the Cariboo and the prosperity project and what that can bring along in terms of the new jobs throughout there.

Indeed, across the province mining has the potential to create tens of thousands of new jobs supporting our rural communities, helping to rebuild some of the fabric within those communities and supporting the kinds of programs that we need to be thinking about as a province. Just to give you some ideas on stats, gross mining revenues in B.C. nearly doubled to \$6.6 billion. It's a phenomenal number.

Of course, one of the challenges that we think about with mining is: how do you get mines actually through the process? It's a long period of time between doing some exploration and finding a resource and then proving it out, getting it to the point where you can actually think about an investment and trying to attract the capital. Governments, of course, play a big role in that.

Governments need to be able to move these projects forward in a timely manner. When you think about mining, the resource window that we have available in terms of resource prices is actually quite small. Prices go up and down according to how the economy goes and demand, and you go through these cycles.

We have a period of time now over the next five years, maybe ten years, where — because of strong mineral prices and, I think, where mineral prices are going to go — we could see some phenomenal progress in mining. But we need to be able to actually get projects through in a timely manner. One of the things that we have committed to doing in our throne speech is to try to streamline our process here, just provincially.

I had a meeting just a short time ago with the owners of Thompson Creek, the people who are running the Thompson Creek Mining corporation. They have an expansion project on their Endako Mines, which is about a \$500 million expansion. It's an enormous project. It's going to extend the life of the mine for 16-plus years, modernize, do a whole bunch of very positive things — create about 500 construction jobs and increase the number of long-term jobs as well.

They have 11 different discussions and permitting processes that they have to go through right now on an existing footprint that is not outside of their current mining permit — 11 different processes that we have to go through provincially. That's not talking about a new mine. Just talking about a new mine, the process that we have to go through is enormous.

We need to be looking at streamlining that, and I invite the members from the opposition to support this. When we're looking at trying to generate jobs in rural B.C. and trying to spark that economy, we all need to be rowing in the same direction. We need to be able to try to push and bring these things through. So I invite the members of the opposition who may perhaps talk about that process to talk about how we can streamline it.

More importantly than that, we also have a federal process. So even though you go through this onerous process in B.C., which is the most comprehensive anywhere in the country if not in the world, in terms of the environmental assessment process that we go through here, once you get the ticket here, now you've got to go to the federal government and ask them for a ticket.

The wait to get through the federal government is often somewhere between four or five months to perhaps even a year or two to get through the red tape and the process, and it's a duplication of work that we are already doing and that we do well and that we're recognized for doing very well in this province.

[1010]

We need to be working with our federal counterparts to have a single process. Once again, I invite the members of the opposition to stand and support that, because we need members from all sides of the House to try to work, to try to streamline, to make this positive.

You know, Madam Speaker, when I think about what that means, to be able to move those processes through, to be able to create those futures for people.... This is about many small families. This is about large families. This is about communities. This is about trying to create those employment opportunities. I invite the members of the opposition to talk about some projects that maybe haven't been permitted yet, which they would like to see happen and they'd like to see go through this process that can create jobs.

You know, when you think about what's happening in Terrace and in Kitimat, the potential in the Stikine riding, the potential down in the Kootenays and through the Cariboo — all of those areas that are so dependent upon our resources.... I would like to hear.... Perhaps the opposition would want to suggest a few projects that can really make a difference. So I stand today to talk about mining as the future for rural B.C. and as a new future because of that opportunity.

J. Horgan: It's a pleasure to rise and respond to the statement this morning from my friend from Prince George. He touched upon a number of issues that certainly are relevant to people in rural British Columbia, those in communities that have an abundance of ore deposits. But it's interesting that we haven't had a new metal mine — and the member knows this — opened in British Columbia since the 1990s. The dark, dismal

decade of the 1990s was the last successful opening of a mine in this province.

I would have thought that the rocket scientists over at PAB in their marketing prowess would have abandoned the bronze medal and instituted the copper medal so we could have had gold, silver and copper here in British Columbia. But unfortunately, we didn't do that. It could well be because copper is selling, as of this morning, at \$3.19 a pound, which is among the highest numbers we've seen in this commodity in a great number of years. In the 1990s international commodity markets had copper around 60 to 70 cents a pound.

Never before have we had such an opportunity, as the member suggests, in terms of the cycles of metal prices, to actually seize the day, grasp the nettle and see mines opening in British Columbia. But at the Association for Mineral Exploration B.C. Roundup in January, we were told that mineral exploration in British Columbia dropped by 50 percent this year over last year. There's been a decline, and of course that has a lot to do with the credit crisis and issues on international pricing, but the commodity has stayed high.

My friend from West Vancouver — with certainly a strong background in this sector — would recognize that there's never been such a golden opportunity, or a copper opportunity in the case of most of our opportunities, in the north and elsewhere. But I do also recall in the 1990s the opposition constantly talking then — the now government, then opposition — about the need for business plans.

I've heard a lot of talk about the electrification of Highway 37. My colleague from Stikine is supportive of that. Many others of my colleagues are supportive of that, provided a good strong business case is made, provided private sector partners step up to the plate. Ratepayers across the province shouldn't be having to subsidize investment in mineral exploration and mineral development in the northwest.

The Tahltan people, who I've met with, have talked about their concern that Eskay Creek will be closing down. They want to see another mine — maybe two but not five — in their traditional territory, which speaks to the other challenge that the member raised. That's certainty on the land base.

What we require before we start talking about streamlining and doing away with environmental regulation is finding a way to engage with our First Nations partners. The member is well aware of that, and I have to confess that in my experience with him on the road with the Finance Committee, we've had lengthy discussions about the importance of cracking that nut, of finding a way that we can — as a government and as an industry, the mining sector — interface with our First Nations neighbours and partners to see if we can advance these projects.

We don't need five new mines in the northwest. I think everyone would agree with that. Perhaps not. We

may hear from the government side that they would like to see five mines opening up, that they'd like to see workers being flown in from developing countries to do the work on these projects. There aren't enough people locally to take on that type of expansion. I think everyone understands that.

[1015]

The federal government has come to the table with some cash to see the electrification of Highway 37. The province maintains that they're looking for a private sector partner. However, when I questioned the Minister of Mines in estimates if he would proceed without a private sector partner, he said yes. The first lesson for the Minister of Mines is: you're not a very good negotiator. I can't imagine Teck Cominco sitting down with the minister and actually believing him when he says, "We need you to help us out with this project," when he's already said he's going to proceed anyway.

What we need is certainty on the land base. What we need is direct and real consultation and accommodation with our First Nations partners. What we need is a solid business plan so that all British Columbians can have comfort that their hydro rates aren't going through the roof to subsidize Teck Cominco. Goodness knows, Teck Cominco doesn't need any more help from government than they're already getting from the bunch on the other side.

To conclude my remarks, I join with the not-quite minister, the member from Prince George, in supporting mining development in British Columbia. I want to see that. People on this side of the House want to see that. Certainly my colleagues from North Coast and Skeena and Stikine want to see that in the northwest, but we need to have a solid business plan. We need to have an open and transparent process that doesn't involve reducing environmental procedures. It involves making them more transparent and open so all British Columbians can understand what's at play here.

J. Rustad: I want to thank the member for Juan de Fuca. Indeed, when we were on the Finance Committee and had an opportunity to travel, we had a chance to talk about many of these issues. I certainly appreciated those chats, because what I'm talking about here is the fact that we need to put politics aside, to try to actually work together to get some changes. The member talks about doing away with environmental process. We're not doing away with anything. What we're trying to do is eliminate duplication, eliminate the red tape and the bureaucratic process that cause delays.

If you have a process that goes through and looks at every single detail and then comes out with a decision, and then you have another process that redoes all of that work, where's the value in that process? Where is the value? And what is it with the time and the delay that that would add to a project?

I asked the member opposite.... I want to thank him for comments about supporting the Highway 37 electrification. That's great to see. They want to see a plan around that. However, not a mention of a single project that they'd like to actually see happen. All they talked about was trying to increase some sort of process, regulatory or otherwise bureaucratic process, to slow down the process.

When you look in the northwest and the opportunities around there, we have an opportunity today to build some mines, and whether that be three mines, five mines or seven mines — whatever that number may be — the economics will drive that opportunity. We have an opportunity to build those. If those do not happen, it will be a generation or more before we see this kind of window again. That is what people need to understand.

I think about a deposit like Mount Milligan, for example, and the fact that it was permitted under the '90s, but they couldn't come to an agreement with the government of the day, and they decided not to build around that. Now that thing has taken another four years to get to a permitting process. You talk about a plan and government subsidizing. Why don't we talk about how the government helped with the electrification up to the Kemess project? An interesting discussion if you want to go there.

In any case, the challenge that we have today is that we have this window. We have this opportunity for mining for rural B.C. It can be transformational. It's the type of thing that I think First Nations.... It would provide an enormous opportunity to them. I have talked with many of them. They are open to the idea behind mining because they want to see jobs.

When you have 75 percent or 85 percent unemployment, you need those job opportunities. Mining can bring that, but we need to make sure that we have all sides pushing to support streamlining a process, making it as simple as possible, trying to remove some of those time barriers so that in a timely fashion we can see those benefits flowing for our communities.

I'm excited about mining. I think it's going to be absolutely fabulous for my riding. I think it has an enormous potential for us as a province. When you think about \$112,000 for the average wage and what that does in terms of family, in terms of communities, it's a great time for mining in B.C.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH SPORTS

K. Corrigan: I'm going to talk about the importance of youth sports today. I have four now-adult children. They were lucky enough to be able to play hockey, lacrosse, water polo, swimming, basketball, ringette and just about every other sport. They all won provincial titles and even some national titles. They were lucky

enough to be born into a family that provided the opportunity to do those things.

[1020]

But just as important as that, and creating just as much of an impression on me, was a young man who a few years ago came to the Burnaby board of education as part of Byrne Creek Secondary's basketball team. They had won recently. I think it was a regional championship.

Byrne Creek is a unique school in my community, with many refugee and immigrant students. A *Province* reporter called Byrne Creek basketball "a hoops United Nations." The young man — I think he was a refugee from Africa — said that without the basketball team at Byrne Creek, he didn't know if he would have survived.

I don't know exactly what he meant by that — what kind of life he came from, what he dealt with — but he spoke of how difficult adjusting to life in Canada had been, how school was difficult, but that having that team gave him a reason to come to school despite all the difficulties. That young man and that team encapsulated what we all know about the importance of sports for youth, or as the *Province* reporter said, they represent why athletics in our education system is so essential.

The team provided friendship and support. It developed self-discipline, leadership, dedication and individual respect. Asked whether geography comes up as a matter of discussion, one student said: "We always have conversations about that, but we always wind up talking more about our similarities than our differences. I can say that I have overcome all of the misconceptions and stereotypes I might have had about different countries."

Self-respect was increased, they had a feeling of accomplishment, and they had fun. We know that if young people get involved in sports and have the joy of athletic activities when they are young, they are more likely to continue to be active throughout their life. We also know that physical activity throughout life makes and keeps us healthier and happier.

I know from my time as a school trustee that many young people who might otherwise become disengaged from school, even to the point of dropping out, stay engaged and succeed in school because of the joy, success and lessons learned from school sports.

Young people play sports in school. They also play sports in the community. Not every family can afford to enrol their children in community sports. So while it is true that we cannot entirely level the playing field for all children in terms of access to school or community sports, we need to give it a shot. I'm really pleased by the example that my city sets where it allocates \$150 per person per year for low-income families to access city recreational facilities.

I'd also like to recognize KidSport, a community-based sport funding program that provides grants for

all children to participate in sports, believing that all kids should be given the opportunity to develop healthy lifestyles, no matter the financial barriers that may exist. Why shouldn't all kids have the right to play? I don't mean walking in the park, but having access to community-based sports programs that develop all those qualities that I spoke of earlier.

We've had gaming grants that have gone to community sports in the past, and some of that money has been used to subsidize kids that wanted to play. I know that speaking recently to somebody from Burnaby Minor Hockey in my community, they're really upset that they're not going to be able to provide that to low-income kids, that there won't be as many kids playing hockey in our community because of the lack of access, the lack of equity.

We used to laugh with other parents when our kids were growing up. The kid that was playing basketball or some other sport was not out getting into trouble. We kidded about it, but it is true. Investment in sports for youth reduces crime.

The county of Newham in London found that out when, in the run-up to the Olympics coming there, they invested a whole bunch of money in young people in that county. What they found was that in their ongoing drive to promote sport, they also saw a dramatic reduction in crime. So when you consider the cost to the justice system, not to mention the impact on people's lives, this seems another good reason to support sports for youth.

We must continue to support programs and organizations that promote equity of access to the fields and rinks and pools of this province. It's also important to point out that in supporting access to sports, we must ensure participation of women and girls. In addition to all the benefits mentioned earlier, UNESCO points out that the participation of women and girls in sport challenges gender stereotypes and discrimination and can therefore be a vehicle to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

[1025]

I must give credit to this government for ActNow B.C. However, words not accompanied by ongoing resources and actions and opportunities, particularly for our young, will be hollow. Have we invested in sport in British Columbia merely for one moment while we're on the world stage, or have we done it in order to ensure long-term, sustained and increased participation in sports in recognition of the connection between sports involvement and healthy communities?

If it's the latter, then it is essential that we must continue to invest in our youth, and that must include supporting youth sports. If not, we may not just be missing the next Joannie Rochette or Clara Hughes, but we may be missing that young person who just wants to be allowed to play.

T. Lake: It's a great pleasure to rise and respond to my colleague from Burnaby–Deer Lake, especially this particular morning after a fine young Canadian athlete propelled this whole nation into what can be described as ecstasy across the land with the winning goal in last night's hockey game. [Applause.] I knew I'd get some applause for mentioning Sidney Crosby.

Promoting sport and athletic excellence has been a pillar of our mandate since 2001 and is proven by the great success of our B.C. athletes in the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. In the nine years since being in office our government has invested over a billion dollars into sport in B.C. — more than any other government.

Government investments also leveraged \$885 million in sport infrastructure during the last five years, providing for Olympic venues, the Paralympic training and development centre in Kimberley, the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre in Prince George and the Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence in Victoria. Of course I have to mention the Tournament Capital facilities in Kamloops, where I was happy last evening to welcome over 1,400 athletes from 61 different countries to the world masters athletic games taking place this week.

The past fiscal year alone has seen \$11 million to support high-performance athletes through organizations like 2010 Legacies Now, Sport B.C., the Canadian Sport Centre Pacific, the B.C. Games Society and over 50 provincial sport organizations that represent 700,000 British Columbians. An additional \$8 million supports the B.C. integrated performance systems for high-performance sport, and \$19 million from gaming will support 800 sport organizations.

The member for Burnaby–Deer Lake can be assured that a lot of those minor sports organizations will continue to receive money from gaming. I can tell this House that all of the minor sports organizations in my city of Kamloops have a policy of never turning down anyone who wants to play, and I know the city has the same policy in terms of recreational facilities there.

Encouraging active living amongst youth is the only way to guarantee that B.C. remains one of the healthiest regions in North America, and it is not a short-term investment. That's why this government has directed almost \$30 million to multi-year programs for sport. SportsFunder has flowed \$3 million to programs that guarantee development for things like the Canada Games, youth sport travel and for coach training.

As well, the member mentioned KidSport B.C. They've received \$800,000 since 2007 to ensure that kids from all economic groups in this province are able to access programs in sport. We've seen the Own the Podium program bring great success to Canada, and this province contributed \$10 million to this program and Road to Excellence for the Summer Games.

The Summer Games and B.C. Games program is really important for sport development in this province.

Kamloops has been proud to host the Canada Summer Games in 1993 and the B.C. Summer Games in 2006. The Western Canada Summer Games are coming up in Kamloops in 2011, and we are putting in a bid for the Canada Winter Games in 2015. I know my colleagues from Prince George and Kelowna have almost said that it's ours for the taking. I appreciate their support.

Schools are also an important part of sports programs, which is why this government has provided \$14.5 million over the last five years for Action Schools B.C. The member mentioned that important program. We will continue supporting Action Schools B.C.

So \$80 million from the government supports a full spectrum of health and fitness programs in schools. Today, as we know, students in kindergarten to grade 9 are required to perform 30 minutes of physical activity a day while those in grades 10 to 12 are active for 150 minutes a week.

[1030]

Supporting school sports has always been extremely important. I'm very proud that my own daughter Gemma will be in Victoria this week to compete in the B.C. high school badminton championships. I know that they are appreciative of the support they receive not only from the government but also from members of the community and, of course, their parents, who play such an important role in their lives as young athletes.

Sport tourism is an important generator in my city. To that end, the Tournament Capital fund is on top of city council's strategic plan and will continue to be supported by this government as well.

This government's funding of sport and physical activity....

Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member.

K. Corrigan: Well, tomorrow we are going to have a budget, and I guess we'll see how much of a priority funding sports is for this government. We've certainly argued that the budget must invest in the people of this province. We do know that we would not have had the success in the Olympic Games that we've had — the great success — if it hadn't been for the investment in athletes.

Scott Moir said there is no way that he would have had an Olympic gold medal in his hand without the Own the Podium program. We'll see whether or not that's going to continue to be supported by this government. Ashleigh McIvor, women's ski cross gold medallist, gives credit to the Own the Podium program for her training, coaching and support team.

We heard repeatedly from medalling athletes that they couldn't have done it without the Own the Podium program. So if we want to continue the tradition, we need to continue to invest in our athletes. Not only at the highest levels but, arguably more importantly, we

need to invest, as I said earlier, in access to community and school sports so that if a talented young boy or girl has been inspired by their Olympic heroes, they too will have a real opportunity to follow their dreams.

I heard about the spending and the investment, but the reality is that gaming grants — cuts to sports groups that were funded by gaming grants — were cut by \$14 million. That included community and provincial sports organizations — a very severe cut. Yes, I agree that local sports organizations are trying to continue to subsidize, but they can't do it if they don't have the funding to do it.

We've had cuts to sports, recreation and ActNow B.C. — a general cut of 31.6 percent this fiscal year, 16 percent and 13.5 percent in the fiscal years after; cuts to the Ministry of Education school sports programs; cuts to B.C. school sports, through the Ministry of Education, totalling over \$200,000; and finally, cuts to the Special Olympics.

The real concern that I have is that there has been investment in sports that has paid off both locally and internationally but now that the world is no longer looking at us in terms of performance of our top-level athletes, we're going to turn away from providing the long-term, sustained and increased participation in sports that will make us all healthier.

STRENGTHENING THE GATEWAY

R. Lee: As a private member who also assumes the responsibility of Parliamentary Secretary for the Asia-Pacific Initiative, I am pleased to talk about the most recent efforts in connecting our province to the Asia-Pacific region.

First of all, let me refresh our memory on what is the Asia-Pacific region. It includes Japan, China, South Korea, North Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea and ten from the Association of Southeast Asia Nations, also known as ASEAN. Under that umbrella: the Philippines; Thailand; Malaysia; Indonesia; Singapore; Vietnam; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia, also known as Kampuchea; Laos; and Burma, also known as Myanmar. Russia is also included by Stats Canada in the Asia-Pacific region, interestingly.

[1035]

I am also very proud that Canada won 14 gold, seven silver and five bronze medals. Let's also extend our congratulations to the Asia-Pacific countries.

Congratulations to South Korea for six gold, six silver and two bronze; China — five gold, two silver and four bronze; and Japan — three silver and two bronze. Russia has three gold, five silver and seven bronze.

As we compete in the Olympic spirit, many visitors from the Asia-Pacific region also are here to exchange ideas and explore opportunities in order to foster further collaborations. I had the opportunity to meet many

of those visitors. It's really evident from talking to them that B.C. has become the capital for Asia-Pacific commerce and culture in North America.

Over the past decade, we have increased the amount of trade with that region and attracted more of its business than any other jurisdiction. In fact, over the last nine years, from 2001 to 2009, exports from British Columbia to this region increased by 40 percent, while exports to the rest of the world last year, because of the downturn.... Actually, if you have the accumulated number, it is 38 percent down from the number in 2001. So I believe this is an opportunity for us to explore further, taking into account those opportunities in that region.

We have recognized the advantage of hosting the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games in order to build on our growing strengths in these Asian markets. It's that kind of foresight that will continue to build on our advantages in that region, in the Asia-Pacific business market. Using the leverage of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we are also exposing the many benefits of our province and opening new doors to more business with Asia-Pacific countries.

Businesses around the world are quickly realizing the potential of our province and also the benefit of being located in this region. It's clear that we had tremendous success in hosting the world during the games, and we are excited about the many new opportunities that will soon be taking place as a result of the games.

I took the opportunity to meet a number of businesses and groups interested in the economic partnerships that our province presents. All of these groups recognize the importance of having a strong trade relationship with Asia-Pacific regions and are well aware of the steps B.C. is taking in order to achieve that.

I met with representatives from the Asia-Pacific regions like Russia, Korea, Japan and China during the games. They are also very excited about our location and how to get their goods to North America quicker — in fact, up to three days quicker for goods from Asia to go through our ports in B.C.

In fact, companies in my riding of Burnaby North are exploring opportunities to do business within Russia — for example, supplying equipment to be used during the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

The benefits of expanding our relationship with the Asia-Pacific region are far-reaching. I met with the chairman of Mitsubishi Canada, an important partner in our Asia-Pacific trade market. Japan is home to Mitsubishi. Japan is the second-largest investor in our province. Fostering these kinds of relationships with companies like Mitsubishi — the largest investors, actually, from Japan to Canada — is very important.

As Asian countries like Japan and China look for investment opportunities elsewhere, the ability to attract this kind of investment is something our province is

proving successful at. Later this month, I may be heading to the south provinces of China in order to generate more opportunities for B.C. business.

[1040]

At this point, many jurisdictions and nations are struggling to improve their financial situation to mitigate problems that arose from the global economic downturn. B.C. had a great deal of advantages in this struggle, as we were able to make the most of the Olympic Games and gathering the whole wide world business community to highlight for them the advantages of our relationships to develop new business with the Asia-Pacific region.

The Olympic Games may have been located in Vancouver and Whistler, but it is the whole province that draws the attention of our new business partners. Rural communities, which are home to many of our province's most valuable exports, will be on the front lines of our province's success on the Asia-Pacific trade market.

The growth of lumber export to the Asia-Pacific is worth noting.

R. Fleming: I seek leave to make an introduction to the House.

Leave granted.

Introductions by Members

R. Fleming: I am pleased to introduce 35 grade 5 students and parents from a wonderful school in my constituency, Cloverdale Traditional School. Many of these students are here for their very first time in the Legislative precinct, and I want the House to make them and their teacher, Ms. Rachel Sutton, feel welcome. Will the House please make them feel welcome.

Debate Continued

J. Kwan: It's my pleasure to respond to the member for Burnaby North's private member's statement. I'd like to first, of course, also congratulate all of the athletes, I would say — in fact, not just those from the Asia-Pacific region but all the athletes who participated in the games. To those who won, a big congratulations. It is, of course, very exciting to be an Olympian and to have a medal awarded to them.

Also, a big congratulations to those who didn't make the trip to the podium, for we all know the commitment of the athletes from the first day that they enter into competitive sports — what it means for them in that game and the hard work that they have put forward and for both their friends and family who supported them all the way through.

I also want to say a big congratulations to all the volunteers, some 25,000 strong, who actually put Canada, British Columbia on the map in an unprecedented way. It

is the spirit of the people that really, I would say, deserves the gold medal as well. Congratulations to all of them. They came from all walks of life and from all regions.

A big congratulations, last but not least, to all of the hosting cities. Of course, Vancouver is the major hosting city, and a big congratulations to the city of Vancouver, the city where I come from, for a splendid job in hosting the games.

Of course, trade, I think, spans many opportunities. The Olympics gave us the prime opportunity to showcase Canada, to showcase British Columbia in a variety of ways. No doubt about it.

Sports was the issue at hand, but there were many opportunities to which we can utilize the hosting of the Olympics to showcase our wares — our goods, so to speak — to the world, not for the people who are here just to participate in the games but also to the many thousands and millions of people who are at home watching the television and seeing the games.

To promote B.C. in such a way was an unprecedented opportunity, I would say, to showcase our multicultural communities and all the different things that we have to offer.

In the area of trade, there is, I think, much work that we need to do. I hope that with the work the government says they have done in putting British Columbia on the map, utilizing this opportunity, it would turn it around to give us some better results in terms of the trade numbers.

I just want to highlight some examples. Trade compared to last year and this year actually went down 24.3 percent in 2009. Trade with the Pacific Rim countries, not including the United States, was down 6.7 percent this year, which represents 36.3 percent of our overall trade in our province. Trade with these countries fell. Although the overall share increased somewhat, the trade with these particular countries actually went down.

[1045]

China is the shining light, if you will. Trade with China went up in 2009 by 29 percent over 2008 but still represents 10.3 percent of B.C.'s overall merchandise exports. Trade with Taiwan actually went down 23 percent — and by the way, it only represents 1.8 percent of our overall trade.

Trade with India is down 51 percent. Trade with India, I should also say, is only a very, very small portion of our overall trade by way of percentage. Trade with South Korea is down 15 percent this year and represents 6.6 percent of our overall trade. Japan is down 31 percent, representing 13.8 percent of our overall trade.

According to the Progress Board, B.C. still ranks eighth in terms of per-capita exports.

If you look at these numbers, there's much work, I would say, that needs to be done. I hope that the government has been successful in utilizing the Olympic Games

as a way to enter into these markets to increase our trading percentage. In comparison to last year, I would say the bulk of it actually went down in the Asia-Pacific. So I hope that we'll have some benefits in return.

R. Lee: Thank you to the member for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant for her response. In fact, if you talk about trade, it's over a period of time. We know that there are ups and downs. Last year was a global economic downturn. Just using the numbers last year to compare is not fair.

It's a fair comparison to use a period of nine years. This is the number quoted. In fact, over the period of nine years, there is a 40 percent increase in trade with the Asia-Pacific region.

For example, of course China is a huge market. China's trade, in terms of lumber.... Last year, despite the global economic downturn, there's an increase of 80 percent in terms of value to China, and a year before, 2008 compared to 2007, also an 80 percent increase. So over two years in terms of the lumber exports to China, the value increased by 160 percent. This is very promising.

In fact, there are new markets, not only for lumber — coal, for example. Coal exports to that region have increased. In China right now it is actually the No. 2 export from B.C. Wood pulp is still No. 1. Coal is No. 2. Copper concentrate is No. 3, and lumber actually is No. 4 in that trade.

We know that the natural resources are our strength. So this is natural that the two economies actually complement each other — the resources we provide as well as the resources they need. This is a market that creates a win-win situation in the market.

In fact, in terms of investment, I believe that there is a lot of interest in getting the capital out of, for example, Korea and China, to invest in other countries. I believe there is a lot of opportunity for B.C. to attract those investments. If we have the proper channel to attract those investments as well as.... I believe that with our tax structure in terms of cooperation — tax reduction of, say, from 16.5 percent to 10 percent next year, in two years.... Those are the measures companies are looking for to have better investment opportunities and environment.

Personal income tax reduction by at least 37 percent over the last eight years. Those are opportunities for people.... We can attract skilled labour to come to this region.

OPEN GOVERNMENT

D. Routley: I rise today to speak about a topic known as open governance. It's a very broad term open to a continued definition but also unfortunately open to continued abuse.

I'd like to first read the words of a very famous gentleman named James Madison. James Madison was the fourth president of the United States and widely considered to be the author of the United States constitution. James Madison said in 1822 that "a popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."

Now, following those words, I'd like to read the words of another person. "When government does its business behind closed doors, people will invariably believe that government has something to hide. Secrecy feeds distrust and dishonesty. Openness builds trust and integrity."

That person went on to say: "The fundamental principle must be this. Government information belongs to the people, not to government. This means, among other things, that all citizens must have timely, effective and affordable access to the documents which governments make and keep. Governments should facilitate access, not obstruct it."

Well, those words were the words of the current Premier, then the Leader of the Opposition, in 1998 — 176 years after the words of James Madison. These are strong assertions. Let's examine how they've held up to the test of time in practice. The former officer of information of this province, David Loukidelis, wrote a recent report which described the information access performance of the current government as "putting at risk the historical record."

This is also a strong assertion made by the former watchdog of public access to government information. Why would Mr. Loukidelis make such an assertion? Well, as we've heard on the committee reviewing the Freedom of Information Act, a sophisticated culture of avoidance has developed. A sophisticated culture of avoiding compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, of obstructing access to records, has permeated the government from the Premier's office down.

Every tactic of delay is exploited routinely. Exemption clauses in the act have been stretched until they no longer fit the purpose they were designed for. The Premier, as opposition leader, said in 1998 that "information rights are meaningless if disclosure timelines cannot be met because there aren't enough staff to do the job, or if fees become an obstacle to access."

Well, let's take a look at that assertion. The media and public interest groups appear to be targeted. Simple personal requests are completed at an on-time rate of 94 percent. General inquiries are completed at a time rate of 75 percent. When you consider politically sensitive requests made by the opposition, media and public interest groups, only 50 percent of requests are completed on time. This clearly shows a strategy of avoiding requests that are politically risky for government.

There was recently a five-year birthday party for an information request by the Freedom of Information Association of B.C. for documents related to the IBM privatization contract. Fees are also used as an obstacle to compliance. The committee heard about a fee for access to waste management compliance made by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund. The estimate was over \$24,000. The deposit was over \$12,000. After an appeal was filed, the estimate shot up to \$173,000.

We heard about a forests inquiry where the fee estimate was over \$4,000. That matter went unpursued. The official opposition, of which I am a member, recently made a request for information related to the cost of the Torch Relay. The estimates of fees for those two requests were \$43,000 and \$76,000. Clearly, fees have become an obstacle to democratic participation and openness in government.

The current government has exempted the quasi-private corporation B.C. Ferries from freedom of information. This corporation has but one shareholder, the B.C. government, and yet, despite years of calls from the opposition, interest groups and the people of B.C., this charade continues, and British Columbians have no access to information about their ferry system.

The recent Auditor General report which condemned the soaring salaries of top executives at B.C. Ferries noted that those salaries probably would never have been allowed had the corporation been subject to freedom of information.

[1055]

So how do these facts align with the words of the Premier, when he sat as opposition leader, and of James Madison 176 years before the Premier's words? Remember: "A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or tragedy or perhaps both."

We have the technology to store the government on a thumb drive, practically, and yet this situation continues. How will the government recover the trust of British Columbians? How can we as legislators give the people of British Columbia the hope that their democracy works for them?

I suggest that we do so by ending the sophisticated culture of avoidance, by ending the practice of careful and routine delay and by committing to the true principles of open governance. We must restore the faith that we can participate in our democracy and that that will have meaning.

Let's return the tools of democracy to the people. What have become power tools should again be placed in the hands of the people as hand tools along with the faith that they can shape our democracy. Let's start with a true commitment to the principles of open governance.

E. Foster: I'd like to thank the member for Nanaimo-North Cowichan and the concerns for access to

information. Our government continues to ensure that British Columbians can find the information they require by our policies that keep government and public entities open and transparent.

Every year the B.C. government faces the challenging demand of freedom-of-information requests, many of which are large, complex and labour-intensive. We receive between 6,000 and 7,000 requests a year. As of 2008, they amount to over three times the number of requests per capita of Ontario and over four times as many requests as Alberta.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

The increasing number of special requests has not been met with slower response times — on the contrary. Prior to 2001, it took an average of 103 days to respond to an FOI request. Since then, the overall time to respond to a request has been cut by over 50 percent, from 71 business days to just 34 business days in 2008-2009. Response times for addressing requests for personal information are even more promising. Today 56 percent of freedom-of-information requests for personal information are processed in under 30 days, compared to just 36 percent in 2001.

What's more, our government's centralized privacy and information operations improve response times, make better use of resources and provide a streamlined, one-window service for people making access requests. As of February 1, 2010, 87 percent of requests are done on time, compared to 71 percent before centralization.

Today there are over 2,000 bodies covered by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Since 2001, 61 bodies have been added to the act, providing the broadest coverage of public bodies under any act in Canada. Coverage includes provincial and local governments, Crown corporations, school boards, universities and colleges, municipal police, hospitals, health authorities and governing bodies of professions. With more coverage and quicker response times for requests, the government is serving British Columbia's information needs better than it ever has.

We are committed to open and accessible government and recognize that complex freedom-of-information requests result in many hours of research time that public servants would otherwise spend delivering programs and services to British Columbians. To this end, the government maintains a very responsible fee structure to facilitate access and research while saving taxpayers from paying for expensive requests. Personal information requests remain free of charge, and the cost of a complex FOI request has not gone up since 1993.

In Canada, British Columbia is a pioneer in open government and accessibility. We doubled the time allotted to the opposition to ask government questions, bringing question period to 30 minutes. We are the first govern-

ment in Canada to implement set election dates with strict limitations on pre-election advertising.

[1100]

In keeping with our mandate to promote open government, we created the first-ever lobbyist registry in B.C. and only the second such registry in Canada. Who is lobbying decision-makers and for what is now public knowledge.

Accountability and ethical human resource practices in public service are also a great significance to this government. We created a Merit Commissioner to ensure merit and transparency in public service hiring. We depoliticized the appointment process through the board resourcing and development office. Ensuring appointments are made on merit, skills and performance is an immense significance to this government.

In keeping with maintaining integrity of independence of the Legislature, the Finance Committee increased the budget for the Information and Privacy Commissioner from \$2.3 million in 2001-02 to \$3.8 million in '09-10 — a 63 percent increase. Our government also doubled the net budget for the Auditor General.

We are the first government in Canada to implement general accepted accounting principles that ensure openness and transparency by following the traditions of matching revenues and expenses to their sources. We also have a ministerial accountability act that holds each minister individually accountable for coming in on budget by holding back 10 percent of their salary until it is confirmed that they have not overspent.

D. Routley: Thank you to the member for responding, but his remarks seem in absolute defiance of everything that the Committee to Review the Freedom of Information Act has heard from researchers and British Columbians alike.

There have been 50 amendments to the act — all of those restrictive, none of those expansive. Ontario and Alberta have fewer requests, as we've been told on the committee, largely because they don't have a public insurance body. Notably, ICBC requests are among the highest performers in terms of meeting the act's deadlines.

It's when we look to politically sensitive requests that we see a strategy of delay and a strategy of avoidance. It's been described as a sophisticated culture of avoidance. Mr. Speaker, 50 percent of political requests are late; 50 percent do not comply with the act. In fact, the member talks about a Lobbyists Registration Act that was only updated once most of the asset privatization plans of this government had been completed after the requirement was really effective.

Let's take a look at what would truly bring an approach to open governance that would make us legitimate leaders both in Canada and in North America. Look to the Obama administration in the United States. On their

first day in office they committed to an open governance platform. After 60 days they announced that every federal institution, within 60 days, would have on-line routine disclosure, on-line reading rooms in which any citizen with a typical search program could search, file and store government documents.

The member talks about the expense of freedom-of-information requests. Most of that expense could be avoided if this government would undertake to engage routine disclosure — routine disclosure of every possible document. That would end the charade of freedom of information in this province.

We saw open cabinet meetings in the beginning of this government's mandate that really, really were clearly a charade, and now every person who has come before our committee to review this act has told us about the absolute failure to live up to the notions of accountability and openness, let alone the prescriptive regulations of the act.

We need to encourage British Columbians to believe that democratic participation is effective, and we can only do that if we engage in a real campaign to create a culture of openness within government. We can only do that if British Columbians believe their government.

[1105]

Private Members' Motions

MOTION 1 — OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Hon. I. Chong: I call private member's Motion 1.

J. McIntyre: It is with great pleasure that I'd like to move the following:

[Be it resolved that this House celebrate the success of the athletes, organizers and volunteers of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and wish the same success for the upcoming Paralympics.]

[L. Reid in the chair.]

When I originally submitted this Motion 1, I certainly had faith. I believed that these games would be successful, but who could have imagined on this scale? Our Vancouver games are being referred to as the golden games. Canada won more gold medals of any nation in the history of Winter Olympics — and from zero, from a standstill.

Jacques Rogge referred to our games in the closing ceremonies last night with these adjectives. These were "excellent" and "very friendly" games. I heard a media commentator this morning actually referring to this as a turning point in modern Canada. One of the recent headlines over the weekend caught my eye. The headline: "A Gold Medal for Vancouver Games." That was the *Globe and Mail* editorial headline two days ago on

Saturday, February 27, just as the Olympic Games were nearing a close after just over two weeks of action-packed activities where Canada absolutely smashed records.

From the outset when Alexandre Bilodeau won our first gold on the Canadian home turf to Maëlle Ricker, a local hero who lives in Squamish, in the Sea to Sky corridor, who won the first women's gold on Canadian soil — incidentally, I have to say that both those medals were at Cypress Mountain, in the constituency I'm so privileged to represent — it went on to a record-breaking 14 gold medals of the 26 won, with the last one a nail-biting overtime victory by Team Canada in the men's hockey finals. And no one could have ever written that script.

I just want to continue briefly from that same editorial in the *Globe and Mail*, because I think it really speaks to the success. It's outside of government. It speaks to the success that I think we should be celebrating.

It says that from a difficult start, "the Vancouver games have gone on to become a success of a first order. They overcame inclement weather and countless other obstacles and exemplified what the Olympics are meant to be: a celebration of sport, of winter and of youth; an elite competition in a friendly spirit; a striving beyond previous boundaries of accomplishment."

It went on later on to say, "The Vancouver games have awoken a new Canada, one that aims high, risks failure and wears its heart on its sleeve" — a thought well said.

I think that these games, obviously, are not just about the medals. I think the successes can be counted in so many ways, but perhaps in no better fashion than the extent of public engagement. I think the street scenes that we've all been watching are absolutely unforgettable, from the tens of thousands of Canadians who turned out in the Torch Relay, which I really believe was the catalyst to all of this, to the throngs that were celebrating nightly and almost 24-7, certainly in downtown Vancouver and Whistler. Certainly across the nation yesterday, I think, Olympic fever has definitely taken hold and united this country in unexpected ways.

You think of the over a million people, apparently, who went through the revitalized Robson Square. There were spontaneous outbursts of *O Canada* all over the place, all on the streets and in the streetcars, strangers talking to each other in crowded buses. I certainly experienced that. Six-hours-plus waits for the zip line across Robson Square and several-hour waits for all these pavilions, for the international pavilions and pavilions from the provinces all around our country.

I'm sure all of us will never forget the thousands of painted faces, the red-and-white costumes, the Canadian flags waving, and three million red mittens — all of this in our backyard. I think it's clear to say that the inner Canadian has been unleashed.

I wanted to spend a minute or so here talking about the athletes in particular. I really want to pay tribute to

their success. There were 5,500 athletes and officials from over 80 countries. We're expecting 1,300 Paralympians from about 40 countries. Of our 205-member Canadian team, over 30 were from British Columbia, and I'm proud to say six were medal winners.

Who will ever forget some of the vignettes of both joy and disappointment on the faces of those who have trained for years, who have excelled and propelled themselves to the top of their sports? Those who won medals will be in the history books, but there are also those who literally missed the podium by the narrowest of margins, and I think those achievements should also be celebrated. I have a couple of examples.

[1110]

I think the four-man Canadian bobsleigh team missed by $\frac{1}{1000}$ th of a second. I can't even imagine what that is. Also, Devon Kershaw. I don't know if some of you watched yesterday, but the 50-kilometre cross-country at Callaghan Valley yesterday was over a two-hour race, and he was 1.6 seconds from a gold medal and 0.6 seconds from a bronze. What an achievement. I think these are the real champions of the games, and they are the athletes who'll be inspiring our youth.

I was also struck by the number of Olympians, when they were sharing their stories, that said it all started when they saw the Olympics as youths, and they said: "I can do this. I want to do this too." I think that was an amazing story, an amazing thing to share with all of us, and it will undoubtedly inspire.

Of course, I cannot resist acknowledging our Canadian women athletes. They were just over 40 percent of our team, and they scored 54 percent of the medals — five golds. I have to just get that in too. Congratulations to all those who competed and made us so proud.

Also, kudos to the organizers. Our gratitude to John Furlong, VANOC and the extended team for providing countless opportunities, not just for athletes but for artists, with the Cultural Olympiad headed by Burke Taylor, the plays, the music performances, the live sites at the medal ceremonies and all the concerts that were going on around town. They added so much of the richness of the experience.

For economic development.... There was actually a positive article in the *Vancouver Sun* with the headline: "B.C. Pavilion Lauded as a Business-Generating Site." And they talked about Robson Square finally becoming what Arthur Erickson, the architect, had envisioned years ago for a vibrant city centre. We had 25,000 business people through Robson Square, through the business hosting program at the pavilion and at the B.C. Showcase — millions of potential investment opportunities. MOUs were signed with Russia, with Korea, with Europe for our wood pellets. Air China and Emirates air are announcing expanding air service.

Also, opportunities for indigenous people. This was one of the most important things, I think. The four host

First Nations, an Olympic first, were recognized as official partners. Aboriginal businesses had about \$60 million in VANOC contracts, and the province has contributed about \$16 million to First Nations Olympic legacies.

In the Sea to Sky corridor that I represent, there were wonderful opportunities with the highway upgrade for business, the concrete thing, the apprenticeships — some of them have gone with Peter Kiewit on to Port Mann Bridge — the land transfers, the opportunities for economic development, and of course, the Squamish Lil'Wat Cultural Centre in Whistler that is such a magnet now for cultural tourism.

The transportation plan, the organizers behind that masterful logistic.... Well, I don't even know. The biggest puzzle you can imagine: moving people around the city and up the Sea to Sky corridor. The highway was wonderful. I can say, after all these years in anticipation, that I certainly drove up and down that a number of times, and everything moved very, very well. They actually got people out of their cars, and they deserve a hats-off.

Then finally, the volunteers — 25,000 volunteers. The blue Smurfs, I think, as some of them are affectionately known now, were an amazing crew, volunteering on the sites, at the venues, directing traffic, asking questions. They were everywhere. I certainly had many compliments, and I noticed that Jacques Rogge had mentioned last night how friendly they were as hosts and, I'd say, despite the very, very long shifts and all the hours people put in.

There was also a wonderful opportunity for non-profits to capitalize. There was a great example. The Squamish Rotary made a connection with Clean Event, and for every volunteer that Squamish Rotary put into the venues, they were paid. They were trying to raise \$20,000 for their operations, and I thought it was a great opportunity, one I got to partake in. That was quite the experience doing cleanup at the Olympics.

Anyway, anecdotally, you can certainly feel and see how successful it's been. The polls show that an increasingly huge majority of Canadians believe these were well organized and successful games. I only hope the NDP speakers following me can rise above some of the partisanship and really acknowledge the success.

Also in closing, I can only wish that the Paralympics that begin on March 12 are embraced in much the same way. I believe in my heart that the Paralympians are bound to dazzle us with their accomplishments, their stories of overcoming adversity and their triumphs. So go, Canada, go.

K. Corrigan: Well, I'm wearing my red jacket today. I've been wearing a lot of red for the last few weeks.

Before the Olympics, I said in this House that B.C.'ers were some of the friendliest people in the world and that we would be great Olympic hosts. That, of course, has proven

to be true. So congratulations to all of us in this province, particularly the thousands of volunteers who cheerfully guided visitors through the Olympic experience.

[1115]

I want to congratulate people on how well they celebrated as well. I walked those downtown streets for several days and evenings with thousands of other people, and while there were some people who had obviously been imbibing, and a lot of hooting and hollering, it was almost always good-natured and positive. I'd also like to congratulate law enforcement officials for their restraint in the relatively few instances where vandalism and hooliganism took over from peaceful protest or celebration.

I also want to, along with everyone else, congratulate all the Canadian athletes who participated. They had a lot of support, but they also were, arguably, under a lot of pressure, and they performed extraordinarily. I want to congratulate all the amazing athletes who won medals. We beat the record for the most gold medals and ended up third overall in the medal count.

This was their moment to shine, their wonderful moment of achievement, but it was the dedication, hard work and focus over many years when they were not in the spotlight that got them here, and I know that athletes do not get there without equal dedication from their families. So on behalf of all Canadians, thank you to them as well.

We heard repeatedly from medalling athletes that they couldn't have done it without the Own the Podium program. If we want to continue the tradition, we need to continue to invest not only in our elite athletes, but also our new generation of athletes through support of access to community and school sports so that those young athletes will also have an opportunity to follow their dreams. That investment has been cut over the last year, and I'm very concerned that there will be further cuts to school and community sports.

I want to get back for a moment to how well we showed ourselves. Vancouver and Whistler are stunning, beautiful places, and that really showed up in these games, but more importantly, we showed people who Canadians are. I heard Donald Sutherland express it so well yesterday morning on CTV. He told a story, and I'm going to repeat it because I thought it was really fitting.

He said that a grandfather from the Cherokee Nation was talking to his grandson. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It's a terrible fight between two wolves. One wolf is evil, unhappy and ugly. He's anger, envy, war, greed, selfishness, sorrow, regret, guilt, resentment and arrogance. He spreads lies, deceit, fear, hatred, blame, scarcity, poverty and divisiveness.

"The other wolf is beautiful and kind. He is friendly, joyful, loving, worthy, humble, kind, benevolent, just, fair, empathetic, generous, honest, compassionate, grateful and brave."

The grandfather continued: "This same fight is going on inside you and inside all human beings as well." The grandson then said: "Grandfather, which wolf will win this horrific war?" And the elder Cherokee replied: "The wolf that you feed. That wolf will surely win."

Donald Sutherland was proud that in Canada we feed the good wolf, and I think he is right, that that is what the rest of the world saw. It's a collective belief that every person is equal and equally worthwhile, I believe, that goes a long way to making us the welcoming, friendly society that was reflected to the world in the past few weeks — that we believe in equality of opportunity for all, no matter where we are born or under what circumstances. That was the Canada I was proud to be part of and to show the world.

Now a short breathing space, and we will again welcome the para-athletes to our city. The best of luck to all of them, and I'm sure we will do just as great a job as hosts again.

So congratulations to all the athletes, win or lose, and congratulations to all of us who have taken part in this amazing experience. We are truly proud to be Canadians.

R. Howard: It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to this Olympic motion.

First I will say that it has been my great pleasure to have been on this wonderful ride from beginning to end. In 2002 when I was serving as a councillor for the city of Richmond we stepped forward with a \$500,000 contribution to the bid committee. Then Vancouver won the bid, and events unfolded.

Our city had the opportunity to bid for the long-track speed skating facility, a rather functional name for what was later to become the Richmond Olympic Oval, where medals would be won by Canadian Olympians on Richmond soil, all under a 6½-acre wood roof constructed from pine-beetle-enhanced lumber.

[1120]

We watched as Canadian and community spirit erupted when the Olympic Torch Relay arrived in our city. Our community cauldron was lit by none other than Rick Hansen, bringing a sense of pride and a sense of connectivity with the nation.

Who would have believed, Madam Speaker? Well, we believed. We invited the world, and they came. They came in person, and when they could not get here in person, they watched on TV. Over 250,000 came, and over three billion watched.

They saw a record-setting Canadian performance as host nation, and they saw us showcase ourselves like never before. We watched as even seasoned Olympic observers marvelled at what unfolded in front of their very eyes. The outpouring of Canadian pride was building and building and building — if ever temporarily receding, only to resume the momentum and build some more.

From heart-wrenching misses to profound victories, we saw the full range of human emotion and achievement. We saw a record Canadian performance, with the most gold by a nation in the history of the Winter Olympics. We held our collective breath as the men's hockey team earned their place in Canadian and Olympic history. The games' organizers must be oh so proud. Thank you, John Furlong. Thank you, Jack Poole and the legions of organizers.

We watched as First Nations expressed themselves proudly and wound themselves even deeper into the fabric of Canadian society. We watched as our community celebrated at the Richmond O Zone, one of 30 free events in Metro Vancouver — the Richmond O Zone welcoming 20,000 or more visitors on a daily basis.

We saw Canadians and Dutch celebrating together at Holland Heineken House. We saw families enjoying the outdoor skating. We saw over 800 Richmond volunteers working hard and actually becoming part of the games' experience for so many others.

And, of course, we worked hard. We worked hard on behalf of British Columbians to make sure we took advantage of the international presence during the games. I attended close to a dozen different meetings and conferences aimed at building relationships and heard many different airlines, shipping and logistics companies express what was important to them as we continue to seek new business and work to grow and diversify our economy.

It is worthy of note that our government and the Gateway executive have gained worldwide attention in the success of our gateway, creating a seamless inter-modal transportation network. From ship or air to truck or train, our gateway business partners need reliability, and the Gateway executive has worked to provide just that reliability.

Our Asia-Pacific gateway, having two corridors — the northern of Prince Rupert and Prince George; and the southern of Vancouver, Richmond, Delta — is vital to the continued growth of our province and our nation. The Asia-Pacific gateway is key to growing and diversifying our economy.

These international business leaders came to be part of the Canadian Olympic experience and were amazed at how successful the games had become. They watched in awe as a province, indeed a country, was ignited in unity and national pride by a single flame. These many meetings represent just some of the behind-the-scenes work necessary to ensure that these Olympic Games are a platform for our future, a launch pad for our province and our country.

These business leaders look to do business with people who have the right attitude, the kind of attitude that gets things done, the kind of attitude that will rigorously tackle problems as they arise. These games demonstrated that tenacity in a way that truly impressed the world.

What started as "Go, Canada, go!" then transformed into "Gold, Canada, gold!" could perhaps transform once again into "Grow, Canada, grow!"

S. Herbert: You'll have to excuse me. I'm still reveling in the incredible hockey game and the great couple of weeks we've had.

We're here today to celebrate the success of our athletes, organizers and volunteers, and in celebrating, I hope that we can learn as well. We were asked again and again if we believed. The answer was a resounding yes — yes to a belief that we can achieve great things when we support each other and work together; yes to a belief in our ability to defy the odds when we try a little harder and aim a little higher; yes to a belief in good sportsmanship and teamwork; yes to our ability to connect with the world and learn from each other; and yes to Canada. We believed.

Now, not every one of my constituents agreed with the games, and that's okay. We should celebrate that as well. That is part of being Canadian. We allow and celebrate a diversity of views. It makes us stronger when we listen and learn from each other. More debate to come, I'm sure.

[1125]

As we celebrate, we also have a responsibility to think about the impact of the decisions that we make today on the future for each other, our planet and our children. The Olympics, whether you agreed with them or not, have proven that if we put our minds together, put our spirit and our money towards a big task, we can achieve great things. I hope this House and our country will take this momentum and positive example of working together and tackle big goals that will really improve the lives of every British Columbian.

We can take the Olympic example and act now to end homelessness and the high level of poverty in our province. We can act now to stop climate change and build a green economy, and we can act now to build a creative economy that benefits every one of us.

By doing this, we can show that just as we brought the world into our home, we will do the same for our own people and our own environment. That would be a true Olympic legacy with real economic, social and environmental benefits.

To our athletes: thank you. You are an inspiration to us all. I heard many times from people about how your incredible feats, your incredible daring, had inspired them to work harder to achieve their own personal bests.

Faulkner put it well when he wrote: "Don't try to be better than your predecessors or your contemporaries. Try to be better than yourself." This was the lesson that I believe our athletes taught us all. While a gold was the aim — and we got a lot of gold — doing better than we have ever done before was a victory all the same.

To honour and celebrate our athletes we need to as a province restore funding to kids' sports and athletic pro-

grams so that the dreams of greatness for our children aren't out of reach. It would be wrong to continue cutting the programs that support our kids to reach their personal bests while celebrating our athletes who have reached theirs. Let's put that money back — okay? That would be a real Olympic legacy.

One thing noticeably absent in this motion is a celebration of our artists. Our artists impressed the world. They told our stories, and we got to know each other better because of that. What could be a better argument for strong provincial investments in arts and culture than the work we saw at the opening ceremonies and the Cultural Olympiad?

Walking down the streets in Vancouver, it was our artists, as well as the athletes, who brought us together. So just as we need to stop cutting kids' sport programs, we need to stop cutting investments in the arts. If we're going to honour the experience we had at the games, then we must honour our artists and invest in their work. Otherwise, the only art we may see in the future is of the joke variety of floating moose and giant beavers that were lampooned last night. We can do better than that. We must do better than that. Let's reinvest in the arts. That would be a real Olympic legacy.

To our 25,000 volunteers who gave of their time, their spirit and their skills for the love of it, not expecting any compensation: thank you. You showed that if united in a common purpose, we will make sacrifices so that we can all prosper. The volunteer sector in B.C. has been hard hit recently because of decisions government has made that have hurt charitable and non-profit organizations. If we want to truly celebrate the volunteer spirit which was so prevalent in these games, then we must as a House join together and support organizations that rely on volunteers.

People want to give, and as a House, we should support those efforts, as they make a province a much better place to live and us all better people. That would be another real Olympic legacy.

As I draw to a close with my speech, I want to say that I've bought a ticket for the opening of the Paralympics. I'm looking forward to more great athletics. And as I've said before, as a province, when we put our minds, our spirit and our dollars together towards a great dream, we can and will achieve great things. Go, Canada, go!

D. McRae: I stand here today in this building as a very, very proud Canadian. These games could not have been better written by a Hollywood scriptwriter. It all began 18 days ago on a dark and stormy night. Two days later, on the Sunday, the skies began to clear, the crowds came out, and Alex Bilodeau won the first gold medal on Canadian soil. It was proud.

I also had the opportunity to spend time on Robson Street with my family. I got to see the mascots on ice, see a youth acrobatic group, and I also had a chance meeting on

a stage with Alex Bilodeau, who was fantastic. Everywhere I went in Vancouver, I met volunteers who were outstanding ambassadors for their communities.

I had the opportunity to attend B.C. Street at the O Zone in Richmond, and the Comox Valley tent was staffed by some amazing individuals promoting my community but also many communities around this province. I would like to say thank you to people like Sandy Gray, Bent Harder, Lara Greasley, Geoff Crawford and Carolyn Mulvaney. You've done a fantastic job for the Comox Valley.

[1130]

The weather — minus the lack of snow on Cypress, which we overcame with volunteer work — was everything we could have hoped for. The organizers pulled off a herculean task. The venues were completed a year in advance and are iconic structures for this province. The VANOC staff were professional and able to react to any challenge thrown at them.

I want to thank the athletes. They have sacrificed financial gain and personal relationships and put their lives on hold for the love of their sport and to have the privilege of representing this great nation. They met this challenge, I'm proud to say, exceedingly well.

Canada won 26 medals, as we all know. We set the record for the highest medal count ever by a Winter Olympic nation. You think back to the Soviet Union, the monster-sized country it used to be.... We exceeded that.

This triumph became legend this weekend, with gold in both the women's hockey game last Friday and Sidney Crosby's overtime goal yesterday, which you saw everybody in Canada rise and cheer. Even in small towns like the Comox Valley, I could open my door, and in the distance I heard horns honking and people cheering. I have no idea who they were or where they were, but I'm sure across the nation there were people screaming out of doors and kissing strangers. I kissed my wife.

What makes it even more proud is the dignity and modesty our athletes displayed. The athletes are great role models for this nation, and they will inspire our youth to carry on this great sporting tradition.

In two weeks B.C. will welcome the Paralympic athletes to this province. These athletes, their coaches, trainers will further solidify just how much impact the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games have had on this nation and the world.

Without a doubt, Canada should be proud. We indeed own the podium.

S. Hammell: Over the past few weeks we have had the opportunity to experience one of the most exciting experiences of our lifetime and perhaps that of our children and grandchildren.

During the opening ceremonies we heard Shane Koyczan's poem *We Are More*. That poem could not have defined the games any better.

In that poem there was a line that said: "We are an experiment going right for a change." I believe that this was one experience for the nation that does have the potential to change the way we define ourselves; the way we express our pride in ourselves; the way we enjoyed our finest, not only in sport but also in the arts and music of our country and province; the way we policed ourselves — the firm but kind manner that order was insisted upon; the way we partied in the rain, in the rain; and when the clouds finally chose to part, we partied as never before. In the end, in cities across this nation, we spilled into the streets.

In Shane Koyczan's poem he tries to define a definition of what a Canadian is when he says: "And some say what defines us is something as simple as 'please' and 'thank you.' And as for 'you're welcome,' well, we say that too." Although it may not completely define us as a nation, it does define the actions of our volunteers during the Olympics.

Over the last few weeks my constituency assistant Brett Barden had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be an accredited photographer for these Olympics. He brought back wonderful stories of the commitment shown by the volunteers to make everyone's experience a successful one.

One of the stories Brett brought back, about volunteers going that extra mile, was of a day trip to Whistler. After spending several hours photographing the Olympic venues, their team ran into a transportation glitch. The media buses back to Vancouver were missing in action, and the weather outside was cold and sleeting. But the warmth from the volunteers made all the difference in the world.

The volunteers kept positive doing everything in their power to track down a bus to get the photographers home. From offering coffee to a place to keep warm to a simple smile, the volunteers went that extra mile. They could have left them out in the cold for those few hours, but that was not the volunteers' way, nor was it the Olympic or British Columbian way.

[1135]

In the closing of Shane's poem, he says: "We are the true north, strong and free. And what's more to that, we didn't say it. We made it be." Our athletes made that true.

When you try and define what an athlete is, you come to adjectives such as "passion," "commitment," "humility," "strength" and "determination." All have been used, but none truer than in these games.

Passion — the passion showed by the men and women's hockey teams as they brought home gold. Gold for our game. I was at the women's gold event and watched the men. Both teams fought with passion, and it was a thrill to join in with *O Canada* with both wins.

Commitment — the commitment shown by Clara Hughes in winning her sixth medal in her long, success-

ful, Olympic career. No other woman has won medals in both Summer and Winter Olympics.

Humility — humility shown by our men and women's skeleton team, one in losing and one in winning. From Mellissa Hollingsworth's quote, "I feel like I let my nation down," to Jon Montgomery's quote: "Some people have become doctors in the time I have chased this dream, and they are saving lives. Although I'll never do that, hopefully, in competing with honour and dignity, I can inspire some people." Many of our athletes have yet to realize their impact. The experience — win or lose — will be carried with the children of this nation. But history tells us that every athlete will inspire someone.

Strength and determination. You can't talk about strength and determination in these games without talking about Joannie Rochette. When Joannie took the ice within 48 hours of her mother's death, the nation responded with an outpouring of support and best wishes.

Many wouldn't have blamed her if she had skated on the ice, taken a bow and skated off, but in the true nature of a champion, she fought on and conquered her goals of being on the podium. Though Canada is a large nation with vast regions and territories, in the moments following Joannie's short program, Canada was united in the support for one person and one family.

In closing, the past 17 days have provided the nation the ability to remember that as a nation, we are not just defined by deficits, disasters and wars but as a proud people who sang *O Canada* for the rest of the world.

D. Horne: Wow, what an incredible couple of weeks we've had with the Olympics in town. In not very much longer, the Paralympic Games will begin as well.

The Olympics and the opportunities that they brought to our province will, I think, be felt for many, many years. I find it refreshing that the members on the other side, the members opposite this morning, have been talking about how wonderful this Olympic experience was, how wonderful the Olympic Games are, how much.... I heard one of the members talk about the unprecedented opportunity that the Olympics have brought to our province and the ability of our province to reach out to the world to promote ourselves, to promote our business, to promote our goods and services.

Truly, the Olympics are that — an unprecedented opportunity. But, you know, I will remind the members opposite that in the beginning, they weren't necessarily of the same mind. If their leader had had her way in the beginning, we would not have had the games.

That being said, I think that we've all joined together now. I think that we're all on the same page, and we're happy. So I think that rather than pointing fingers and saying who did what, what we have to look at is the future. Because the future that the Olympic Games has brought British Columbia is truly exceptional.

One of the things that the Olympics did bring.... We talk about the volunteers. We talk about all of the time that the volunteers have contributed to the games and the ability that they allowed for the athletes, allowed for those competing, to be able to compete in such excellent conditions.

People talk about the fact that Cypress's weather conditions were poor. Speaking to the athletes. They talk about how, many times around the world, they've competed in far worse conditions. So even with the weather conditions that we had, our volunteers truly made the field of play exceptional, and that's something that is a testament to the dedication and the hard work put in by that group.

That being said, the one thing we also have to remember is that the one thing Canada has to offer — and the unique ability that British Columbia as a province has to offer — is the fact that the Olympics offer to each one of the teams what they call an NOC assistant or a national Olympic committee assistant. And whether you have a small team or a large team, each of these groups of volunteers is put together in order to provide assistance to that team.

One of the unique things that British Columbia has that many parts of the world — Torino; Beijing; Sydney, Australia — couldn't offer these teams is that.... We have a diverse, wonderful multicultural population here in British Columbia. So when the Russian team needed Russian-speaking volunteers, we had many of them. When the Chinese team needed Chinese-speaking volunteers, we had many to offer them.

When many of the other teams from around the world required volunteers that spoke their own language, that understood their own culture, that could understand the special needs that they might have, British Columbia and Canada could offer that assistance. That's really what makes us unique as Canadians, what makes us unique as British Columbians, and it's something that allowed, I think, for us to stage one of the most magnificent games in the history of the Olympics.

That, too, allows us a very unique situation within the world when it comes to economic development, because as each of these teams, as each of the leaders of these nations were here enjoying the Olympic games, they realized the opportunities and the fact that we had Russian speakers or Chinese speakers or speakers of Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese — all of these wonderful languages from around the world. One of the things that we can offer in economic development is we can have the ability to speak these languages and to offer these services and to communicate with these people, which puts us in a wonderful, wonderful situation.

Many have said the economic opportunity that the Olympics provided would certainly lead Canada as a nation, given these unprecedented times. But that being said.... You can talk statistically about what this

will offer, you can talk about the billions of dollars that VANOC themselves have spent over the last number of years, you can talk about the hundreds of millions of dollars that they were spending over just this last year when obviously our economy needed it the most, but the most important thing, I think, was talking to the people that were here during the games.

I had the opportunity to speak to many, many people over the last couple of weeks while they were here, and one of the things that I found most interesting... I spoke to a number of venture capitalists at one point, and they talked about the fact that they had done deals in British Columbia before. Several of them had done deals in Vancouver before.

The thing that I found most interesting was that very few of them had actually been to British Columbia or Vancouver before. They'd relied on the diligence package that they'd been given. They were part of a syndicate, and they'd obviously funded the deal, but they'd never been here.

So coming here for the games was the first time they'd actually come to British Columbia, the first time that they'd actually come to Vancouver, and they had an absolutely magnificent experience. The weather during the games was fantastic, obviously, and they enjoyed very much the energy that our city had, the people, the friendliness, and want to come back.

[1145]

A couple of them said to me that they were searching out deals, because obviously, when you want to come back to a place, you want the opportunity to be able to come back and do more business. So they were saying: "Well, we're looking for opportunity here. We're looking for places to invest here in Vancouver." One of them made the point to me that they were going to look because they would like to join the company's board here and be able to come to regular board meetings.

This is really what the games have allowed. This is the opportunity. This is the economic advantage that the Olympic Games have had — the athletes, the coaches, everyone, the business people that came to Vancouver as a result of these Olympics. Very, very shortly we're going to host the Paralympic Games, and the wonderful opportunity that all of it represents and will bring to our province is just absolutely unparalleled and fantastic.

J. Brar: Today members of all the teams of this House come together to celebrate the success of athletes, organizers and volunteers of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games and to wish the same success for the upcoming Paralympic Games. As a member of this House and as a former national basketball player, I'm very pleased to join all the members of this House in this rare celebration.

To our athletes, a huge, golden thanks to all of you for representing our great country in the 21st Winter Olympic Games held here in our beautiful province of

British Columbia. I'm very proud of the extraordinary talent, sportsmanship and grace that you've all shown to us and to the global community.

Alexandre, you have opened the golden door to Canadian athletes, and that was a big source of encouragement to our athletes. You are a huge source of inspiration to our young people.

Our women's hockey team players, you have proved to us that if you are fully prepared for your journey, no one can stop you.

Our men's hockey players, you have shown to us that winners never quit and quitters never win. You have shown Canadians how to convert defeat into victory.

Tessa and Scott, you have demonstrated that teamwork and balance in our actions is the key to success in life.

Joannie, you have delivered a very powerful message to all of us that nothing can stop you if you have a real purpose and determination.

All members of Team Canada, you have made it very clear that Canada has a special place in the world. You have displayed that by winning the highest number of gold medals in the history of the Winter Olympics. You are real role models for the young people. You are real heroes of this great nation. You are the real gold of Canada. You made us all proud. You should be proud of yourselves.

To the volunteers, it was not possible without your enthusiasm, dedication and deep commitment to the success of these games. You were there to welcome the world. You were there to guide our athletes and visitors. You were there to the successful completion of all events. We saw you helping at the opening ceremony and the closing ceremony. You were everywhere. My sincere thanks to all 25,000 volunteers who came from all walks of life, breaking all the boundaries for the success of the Winter Olympic Games.

To the people of British Columbia, you are the best hosts in the world. A smile on your face. "What can I do for you?" "Have a nice day." You have shown the world that we love our country, that we love each of them. There's no match anywhere. We have done it and done it well. People of Canada and British Columbia are hoping that these Winter Olympic Games will leave behind a long-lasting legacy that we can all be proud of.

People expect that the spirit of these Winter Olympic Games will touch and inspire our young people, and I hope more and more young people will start dancing on the ice. That will definitely be the true legacy of these games. That's why it's important for us to restore funding to our young athletes of this province to make sure that we have a long-lasting legacy of these games.

[1150]

Like many British Columbians, while watching the ceremony on TV, I felt pride in the work of the tireless volunteers, athletes and staff members who pulled off a spectacular event that showcased our province to the world.

The prominent role played by the First Nations in the opening ceremony, while historical and something we can all take pride in.... We cannot ignore the fact that many people felt that the opening and closing ceremonies missed the opportunity to reflect the rich cultural diversity of this province and this country. I hope that we will learn from this missed opportunity and make every effort to ensure that our future events and ceremonies are reflective of our cultural diversity.

Congratulations to all our athletes, volunteers and staff members for the job well done. I wish the same success to all the participants of the upcoming Paralympic Games. In that spirit, I support the motion presented by the member, and I hope all of us support our athletes and all the participants and the volunteers.

D. Barnett: It is with great pride that I stand here and support this motion. We should all celebrate the Olympics in a way that the Canadian country has celebrated them. Without the support of the 25,000 volunteers, these games would not have been the great success that they are today.

Citizens from my riding had the opportunity to come to Vancouver, Whistler and work as volunteers, and they are so thrilled. They have told me that it is an experience and an opportunity they will never forget.

To the athletes: you are all winners. From countries around the world, you have set the stage for our youth. Never say never.

At the Richmond O Zone street, I had the opportunity to spend a few hours there as members from my community, the Cariboo Chilcotin tourist association, and the Cariboo regional district volunteers and staff showcased the Handcrafted Log Home Capital of North America in their booths, showcased what the forest industry is about and what rural B.C. and the Cariboo-Chilcotin really have to offer.

To VANOC, I say thank you for your great leadership and skills.

As I spent most of the time that the Olympics were on driving through my riding and meeting with constituents, wherever I went where there was a television, my constituents were sitting there cheering with pride. Whether you were from the Cariboo-Chilcotin or from Newfoundland, together we celebrated the success of the 2010 Olympics like we have never seen Canadians celebrate together before.

We now have an opportunity to celebrate and wish the 2010 Paralympic Games the same success. Let us all wish them the best and, once again, stand up and sing that great song *O Canada*.

R. Austin: It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this motion one day after the 2010 Winter Olympics have ended here in Vancouver and to celebrate along with colleagues from the other side of the House what a suc-

cess it has been — I think probably one of the greatest Olympics that has ever been set, not just here in Canada but around the world.

As I obviously live in northern B.C. and didn't come down for any events, my view of the Olympics was one that was gathered from watching news broadcasts on television and, of course, reading newspapers.

It's true to say that we have lots to celebrate about, not just our incredible athletes and all their accomplishments but also, I think, the image that we gave to the rest of the world. It was just wonderful to see people being interviewed on television who were visiting this province for the first time in our wonderful city of Vancouver and saying such wonderful things about Canada and about British Columbia. It's also great to read in newspapers around the world from the reporters who sent news stories back saying how much they enjoyed coming to Vancouver and to Whistler.

[1155]

As somebody who immigrated to this country almost 30 years ago, it's very fascinating to see how this country, for the first time in my experience living here, actually demonstrated a real sense of pride. I mean, as an immigrant, I've always been thrilled to come and live in this country. Obviously I made that choice, and I'm very relieved I did, but to actually see Canadians born and bred here come out and openly speak out with pride about being Canadian was really quite heart-warming for me as somebody who chose to come here.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Someone mentioned that we had 25,000 volunteers working the B.C. Winter Games. This is a great segue into our next little winter sporting event. Now that we've gotten over the 2010 Winter Olympics, it's my very great pride to talk about the fact that coming this weekend, from March 4 to 7, we have the B.C. Winter Games hosted in my home community of Terrace.

Now, of course, it's a very small event in comparison to the Winter Olympics. However, we're going to have 1,600 volunteers over the next three days on the coming weekend. Now, 1,600 volunteers in a community of less than 15,000 says quite a lot about the sense of pride and the sense of community that's going to happen in Terrace.

There are going to be 1,100 competitors coming, taking part in 16 events in Terrace this weekend. Again, that's a wonderful number of athletes coming, and they're going to bring an economic benefit to my small community, of over \$1.6 million. Trust me; in northwest B.C., in a small town that has been having very difficult economic situations, the Winter Games is going to be a welcome addition.

You know, our athletes come from all parts of British Columbia. We've witnessed that in the last little while. But in northwest B.C., when we come together this weekend for the B.C. Winter Games, we're going to be

remembering Carol Huynh from New Hazelton, a small community that provided the very first athlete to win a gold at the recent Summer Olympics.

So there's a lot to celebrate in British Columbia. I think we can collectively look at this last 17 days, breathe a sigh of relief for those who organized it but take a collective euphoria that we got from the winning of the game yesterday. I was driving around Victoria after the hockey game, and I was absolutely amazed at the amount of street activity that was happening. It was joyful, and the police were engaging in it. There was no trouble. It was wonderful to see.

R. Austin moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. I. Chong moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

Mr. Speaker: This House stands adjourned until 1:30 this afternoon.

The House adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

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