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3RD SESSION, 37TH PARLIAMENT

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Morning Sitting

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2002

The House met at 10:05 a.m.

[J. Weisbeck in the chair.]

Prayers.

Private Members' Statements

TOURISM

W. McMahon: I rise today to speak about a very special region of our province, the Kootenay region, and more specifically my riding of Columbia River-Revelstoke.

We have a tremendous opportunity in the Kootenays. As a government, we recognize that tourism has long been and continues to be one of the greatest economic success stories in British Columbia. It combines spectacular destinations with superb marketing programs. Adventure tourism constitutes a major growth sector of the tourism industry and outpaces every other sector of the Canadian economy.

Every year the Trans-Canada Highway between Golden and Revelstoke and Highway 93-95 between Cranbrook and Golden get a little busier with out-of-province licence plates. People come from the prairie provinces, Washington, Oregon and beyond to visit the Kootenays. We are seeing more European and Asian visitors every year. As I have said before in this House, they come in every season. They come to hunt and fish. They come to golf and mountain bike. They come with skis over their shoulders to explore the back country and challenge the fresh powder on our many mountain resorts.

There are a number of resorts in my riding that are experiencing considerable growth. They are investing their money for no other reason than that they believe in British Columbia. They believe in the business climate we have created in this province, and they believe that they will get returns on their investments.

People have asked me how many people visit. I know that in 2000, British Columbia hosted 22.5 million overnight visitors who spent almost \$9.5 billion in the province. In 2000, \$4.1 billion of B.C. tourism revenue was earned in foreign exchange. This was an increase of 2.6 percent over 1999 and 21.5 percent since 1996.

I was recently reading a report that indicated that in 1998, nearly 2.5 million visitors travelled to the western B.C. Rockies for a day or overnight experience, 63 percent of whom were non-residents. The region captured 8 percent of all B.C. visitors in 1998. Today we know we are attracting more, and we know the opportunities are endless.

Panorama Resort near Invermere continues to invest in its resort and ski hill operations, and has become not only a winter destination but also a year-round destination for many, many people. Millions of dollars have been spent to expand the Kicking Horse Mountain Resort near Golden, which is opening a number of new runs this ski season and has introduced mountain biking to its off-season to capture that growing tourism market.

Skiers here enjoy the second-longest vertical terrain in Canada after Whistler-Blackcomb.

A 12-minute gondola ride takes visitors to Canada's highest restaurant, the Eagle's Eye. At 2,450 metres, it is a gourmet restaurant with spectacular 360-degree views of the Rocky, Purcell and Selkirk mountain ranges. It is almost six times higher than the CN tower in Toronto.

The Resorts of the Canadian Rockies near Kimberley and Mount Mackenzie near Revelstoke are two more ski attractions that are just beginning to tap an international market. At Powder Springs in Revelstoke, the 1920s saw world championship ski jumping. Today there are plans for more development.

Yet for the serious skier, Revelstoke, Golden and Invermere also serve the heli-ski industry, providing lasting memories to those who dare. The Resorts of the Canadian Rockies in Kimberley is listed as one of B.C.'s top ten ski resorts. For the serious skier, 60 percent of not only the heliskiing but also the cat-skiing industry takes place in my riding, and we are not yet done tapping the full potential of this market.

[1010]

The list of tourism opportunities in this region is endless. I haven't even begun to touch on the thousands of American and Albertan snowmobilers that spend thousands of dollars in our communities on gas, accommodation, food and supplies through the winter, or the hang-gliders that come to take flight near Golden and Invermere. Our river rafting on the Kicking Horse River, Toby Creek and Columbia River attracts tourists from across North America, as does our ecotourism.

Did you know that less than 20 years ago golf courses in the Kootenays were few and far between? Not today. The original destinations have been greatly expanded, and with many new courses, the B.C. Rockies now feature the greatest concentration of high-quality resort courses in Canada. People are again coming from every corner of the globe to experience the diversity and the challenges that make these courses second to none.

Did you know that Fairmont Hot Springs, in my own back yard, has just opened its third golf course this summer? In addition, this summer saw the opening of Kimberley's new Bootleg Gap course, the third course for this city. We now have more than a dozen championship-style resort courses in Columbia River-Revelstoke.

Today I have asked the member for Oak Bay-Gordon Head to respond to my statement. Although she may not have the number of ski and golf resorts in her riding, she certainly represents another special region of the province that knows about tourism, a region that has opened its doors to the world and that knows about the endless opportunities tourism provides.

I. Chong: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to respond to today's private member's statement from my hon. colleague the member for Columbia River-Revelstoke.

Certainly, there is no question that tourism is a significant and important industry in our British Colum-

bia economy. As she has indicated, it has long been and will continue to be a growth industry, because it has the opportunity to provide spectacular vistas and tremendous value for money. From outdoor recreation to ecotourism to cultural and heritage tourism to aboriginal tourism to winter sports tourism, as she has indicated, British Columbia is one of the world's best tourism destinations. There is something for everyone, young and old alike.

As was also mentioned, tourism revenues generate well over \$9 billion annually. We see more than 20 million visitors to our wonderful location. This sector employs over 113,000 people directly, with many more who are not counted in that number because they are self-employed — many small bed-and-breakfast businesses, as an example.

Yet we have not begun to tap into our potential — in particular, our ski resort potential, as the member has indicated in her area. I recall recently attending the area of Kimberley, where we, as the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, were conducting our public hearings on the prebudget consultation paper. At that time a presenter, a man by the name of Andy Cohen who represents the Resorts of the Canadian Rockies for the B.C. resorts of Fernie and Kimberley, came and spoke to us. He made a very important and impassioned presentation to our committee. He reminded us of the amount of investment that tourism brings to our province, and he indicated that in the last two years alone more than a billion dollars was invested in the East Kootenay region in tourism infrastructure.

He knows that tourism is not about internal growth but about external growth. It is about bringing outside dollars into British Columbia. Many regions in the East Kootenay area were benefiting from those dollars. Those tourism dollars don't just go from one pocket to another. They exchange hands many times, as many as six times, which is what his last count was. That's why it was important for us to hear about how we can revitalize our economy from regions that are outside the lower mainland, outside the so-called golden triangle of Whistler, Vancouver and Victoria. I was pleased to hear that in Kimberley and in the Columbia River-Revelstoke area, they indeed are capitalizing on these opportunities.

[1015]

I just want to take a moment and mention the area that I represent. On Vancouver Island in particular, there is a little town that people the world over come to visit and to see their incredible murals. That, of course, is the town of Chemainus. Chemainus lost its primary industry years ago. Everyone thought that town would just close up, but no, the residents wouldn't let that happen. The residents came together. What we see today is a vibrant tourist attraction that contributes to our B.C. economy very, very significantly.

Here in the capital region — not in my riding but in the riding of Saanich North and the Islands, held by the hon. Minister of Human Resources — we have the world-famous Butchart Gardens. This site was once a

quarry. You would never know this. Now it is an amazing development of greenspace. I know visitors from Asia, in particular, make it a special point when they come to the lower mainland and Vancouver, when they're meeting with representatives of government, to take that ferry ride over to visit the Butchart Gardens.

These are just two examples that tell us that from change comes opportunity. One of our tourism industry's greatest strengths is that it does have that ability to recognize and seize opportunities, and of course, from opportunity comes investment.

There is much good news happening in the tourism industry in British Columbia, and our government has contributed to that. We've cut personal income taxes so that personal disposable income is available for internal travel. We've cut general corporate income tax rates to 13.5 percent and increased the threshold for small businesses so those who are in the hospitality sector can reinvest those dollars back into their businesses. We've eliminated a corporation capital tax, which was a tax on investments for all those business which are non-financial institutions. Specifically in aid of our tourism sector, we've cut the domestic jet fuel tax rate and the tax on aviation fuel. To make our province's busy ports even more attractive for cruise ships and private pleasure boats, we've eliminated the 7 percent tax on bunker fuel.

Those are just a few of the things this government has done, and I know we will continue to do that much more to ensure tourism continues to flourish in British Columbia.

Deputy Speaker: With concluding remarks, the member for Columbia River-Revelstoke.

W. McMahon: Thank you to my colleague from Oak Bay-Gordon Head for her comments. She touched on many things that I didn't, with cultural heritage and aboriginal tourism. The opportunities are certainly endless for us in British Columbia. She gave us two excellent examples of diversification — from a rock quarry and from a resource-based town. I think we'll see many more opportunities for the citizens and also the tourists in British Columbia.

In conclusion, tourism is a credit to the communities, developers and tour companies who have embraced this industry and who know that British Columbia is a leader in tourism, with the potential to be the number one destination in the world.

The Kootenay region is still being discovered by many because it's not easy to access. We must open the Kootenays to the world and make it easier for tourists to visit our region. We need to upgrade the Trans-Canada Highway and make it safer for all travellers, but especially for those who have never driven that route before. We need to improve our airport accessibility by expanding the Cranbrook Airport so we can attract more charters and more long-haul flights. We're working hard on both of these projects. We also need to work together to spread the word about our tourism opportunities. We need people from the East and West

Kootenays to get together and take a Team Kootenay approach to attract more investment and more tourists from other regions.

I believe the tourism industry in this province is ready to flourish. We have the natural resources, we have the expertise of people who've dedicated their lives to this industry, and we have the attention of investors who see the endless potential. We all know that British Columbia has all the tools to be a North American leader in the tourism industry. We will be ready in 2010, when British Columbia invites the world.

Deputy Speaker: Our second private members' statement is from the member for Alberni-Qualicum, speaking on the effects of the softwood lumber dispute on communities.

EFFECTS OF SOFTWOOD LUMBER DISPUTE ON COMMUNITIES

G. Trumper: Today I want to talk about the region that I come from and that I live in, of which the backbone is the forest industry. Much of the debate on the softwood lumber dispute has rightly focused on the effects of the tariffs on lumber exported to the United States. Companies large and small have worked with the provincial and federal governments to come to some solution to this dispute, but there is no province that is more impacted by this dispute than British Columbia.

[1020]

Discussion has taken place on what can be done for the industry. We are well aware of the relief program that has been proposed by the federal government, although many of us consider it not enough.

However, very little is said about the individuals whose lives are affected most deeply by this dispute: the people who live in the communities. The area that I come from, the west part of Vancouver Island, is serviced by Highway 4, which most people tend to forget about and which is in deep, deep need of some reconstruction. It's the one road in and the one road out to the west coast. If it falls off the side of the mountain, you can't get in and you can't get out.

We have a deep-sea harbour run by the Port Alberni Port Authority, which can take the huge Panamax ships that come in and is underutilized. We also have an airport owned by the Alberni regional district, which needs a lot of upgrades to attract a regular flight in and out of the valley.

Over the past decade in my region right out to the west coast, due to changes in the marketplace and land use decisions, direct forest jobs in the forest industry have dropped from 6,000 to barely 2,000. Now many workers are laid off with uncertainty about when they might be called back. As the woods go down, as we feel the effects of the tariffs and the mills are shut down for maybe a month — it may be longer — the uncertainty is there.

The people who work in the industry are proud people. They work hard in difficult conditions. They

work in inclement weather, and we all know how the rain usually comes to the west coast. We have about 80 inches, and 170 inches on the west coast. They work in noisy mills. There are physical challenges to that work. Many times it's dangerous. They work hard to support their families, maintain their homes and live a reasonable life.

It is also said that one forestry job in a community supports two other jobs. There are many businesses and light industries that rely on the forest industry. When the woods and the mills are down, not only are the forest workers not working, but small business people and their employees also face layoffs as business slows. There are many owners who have, over the last while, wondered if they can keep their doors open as the local economy falters. It is important to remember that none of these people or their employees is covered by proposed relief programs.

The shutdown of the forest industry affects the amount of taxes being paid, and there is a domino effect on everyone, including the public sector, as services in all levels of government are affected. For the individuals, some of their homes are repossessed. In fact, today you can buy a home in the Alberni Valley very reasonably, which would probably cost three times as much if you go to the other side of the Island.

Some of the homes are repossessed, and others lose value. Children are not able to participate in the sports programs, music lessons or other activities that enrich their lives as family finances are limited. There is stress in families, and this reverberates back into the health community.

Someone here in Victoria told me of the time that his son went on a school trip to the Alberni-Clayoquot region. He described his son as being a very green teenager. Before that trip he'd been very dismissive of the forest industry. The school group was taken to meet some of the workers who had been laid off. They were taken out into the woods and met people. They also went out to the west coast and met many of the people who were involved in the preservationist movement.

[1025]

One of the things that most impressed him was that they put on a skit for these kids as to what it was like to be a child or a young person growing up when your parents were laid off, and you didn't know how long you were going to be on unemployment or what was going to be happening in six months. The skit explained how the parents could not go and buy those \$100 running shoes that they wanted or how they could not go out and buy the newest piece of technical equipment that every teenager seems to have. This young person came back to Victoria with a much better understanding of life in a resource-based community and how our lives revolve around it.

I do want to compliment the Minister of Forests and the Premier on their long, hard work with the federal government to negotiate an agreement with the United States. Maybe after November 5, which also happens to be Guy Fawkes' Day in the United King-

dom — actually, I won't go into what happened on Guy Fawkes' Day — we will see some results

In our communities, we are losing our young people and their families as they are forced to leave and look for employment elsewhere. I would be the first to say you should always go and look for opportunity, for I'm one of those who left my own home and country to look for opportunity. But it's sad to see them go.

Our school population is falling even faster because of the lack of employment, and although the region works hard on diversification and we have some projects in the community we hope will come to fruition — one of which, many of you know, is a huge project with a proposed smelter — forestry is still the backbone of our economy and our province.

Deputy Speaker: In response, the Minister of Forests.

Hon. M. de Jong: These are timely comments by the hon. member for Alberni-Qualicum, and I'll tell members why I think that is so. I have read lately, as I think all hon. members have, of some of the situations that have developed, the Canadian and British Columbia response to the imposition of these tariffs. We have read those stories about the manner in which British Columbians have shown their resiliency in the face of this attack by protectionists in the U.S.

We have read the stories about how lumber has continued to flow, albeit at a much reduced price. There is, I think, a degree of pride, as well — or should be — in the manner in which British Columbia has withstood this unfair protectionist assault. Yet I think the member makes the point correctly and accurately that we should not in any way discount the human price attached to this ongoing trade dispute with our largest market in America. Mills are closing or taking downtime, putting people — real individuals and their families — out of work, and all of us, I think, can understand the anxiety that goes with this taking place.

There has, as the member points out, been the announcement of a federal support package. I agree with her that it is wholly inadequate, particularly given the discussions that took place and the length of time the federal government chose to deliberate on the matter. We're not satisfied, and we're not resting. We will continue to work with British Columbia stakeholders, community leaders and members of the IWA to impress upon the federal government the need to do more.

We will continue to pursue the achievement of that elusive long-term trade deal, but I hasten to remind all members of the House of the instructions I think the government has received, loud and clear, from British Columbians. That includes, I'm happy to say, leaders from within the hon. member's own community — people like Mayor Ken McRae, who have done an extraordinary job articulating the views and concerns of the people he and the hon. member represent.

[1030]

Those instructions are quite simply not to pursue a deal at any cost with the Americans. There has been

plenty of opportunity to do that, but we won't. We will pursue a deal and hopefully achieve one that is in British Columbia's best interests. In the meantime, we will pursue efforts to diversify our marketplace, and we will pursue other reforms designed to provide the certainty and the prospect for success that this member, I know, has laboured long and hard to achieve for her community. We need to get on with that, and I'm happy to say that in the days ahead, we will begin that process through the debate in this chamber of a new results-based forest practices code.

But to this member and all members whose constituents are feeling the impact, I say first of all, thank you for their strength in allowing the government to confront the United States of America with a unified position. I also say to them to maintain their perseverance, because though we don't have a deal yet, I am confident that, as this member says, following the mid-term elections the negotiating dynamic may change in the U.S., and the prospects for securing that elusive long-term deal will in fact improve.

Deputy Speaker: With concluding remarks, the member for Alberni-Qualicum.

G. Trumper: I want to thank the minister for his words. I think we all have a lot of faith in the minister for the work he's doing. I think there are many people out there who think that not a great deal of work has been done on this particular issue. I know for a fact, having been with the minister on one of his very many trips in talking to the federal government, that endless hours have been spent in trying to come to some successful conclusion to this unfortunate state of affairs for British Columbia, because it affects us all.

I want to thank him and the Premier and also someone who I know well, Dave Haggard, who is the president of the national IWA. He has worked very hard too, I know, with the minister in trying to bring everyone together so we're all singing out of the same hymn book when we're dealing with the United States. They are to be commended. I think it's been very frustrating, and that makes it very tiring. I know that when we get to the end of the road, it will be very rewarding.

I do believe, though, in talking to the federal government on a package for the individuals who are in my community, that a bridging mechanism encouraging senior employees to retire would be beneficial, as it would enable the younger employees to retain their positions. They're always the first people who are laid off when there is any downsizing in the industry, and they're always the last people to be taken back on. They are the people in our communities. They have families to support. Many of them are just buying their first homes. They are the people who spend money in the stores on clothing, on washing machines, on refrigerators — all the things we take for granted in our homes. They're the ones who are spending the dollars, and they are the ones who contribute to the well-being of the rural stores.

I look forward to listening and watching and working with the minister as he works towards a solution, not only for British Columbia but also for Canada, to the softwood lumber dispute. I know there will be many, many people in my region and right through British Columbia who will then be able to look forward and not be facing the uncertainty.

Deputy Speaker: The third private member's statement today is offered by the member for Burquitlam, on union job targeting.

UNION JOB "TARGETING"

H. Bloy: I would like to talk today about labour practices in British Columbia, the concept of closed shops in regards to the public tendering process — only allowing union firms to bid on public buildings. I believe that all qualified contractors should be allowed to bid on all government projects. The concept of allowing only in-house unions to do millions and millions of dollars of renovation work is wrong. I believe that all projects within government buildings should go out to public tender. Maybe a minimum would be \$20,000 — would be done in-house — but everything else would go out to public tender.

[1035]

What I would like to talk specifically about today is the practice of job targeting in the construction industry — this practice of job targeting on selected jobs, where the union contractor applies to a craft union for a wage subsidy. The contractor applies to the union to assist the union contractor in bidding against a non-union contractor. The contractor notifies the union of all non-union bidders on the job and the number of person-hours on the job. The union alone decides how much to subsidize per hour and what the total number of hours to be subsidized will be. This practice leaves the contractor's competitiveness to the whim of the union.

Under the B.C. Labour Code it is illegal for an employer to contribute financially to the operation of an union. To do so would make the union employer-dominated. Why are unions allowed to contribute? Is this not dominance over the employer?

Some numbers suggest that job targeting in Canada is more than \$100 million a year. This represents subsidies granted on jobs averaging from \$1.50 to \$19 per hour. Another example is the 578 jobs that were supported by job targeting, representing wages generated of approximately \$21 million with union subsidies of \$5 million. This equals job targeting at a rate of over \$7 per hour. In some cases in the past, wage subsidies meant union contractors were paying less than the government fair-wage policy.

I would like to quote from the pile drivers local 2404 document on job targeting: "When an union contractor is successful on a targeted project, the contractor will pay full wages and benefits based on the current collective agreement and will recover the predetermined adjusted portion by billing or by receiving a

kickback from the recovery fund for those hours earned on the project."

The union may target certain types of work or individual contractors until such time as this competition is reduced or becomes signatory or, in fact, joins the union. The unions claim that this will level the playing field as all members will contribute their hard-earned money for only a few who will receive the benefits of this money. I call this policy a kickback. Why not outlaw this policy?

In the United States the Department of Labour has ruled it illegal to collect dues for job-targeting purposes from union members who work on federal government projects. It is also illegal to use job-targeting rebates on federal government work. Approximately one-third of money collected for job targeting is collected and receipted as union dues. I would say this might be deemed to be in violation of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency's practices.

The unions have an unfair advantage over non-union companies, and union members are not paying a fair share of taxes on earned income. If union members want to support this activity, why not do it with after-tax dollars? I believe this practice is only to benefit the craft union, and if they were to regain dominance, wages would climb even higher to offset the cost of the job-targeting programs.

I just want to read a couple of examples of what goes on. There are many terms to define job targeting. Another one is MRF, market recovery funds. How much unethical bidding activity goes on through the use of MRF or job targeting? Getting information on the devious ways the funds are applied is difficult, and many believe that like the iceberg, most of the tactics are below the surface and undetected.

[1040]

Many believe job targeting threatens the free enterprise system that relies on integrity in the bidding of projects. The following are a few examples of this practice. The sprinkler system component is generally considered a subprice to the mechanical contractor. An open-shop contractor submits the lowest price for a sprinkler system. The mechanical contractor is union and is encouraged to take higher union contractor sprinkler prices on the basis that the union will subsidize the union mechanical the difference between the low open-shop sprinkler price and the union sprinkler bid. Again, the union knew exactly how much to subsidize the sprinkler package, thus undermining the competitive bidding system.

Another example. A union is upset that a general contractor is not carrying sufficient union bidders in the pre-tender process, and when a project is tendered, the union instructs all of the union contractors not to submit the job-targeting subsidized price to the one general contractor. This general contractor loses the work by a small margin, likely the difference in the higher electrical prices he has received.

My last example. An union ironworker contractor loses a project and, when investigating how an union contractor submitted a much lower price, discovers

that the union subsidized his competition. Union contractors do not like the fact that job-targeting subsidies are largely controlled by the union, which allows the union to play favourites. Why are certain projects subsidized and others not, and why in some cases have not all union bidders been given access to the job-targeting subsidies?

Deputy Speaker: Responding to the member's statement, the Minister of Labour.

Hon. G. Bruce: The member for Burquitlam brings an interesting concern to the floor here today. In respect to the first comments, the government has gone a long way to opening the tendering business, the process, to make it as transparent as possible and to encourage as many as possible to bid on government projects.

As always, there are other things that come to light as you move through government working on initiatives that are presented or problems that are raised. The whole aspect of government in the bidding process was to make sure we were able to get the best value for the taxpayers' dollar in respect of construction and capital investments in British Columbia.

The other thing that one must always ensure, in regards to the issue of labour and business, is that there is balance and fairness in whatever it is we are doing. The member here brings forward an interesting issue, which has been put before me in other times as a concern, that from the standpoint of bidding shops, this type of initiative — where there is a concern of subsidization of labour rates — perhaps does not allow for fairness and balance in how the bidding process takes place.

We have, through this next little while, indicated that a section 3 committee would be struck to review other components of the Labour Code, issues that have been presented to me during the past 15 months. In the interest of making sure the code reflects a balance and fairness to it, they will be put to a panel of five people. Hopefully, in the next several weeks I'll be announcing that panel, the issues to be put to them, the questions and terms of reference, and how I would hope they would go about reviewing those types of concerns.

As you would know, Mr. Speaker, earlier on in this year, in regards to balance and fairness we dealt with the issue of certification and decertification. We brought into effect the issue of secret ballot for members, for employee groups who were looking at the prospect of certification and decertification — that those individual members would have the right to a secret ballot to determine what they thought was best for their particular group. What we've done in those terms is a quid pro quo. What's good for certification is also good for decertification, and those rules and regulations are the same. That's what we're attempting to do in anything we look at in regards to the Labour Code.

The issue as presented by the member here may very well be one that we should be considering to put

to a section 3 committee, whether it be this one that we're about to put out right now or a future one, as a concern for the balance that takes place in the marketplace and in making sure that the taxpayers' dollar is spent the most cost-effective way on behalf of the taxpayer and the citizens of the province.

Deputy Speaker: Concluding remarks, the member for Burquitlam.

H. Bloy: I would like to thank the hon. member for Cowichan-Ladysmith for his remarks, and I look forward to working with him in the future for all British Columbians.

[1045]

Union work has declined over the last 50 years from a high of 88 percent to a low of 17 percent today within the construction industry. I would like to see more people employed within the construction workplace today. I believe that with the policies of this government and all the trends showing that B.C. is on the road to recovery, the construction industry will be leading the way in British Columbia.

We in government are challenged to get the most qualified supplier at the lowest price for the benefit of all British Columbians. I believe that the open-door policy has to be put in place for B.C. to continue to grow. I support the open-door policy of business and the concept. I believe that in open and fair bidding, with all businesses on a level playing field, the only beneficiaries will be the citizens of British Columbia. I believe that the construction industry will be the catalyst in every community to build B.C., from highways to hotels to schools to the film industry studios. The construction industry should be open and fair to all companies in British Columbia in building public and private infrastructure and creating jobs and wealth in every community in British Columbia.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

Deputy Speaker: Our final private member's statement today is the member for Vancouver-Fraserview speaking on street racing.

STREET RACING

K. Johnston: I really appreciate this opportunity to speak on an issue of great concern to all people in British Columbia, especially people residing in the lower mainland. Since the 1950s when James Dean died on a lonely stretch of California highway while racing his silver Porsche Spyder, speed has been a fatal attraction especially for young men, who often consider themselves invincible and live by the James Dean mantra of "dream as if you will live forever; live as if you will die today."

In the sixties and seventies when I was growing up, supercharged engines and V-8s were all the rage. The only saving grace for my generation was that very few young people could afford to purchase a high-performance vehicle — or, for that matter, any vehicle.

In fact, in my grade 12 class of 300 people, I can only recall one brand-new Mustang Cobra. Despite that, there were still often fatalities relating to late-night speeding, so the latest round of tragedies relating to street racing is not a new phenomenon.

There has been a spate of misfortune over the past few years in the lower mainland. Some of the victims include Rick Chen, Danny Chew, Jennifer Johnston, Joseph Lui, Payam Yaghoobi, Jerry Kithithee, Tao Lee, Irene Thorpe and, lately, Jimmy Ng — all deaths related to street racing or excessive speed in the lower mainland in the past two years.

Researching this subject, I came upon a website promoting local street racing. The header on the site says this: "I don't really care about posting these, because I know the pigs already know about them. I just don't want to give the good ones out." Then the site goes on to list two sites in Delta, two in Richmond, one site in Coquitlam and one in New Westminster. Actually, most of these sites that are listed either have traffic-calming, or the police are aware of them at this particular point in time.

During my years as a city councillor, we were constantly working with the police to curb illegal street racing on city roads, but the kids — through the use of spotters, police scanners and even lookouts on the tops of buildings — always stayed one step ahead. We need, as a society, to take action to stifle this activity.

I commend the actions of the Solicitor General in May of this year, when he gave police the ability to impound vehicles involved in road racing. Police can impound vehicles involved in racing for 48 hours on the first incident. Drivers who are caught racing again within two years can have their vehicle impounded for 30 days. In addition, racing drivers can face a fine of up to \$2,000 and penalty points. Since implementation in June, 132 suspensions have been levied, and ten vehicles have been impounded.

I believe that we must take other initiatives to curb this dangerous activity, including, most importantly, the education of kids and the parents who buy them the cars. People need to understand that giving a young person a high-performance vehicle can be akin to giving them a loaded gun.

[1050]

In 1989, like many people who hit their forties, I had a situation that I guess they'd call a midlife crisis or something, where I went out and bought a 1989 Mustang with a five-litre engine — a car with 235 horsepower that you can barely control when it's wet on the streets. Last year my 16-year-old nephew just stared at the car with open eyes and asked me if he could buy it. I told him: "Absolutely no way. This car has way too much power for your testosterone level." We as citizens have a responsibility and a role in making those kinds of decisions on behalf of young people.

Other initiatives that might curb street racing include the availability of racing clubs. Some operate in a controlled environment in a place like Boundary Bay Airport or Friday night at Mission Race Ways park. At

Mission the motto is: "Race the strip. Cruise the street." Racing clubs also provide classroom and track training.

Street racing is certainly not a problem distinct to British Columbia. All of North America is caught in its clutches. In Carson, California, overtime funds are provided for officers to go undercover to stop street racing before it happens. The high-tech use of computers, cell phones and scanners makes it difficult for marked cars to prevent this racing.

In San Diego the police department produced a documentary on illegal street racing, and this program explores positive community solutions to stop the dangerous activity. We should get that documentary and use it as our education tool.

In Kent, Washington, the program Curb Racing and Achieve Safer Highways has many initiatives and sanctions, including physical arrests, citations, towing and actual jail time.

I believe the ultimate solution to this problem is education and public awareness. Kids must be part of the solution to buy in. Over the past weeks the public has initiated discussion on this problem. Hundreds attended a meeting in Richmond, where options for education of both youth and parents were discussed. Suggestions included establishing a dedicated three-digit cellular phone number for reporting reckless drivers, increasing the minimum driving age to 18, education programs beginning in elementary school and holding parents of reckless drivers responsible to some degree.

The B.C. Coalition for Safer Communities announced its intention of organizing an anti-dangerous driving symposium for 1,000 B.C. and Washington youths this spring. That organization also struck a task force that will target youth aged 16 to 25 on the issues of street racing, excessive speeding and bad driving. The bottom line is that we must continue to pursue a path of zero tolerance on the use of excessive speed. Many lives depend on our doing that.

Deputy Speaker: Responding to the member's statement, the Solicitor General.

Hon. R. Coleman: I'd like to thank the member for his remarks this morning.

Starting out, there are a number of things that have obviously changed generationally. I had access to a 1957 Ford station wagon with a V6 in it and three-on-the-tree when I was a young man. I competed with two older brothers to have access to that vehicle on a weekend to maybe go out for a date. My father actually checked the mileage.

Things have changed. Access to a motor vehicle has changed over the last number of years, and there are some factors around that. One is that in British Columbia, we actually have more young people insured per capita than anywhere else in the country as being the sole or primary driver of a motor vehicle. Part of that argument could go back to how we actually do our insurance rates, as far as risk management and having a global rate for people who can get access to insur-

ance, rather than insuring by class. That is something that at some point in time we're going to have to have some form of public discussion on, no doubt. It is just one example of what affects drivers in our province.

Our government has zero tolerance with regard to street racing and speeding. We have taken some pretty strong measures with regard to this. It has been an on-going and continuous challenge for us to find the tools that the police and the communities need to actually deal with this. Incentives versus disincentives — incentives for good driving and disincentives for bad driving — and education for parents have been a challenge as we've gone through this.

This activity is unacceptable. It is dangerous, and it is unconscionable. People should recognize that that's the starting point we start from. Police today, as a result of some of the initiatives of this government, can do a number of things that the member touched on. I want to touch on them again.

[1055]

First of all, from the side of the road 24 hours a day, the police can access the office of the superintendent of motor vehicles in this province, lay out the issues and the circumstances with regard to dangerous driving, reckless driving or street racing, and a suspension for up to two years can be given to that driver immediately on the spot. We thought that was a pretty important move in order to focus the minds of the people that were doing this activity at the time the activity was taking place, in addition to the other fines and penalties that may be available to us.

As we went through that exercise, though, we recognized we'd taken sort of half a loaf with regards to the suspensions, because law enforcement came back to us and said: "Look, it's fine to suspend the driver of a motor vehicle that's being occupied by four or five youths, but if one of the other youths gets behind the wheel of that vehicle and drives away from the scene and continues the activity, all we're doing is changing the person that has access to the dangerous vehicle and behaviour, versus the actual behaviour itself."

As a result of law enforcement telling us that, we came forward in the spring of this year and made it possible for police to seize the motor vehicle for up to 48 hours on a first offence and up to 30 days on a second offence for dangerous driving involving speed racing. As the member said, ten motor vehicles have been seized under that act, but I think the more important thing is the message that was sent to parents and communities with regards to that particular piece of legislation. That is: "If you're going to mishandle your privilege of a motor vehicle, you may have to explain to your parents where your vehicle is on Saturday night and why they can't have it for work on Monday morning." Since we instituted these initiatives, as the member said, we've had over 130 suspensions. That is good.

There's also a message we have to send. The importance of this thing is to recognize what the future entails for us in this particular.... First of all, it's educate, educate, educate. We have to take the time to educate

our youth, our parents, our communities and have people working together to find long-term solutions. We have to deal with issues with regards to how the graduated licence system is working or how it can be improved — how the Insurance Corporation can have an involvement with regards to the risk factors in this particular age group. Community groups will be brought together and are being brought together by this ministry and other communities in order to deal with this issue as we go forward.

The fact of the matter is that in addition to what we've done, we have to continue to do more. We doubled the points, for instance, this summer for excessive speed and dangerous driving with regards to how you operate a motor vehicle in this province. Why? Because that actually flags bad driving quicker to the superintendent of motor vehicles to move forward with suspension. It also allows us, of course, to have a point system that when they renew their driver's licence, the person is going to pay for their bad behaviour.

As we go forward, we have to recognize that together.... It is a group of people that have to come up with long-term solutions. It is the community; it is the schools; it is the parents; it is the young driver; it is the police; it is this ministry and this government. It's all of us working together to find long-term solutions to what has become a very public and very high-profile problem with our youth in this province.

I think we will get there. I don't think we'll always find the long-term and perfect solutions, but together we can find things that will work. As we move along, I'm sure law enforcement and communities will let us know what other tools they need. As we do that, we will bring those tools forward for long-term success.

Deputy Speaker: Final remarks, the member for Vancouver-Fraserview.

K. Johnston: I'd like to thank the Solicitor General for his response and, certainly, his leadership in addressing this most serious issue. To close my comments on street racing, I would like to read some excerpts from a letter written by Jeannie Parker of Ladner, whose 16-year-old son, Michael, and three of his friends were killed in a speed-related incident. I'd like to make it clear that this was not a street racing incident but an excess-of-speed incident. I had the opportunity to speak with Jeannie Parker, and I think her comments pretty well say it all in terms of the impact this can have on a family.

"Six months ago our 16-year-old son was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident, along with three of his friends. The devastation from that terrible day feels like a lifetime sentence of pain and agony for all of us who have forever lost our sons. Our lives have been torn apart. Families and associates have been left without a son, grandson, brother and friend.

"These boys were wonderful, kind, caring individuals who each had goals and dreams. They got in a car on a beautiful day during spring break to go for a ride, as any normal teenager might have done. Excessive

speed and driving negligence were both probable factors in causing the vehicle to collide....

"Since this accident, there have been several more fatal crashes involving driving negligence, particularly by young drivers. As one of many bereaved parents struggling with this loss, I beg all drivers to slow down and pay careful attention when you sit behind the wheel of a vehicle. Driving is a serious matter. Lives are at stake. Please slow down and drive carefully so no other families have to endure this pain."

[1100]

I think the comments of Ms. Parker sum up the tragedies that can happen if excessive speeding continues. I hope that somebody will listen to just a few of these words today and make some wise decisions, as youth, to not use excessive speed. Thank you very much.

Deputy Speaker: That concludes private members' statements for today. I'd like to thank the members for their statements.

The next item is public bills in the hands of private members. We'll continue debate on second reading of Bill M204.

Second Reading of Bills

THE HUNTING AND FISHING HERITAGE ACT (*continued*)

R. Visser: Since I had the opportunity to spend some time on this last week and to close debate, it's again my opportunity to open debate this morning on what I think is an important and timely piece of legislation that's going through the private members' process. I spoke at length last week about three things: about hunting, about fishing, about the Tyee Club. I wound up by talking about the writing of Roderick Haig-Brown. I think I covered off most of what I have to say on this bill, but I wanted to take a moment today and reiterate my support for it.

These are the things that form parts of the fabric of rural British Columbia, parts of the fabric of those of us that have lived there and do live there. I just wanted to note that when I had the opportunity this weekend to take the ferry back and forth to the mainland, there was a bit of a wait because there were so many motor homes towing trailers, all coming back to Vancouver Island from their northern hunting trips. I wanted to remind the House of the great economic opportunity that hunting and fishing presents to this province.

[H. Long in the chair.]

I'd like to thank the House for entertaining this bill and want to remind them of my full support of it.

V. Roddick: I rise today to speak on behalf of Bill M204. Coming from a rural-urban riding, I'd like to comment on the importance and the necessity of hunt-

ing and fishing to Delta South as well as to British Columbia.

Delta South is on the Pacific joint flyway ranging from South America to Alaska. We are also home to flocks of non-migratory ducks and geese. On top of the incredible amount of snow geese and related waterfowl flying through our particular area, we have what is referred to now as indigenous, or ditch, ducks. This is something that is an ongoing problem and has really given us huge challenges. It has become extremely apparent to the Canadian Wildlife Service, which operates off the end of Westham Island, that the use of hunting is absolutely imperative to control the bird population especially in my riding but throughout the province.

Hunters — all walks of hunters — are the best and truest conservationists. They are not the mass slaughtering that certain environmental groups would like to portray hunters as. They invest vast sums of money. Every licence that's issued, both hunting and fishing, donates all sorts of moneys into conservation programs.

[1105]

We as hunters are very cognizant of wildlife, both all four feet on the ground or finfish. As with every pursuit today, be it business or pleasure, operational methods have changed dramatically with the times, and I'd like to say changed for the better. It's definitely the case. Nobody in any business operates the same today as they did even a mere five to six years ago. Environmental issues are no different. Wildlife and human interaction needs to be managed well for us both to survive sustainably. That is the key word: sustainably. We have to manage the wildlife and us humans; otherwise, neither of us is going to be able to exist.

Recreational hunting and fishing are the perfect tools. A graphic example of what happens when a mere fashion change occurs: our national emblem, the beaver, has now become a national pest. Farm ditches throughout the Fraser Valley are being infested, unfortunately, with these wonderful animals. They're attacking all the trees that are on the farmland and in the parks. In Delta and in Richmond we now have to hire a trapper, who is under contract to the municipalities, to keep these beautiful beasts under control. That is no different than any other aspect of wildlife. As it is said in agriculture, the definition of the word "weed" is any plant that is out of place.

Ladner is home to dozens of local fish tour operators, for instance. We do scenic — with the camera — tours, and we do the real McCoy. It can be catch and release, or it can be catch and eat. Also, several lodges operating in northern B.C. have their headquarters in Ladner.

Hunting and fishing tourism brings hundreds of thousands of dollars to our province. This enables us to finance excellent conservation programs and protection initiatives throughout B.C. In the riding of Delta South we have the B.C. Waterfowl Society and the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust, to name just two.

The B.C. Waterfowl Society was actually formed by a group of hunters, because they felt that the protection of the waterfowl was not being taken care of properly in our particular area. They have done an incredible job in helping both the urban and the rural through the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust and wonderful set-aside programs that help the birds feed as they're migrating through.

[1110]

That's the fine line: how do you do it? These birds aren't without something upstairs. They know a Four Seasons restaurant when they see it. We have to be careful we don't provide too much of these wonderful set-asides and make sure they continue to migrate, because, as I said earlier, we have this problem of non-migratory flocks that have started to flourish.

Our wildlife, managed scientifically, is definitely, definitely a renewable resource. Recreational hunting and fishing are part of our heritage, but it must also be part of our future. I wholeheartedly support this bill.

D. MacKay: The Hunting and Fishing Heritage Act, private member's bill M204, was introduced in this House by the member for East Kootenay. When it was introduced, I asked myself what the intent was of such a bill. After looking at it for a while and after listening to other members speak on the bill, what it does is put in legislation the right to hunt and fish in accordance with the law of the land.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I was raised in the province of Alberta. I grew up in a small coalmining town, and part of my childhood was spent hiking to rivers, fishing in rivers and camping as a youngster. Several of us young people would go hiking and would spend the weekend fishing in rivers near the small coalmining town I grew up in. I do have to admit and confess to the House that I hope the statute of limitations has expired, because when I look back at some of the small fish I caught as a youngster and the numbers of fish I caught, they may have been under size.

Probably because of my age....

Interjections.

D. MacKay: Shame.

So I do hope the statute of limitations has expired on that.

Interjection.

D. MacKay: I hope so. I hope so.

But that was what we did as youngsters growing up in the province of Alberta in small coalmining towns. We fished and hunted on the weekends; we had nothing else to do. As I grew older and completed high school, I later joined the RCMP and travelled to the province of British Columbia. I first arrived in 1962, and I'm still here. I was married in the province of British Columbia to my wife, who is in Smithers with my family and my grandchildren.

As my family got older, I took great delight in taking my children out fishing and hunting, particularly my son, who enjoys hunting and fishing today. Hunting and fishing were a big part of our weekends, because we lived in small communities in rural British Columbia, and it was fun. There was great delight in taking my son and showing him how to put a worm on a hook and showing him safety in shooting a firearm.

I was concerned about the sustainability of being able to fish and hunt as I grew older and as my children grew older — and now my grandchildren. I had no hesitation in paying the hunting fees and fishing fees that were in place to ensure sustainability. The revenues generated from hunting and fishing go into the provincial government to ensure that we do have long-term sustainability in the recreational fields of hunting and fishing.

Hunting and fishing are, in fact, recreation — recreation for those of us that live in the north. Hunting and fishing are also employment for a large number of people who live in the northern part of this province and call it home. There are fish guides, albeit they have a short season. There are people who actually hire themselves out to take people fishing on rivers and remote parts of this province, and they earn their livelihoods from that. From livelihoods, tax revenue is generated for the province.

[1115]

There are also hunting guides with large hunting territories. These hunters guide people from all over the world to hunt in our part of the province for grizzly bear and large moose and, in parts of the province, for elk and deer. Again, as these people are being guided through the province, they're paying a premium for the right to be able to hunt in this province. Our guides and those people who are employed by the guides are creating revenue for the province through the taxation they pay, because they are being employed in those jobs.

The Guide Outfitters Association of British Columbia is an organization made up of different guides and outfitters from around the province. These people are concerned about sustainability, the right to hunt and fish in the years to come. It does not make sense when the numbers of moose are depleted, that they are going to continue to hunt so there is none left. They will be out of a job if they do that. They're concerned about sustainability and the recreation that is afforded through the right to hunt and fish in this province.

Steelhead fishing at the present time in my part of the province is catch and release. I can tell you that the number of people from Europe and from the United States who are fishing on the Bulkley River, the Babine River and the Kispiox River in my part of the province is very, very large. We're getting to a point where locals, those of us that live in the north, are facing problems getting access to the rivers because of the large number of people fishing there.

Yet, as I say, it's catch and release. People understand that when you come to this province, if you're going to fish for steelhead, you're going to have to re-

lease those fish that you do catch. They still come. They spend money. They spend money on guides. They spend money on lodging. They produce a lot of revenue for this province.

Last fall I had the honour to go fishing with my son, who got me on a weekend and said: "Dad, let's go fishing." We went fishing on the Bulkley River. We drove for about 20 minutes from Smithers. We put the boat in, and we travelled upstream for five minutes. As we were going up the stream, my line happened to fall in the water as I was getting ready to do some fishing, and I had a fish on the line. It was that quick. But I have to tell you, that afternoon we fished for two hours on the Bulkley River. Standing in one hole, we caught eight steelhead, and the fish were around 15 pounds a piece.

I'll tell you, the excitement generated from the right to hunt and fish is hard to describe. We had to leave the hole because we were getting tired of catching fish. We moved upstream, and, by golly, we had the same luck there. We must have hit a run of steelhead going through, but we released all of them. We had a great, great time.

P. Bell: If you don't like catching fish, you should come with me.

D. MacKay: Actually, as for the member for Prince George North, I have invited him up, but he hasn't shown up yet.

The right to hunt and fish is a great enjoyment. It's a wonderful opportunity to spend time with your family. My grandchildren are soon to have the privilege of joining my son and myself as we go steelhead fishing on the Bulkley River.

One of the big challenges when you're hunting for big game is that after you find the animal and knock it down, then the work begins. Again, I'm going to talk about my family because I'm not a hunter myself. I enjoy hunting for grouse, but I'm not a big-game hunter. It's my son's life. He spends all day fishing and hunting when the opportunity is there for him.

[1120]

Last Wednesday at 7:30 in the morning, the airlines phoned to say that the flight had been cancelled, and because my son works at the airport, he was out of bed, out the door with his rifle and a handful of shells. Two hours later I had a phone call from him, and I could tell from the tone of the voice that he had been successful. He had knocked down a large moose, but it was not without the excitement that goes with hunting. He could hear the animal breathing heavily, and as he approached the animal to put the final shot into it, the moose got up and charged my son.

Now, the excitement of trying to put a shell into a gun as a moose is charging down on you, breathing heavily, creates a few problems. But I'm pleased to say that my son was successful — the animal was knocked down — and he came to town to get some help to pack the animal out. The animal dressed out at about 700 pounds of moose meat. That animal will feed my fam-

ily in Smithers, it will feed my grandchildren, and it will feed me here in Victoria. I would invite members from this Legislature that would like to join me one evening for some moose to speak to me after I'm finished speaking. I'll see about setting up a timetable, because I suspect there will be several that would like to join me. I'm not a bad cook.

One of the other joys of hunting is the camaraderie that goes with being able to go out in the bush with your buddies for a weekend of hunting, whether it be sheep hunting or moose hunting — the camaraderie that goes with sitting around a campfire at night, sleeping in a tent when it's cold. You wake up in the morning, there's snow on the ground, and you're looking for the coffee pot to put some coffee on to wake you up to get going for the day. Getting up before the animals do is a bit of a challenge sometimes. The animals like to move around at daybreak, so you've got to be up before the animals, and that's a bit of a challenge. There are not always warm toilets to sit on. There's not always warm water to wash your face in when you get in. As a matter of fact, I don't think there ever has been an occasion when you're out hunting for big game that you've had the right to be able to do that, but it is part of the fun that's associated with hunting and fishing.

Hunting and fishing for those of us that live in the north is like going to a professional activity in Vancouver, like going to watch the Vancouver Canucks play a hockey game or the B.C. Lions play a football game. That's what we do in the north for recreation. We walk in the bush with rifles. We walk in the bush with fishing rods, looking for the next animal or for the next large fish.

D. Jarvis: Don't you watch the Lions game?

D. MacKay: We don't get television out there.

One of the other things that is great about hunting and fishing is the right to be able to teach gun safety to your children. I have taught my son the safety aspects of hunting. Probably one of the most important things I did was put a pumpkin on a stump and shoot at it with the rifle to show him what happens when a high-powered rifle hits a pumpkin from a great distance. The pumpkin disappeared, and he's never forgotten that.

P. Bell: Where'd it go?

D. MacKay: It disappeared. I'm not sure where it went.

The power that comes from a shot from a high-powered rifle is difficult to explain to a child. You have to show him, and we did that. Now I'm able to pass that same hunting safety or gun safety on to my grandchildren. I've done that by starting him with a .177 pellet gun — the right to shoot, how to shoot the gun and not to point the gun at papa after you cock it. There are lots of wonderful things we can do when we're hunting and fishing. Gun safety is one of them.

[1125]

The right to hunt and fish in accordance with the law is a right of all of us who live in this province. Ob-

viously, I speak in support of this bill, and I urge other members to do the same.

J. Bray: I rise today to speak against Bill M204, The Hunting and Fishing Heritage Act. I have been listening with great interest to my colleagues over the last several weeks of debate on this bill. It is a bill that I know would have been of great interest in my community, and it has been an issue, especially around sport hunting, that my community has talked about to me a lot.

First, I have to acknowledge that I understand the intent of the bill and the reason why the member for East Kootenay has brought it forward, and I commend him for doing that. I'm also very cognizant about the whole issue of urban versus rural when we come to issues around wildlife management, hunting and fishing, etc. I'm very sensitive to that, and one of the reasons I'm speaking much later in the debate is that I really wanted to take an opportunity to listen to all my colleagues, who had some excellent points to raise.

I must say that from the urban perspective here in my riding of Victoria-Beacon Hill, few issues come up in my constituency office more regularly than issues around hunting. Certainly, grizzly bear hunting is one, but it's just the whole notion of sport hunting. It's an issue that's been discussed with me firstly as a candidate and subsequently as an MLA. I've had great discussions with the member for East Kootenay on this topic, and we have healthy debates about it over coffee, and I welcome the opportunity to raise a different perspective on behalf of my community here in the House today.

Now, my community does not necessarily say hunting is good or bad. My community does not necessarily say all hunting must stop. In fact, my community is very sensitive to many of the wildlife management issues related to hunting. I think members of my community, in reviewing the bill, would look to the particular portion of the preamble that says: "Whereas hunting and fishing should be recognized as legitimate forms of recreation and as legitimate tools with which to effectively manage the fish and wildlife of British Columbia." I think most of my constituents understand how hunting can in fact deal with wildlife management issues, be they encroachment into urban areas, encroachment into agricultural lands, human safety, human-animal contact — those issues. I think what I hear most often from my constituents with respect to hunting is the truly sport version of hunting — trophy hunting — be it big game or even trophy fishing where in fact it isn't catch-and-release or used as food.

I really welcome this opportunity to raise this issue, because what my community is actually asking for is not whether the right to hunt under the law should be there or not there. What members of my community are asking for is a public debate on the recreational side and the sport side of hunting. They want to have that discussion.

I'm very sensitive to the fact that having been born and raised in the city, I've had no occasion to enjoy the

experiences that many of my colleagues have talked about with respect to hunting, so I cannot speak firsthand to those issues. I think what my constituents would like to see, though, is whether or not there is a change with respect to hunting as a sport and as recreation — to have that debate on the moral and ethical sides as opposed to the science and the conservation sides. I think that's a healthy debate for our province to have. I think one of the debates is here, but I think the community would like to be involved in that debate.

Many of my constituents do have concerns. The grizzly bear moratorium was one issue that was raised, but this act raises the whole gamut. Many in my community are sensitive to first nations issues, and many in my community are sensitive to sustenance issues, especially in northern communities and very rural communities where in fact hunting is used as sustenance and is not sport. I want to make it very clear that I'm really talking about the area of trophy or sport hunting, where it's neither of those two issues that is really the primary motivator.

[1130]

I'm also very sensitive that there are people in the province who make a living off this. I think it has to be understood by people in urban centres that for many people, feeding their families and paying their rent or paying the mortgage comes out of the industry around hunting and fishing. I do think that in any debate around this, we have to be cognizant that there are people whose livelihoods are directly connected to the hunting industry.

My community would also like to see an expansion of areas around things such as ecotourism, where all of the wonderful attributes of the hunting experience and fishing experience that many members have raised — the camaraderie, as the previous member raised, the ability to get out and camp, and see this beautiful province and see nature.... My constituents would suggest that those are all wonderful activities and that at the end of that period of time — that point when you see the bull, you see the bighorn sheep or you see the bear — perhaps instead of using a rifle, you use a Nikon or Toshiba camera. The suggestion is that there is a real market out there for ecotourism, where people want to come and see wildlife in their natural state, and bring out memories rather than the actual animal itself.

I think there's a lot to be said for that. I think the experience of being out in the wild is an experience people never forget. My constituents feel that in the twenty-first century, we can perhaps look at moving forward from sport hunting being a primary activity to perhaps ecotourism, where we see Europeans, people from Asia and Americans coming up and actually viewing this incredible province with our incredibly diverse wildlife, and using cameras. That may well deal with some of the economic realities, because a guide outfitter can just as easily take people in to get close to that wildlife with cameras as with other things.

I believe that my community wants to see positive wildlife management techniques. We want to make sure that human safety is always paramount. My

community really does value those who live close to nature, who live in the middle of nature and do have a great passion about nature. I think my constituents are asking for a debate to the next level around some of the moral and ethical issues. I think it's a healthy debate. I think this province would do very well in that debate, and it would also help in the understanding between rural and urban communities. It's quite fair that the discussions around the stovepipe or the campfire up in Bulkley Valley-Stikine will be much different than, quite frankly, the discussions around lattes in Starbucks here in Victoria.

I think that as long there is no public debate around the issues of hunting, we're never going to get that kind of cross-pollination of ideas and viewpoints. I think many such as myself, in listening to the passion of many of the members, really don't have a connection to that whole historical aspect of hunting and why hunting is such an important fact of many communities in the north.

I also believe in talking to my colleagues that don't understand why people in the urban centres have some concerns around hunting and why some in our urban centres feel that perhaps the time has come for sport hunting to be looked at again and be discussed about whether or not that's an aspect of the overall wildlife management plan that we want. I think a public debate would encourage the urban and rural perspectives to come together so that we understand each other's positions better and it's not an us-versus-them. In fact, it's us discussing this important issue.

Many in my community are quite prepared for the Ministries of Water, Land and Air Protection and of Sustainable Resource Management to look at issues with respect to science and wildlife management to ensure that we have appropriate populations of a variety of species in our province, as well as from the standpoint of human safety. I don't think there's much concern around that.

I think my community would really love to see a public debate around sport hunting and trophy hunting and trophy fishing, and see whether or not we're moving forward as a province in a different direction. I think it's a wonderful opportunity for urban and rural people to get together to talk about their common heritage and those things that are different between them, and see whether or not there is a common understanding. Also, I think it would be an opportunity for those who really are in favour of ecotourism businesses to perhaps learn more about those rural areas, and to actually get involved and demonstrate the viability of ecotourism.

I believe ecotourism is a very viable option for British Columbia. But I do believe, as I've said before in this House, that sometimes we in the city have to step up to the plate a bit. If we are going to have a debate and express a point of view with respect to sport hunting, we'd better be prepared to demonstrate some viable alternatives. I think they are there in ecotourism.

[1135]

I'm very pleased that the member for East Kootenay has brought this issue forward. I think this is one place

for the whole issue of sport hunting and trophy hunting to be debated. I think it's a healthy debate. I would encourage looking for other ways for that kind of debate to happen where rural people and urban people talk together, learn about each other's perspectives and see if they have different points of view at the end of that process.

I think we have a beautiful province. We have incredible wildlife, we have an unbelievable way of life, and we need to be sensitive to the realities of rural communities. I think that urban people such as myself continue to need to learn more about the wildlife practices in rural B.C., northern B.C., the Kootenays and, for that matter, the North Island, but we must also bring the public along in that debate. We can't be afraid to have that kind of discourse.

I believe that people in rural B.C. are very intelligent, very passionate people. I believe people in urban B.C. are very passionate and very intelligent people. I think the debate only strengthens both communities as we discuss important issues such as sport hunting.

I will be voting against Bill M204, because I would have liked to have seen the opportunity for more debate around the recreational and sport side of hunting. I appreciate the opportunity to rise on behalf of my community to discuss this, I appreciate the member for East Kootenay bringing this bill forward, and I look forward to hearing continued debate in second reading.

R. Sultan: I rise in support of the private bill of the member for East Kootenay, The Hunting and Fishing Heritage Act. My remarks will parallel those of the members for North Island, Bulkley Valley-Stikine and Delta South. I will, in fact, disagree with the comments of the distinguished member for Victoria-Beacon Hill.

The line-up of constituencies that these speakers represent illustrates my first point, which is that with each generation British Columbians are becoming more urbanized. I can illustrate that by telling you what has happened to four generations of my own family.

For my grandmother, the front yard was an unfenced cow pasture in northern Sweden — otherwise known as Norrland — bordered by the creeping boreal forest coming down from Lapland. It wasn't very far from nature. For my mother, the vacant lot next door to our home at 856 East 13th Avenue in East Vancouver was where she kept the family goat for milking. Now, if you go to the 800 block of East Vancouver today, you won't find any vacant lots with goats on them. For me, my West Vancouver yard features raspberry canes, crabgrass and the occasional squirrel, but no goats. For my daughter, her front yard is a Manhattan sidewalk.

The trend line is obvious. In our day-to-day working lives we are increasingly disconnected from nature.

When I was very young — a long, long time ago — nature was an enemy to be conquered. Now we appreciate that nature must be protected. Those of us doomed to live in the big cities increasingly cherish our parks, our Grouse Grinds, our skiing at Cypress Bowl,

our getaway cottages in the wild. The reason, clearly, is that as our connection with nature becomes more rare, we strive to preserve what is left of it. In this context, the member of this Legislature for East Kootenay has asked us to pass his private bill declaring recreational hunting and fishing to be a cultural heritage.

My first question to him, which he probably will remember vividly, was: does this bill have any meaning? After all, it's not illegal to hunt and fish now. On reflection, I've decided that this bill is in fact worthy of consideration by the Legislature, because one can reasonably ask: what do hunting and fishing have to do with the preservation of nature, and isn't there something wrong with this picture?

[1140]

Well, here's where the controversy begins. Again, I refer to the comments of the member for Victoria-Beacon Hill. "Man the hunter" is an accurate label for *Homo sapiens*, but for many it is an awkward reminder of our prehistoric past, even when it involves trout or deer. Those who abhor the label tend to overlook an inconvenient fact: the broadest exterminations of fish and wildlife occur through mankind's aggressive urbanization and thoughtless takeover of animal habitat.

Who are nature's defenders in this rather unequal contest between man and nature? Who will help preserve British Columbia's magnificent natural heritage? Will the battle ultimately be won by rules, regulations and environmental bureaucrats or by the citizens on the ground? My greater faith lies in the citizens on the ground. For one, they outnumber the bureaucrats at least for the moment.

How do we reconnect our citizens with the land? How do we make them aware of our natural heritage, and how do we sensitize them to the threats it must stand against? I believe one of the most effective ways is through hunting and fishing.

Again, I speak from personal experience. One of my fondest memories of my uncle was following through the fields of what we now call Richmond. He had only one leg, a single-barrel shotgun, as I recall, and no dog. I was his Chesapeake retriever. Despite my failures as a Chesapeake retriever, I learned a lot from him about duck habitat and the need to preserve it. Even in those very early days it was being subdivided and black-topped.

That same uncle demonstrated to me the need to remove barriers to spawning salmon thoughtlessly erected on a tributary of Kawkawa Lake, near Hope, by a local tourist camp operator who believed the smell of rotting fish, much more abundant in those days, was bad for his business. Who dragged out the metal barriers on the creek? One of our great local fishermen — or perhaps I should say one of our great local fisherpersons.

That same uncle taught me the glories of steelhead fishing at the tunnels on the Coquihalla River and the magnificence of that wild river, which has been preserved. Even in those early days we learned it was a great natural heritage to be protected. That same uncle

took me fishing on Nicolium Creek up what in those days was the early beginning of the Hope-Princeton Highway.

Like the member for Bulkley Valley-Stikine, I, too, was guilty of catching some undersized brook trout. But boy, it was great to fry them in a frying pan right on the banks of the river. At the same time, I appreciated the need to protect that river, where the trout were largely exterminated by the location of an encampment there for people being deported from the coast. It was an unfortunate part of our history — again, the urban-natural clash and conflict.

The same uncle set me up with a .22 rifle to defend the chicken coop from marauding coyotes in the early dawn. On the first day the coyote ran off with one of my grandmother's leghorns in his or her mouth. On day 2, to his disgust, I missed my shot. But it was a splendid training, waiting for hours behind a stump, alert to every movement of a leaf, every shadow under the trees, every possible hint that a predator was about. For this 11-year-old, it was a return to nature, a return to man the hunter. I learned to appreciate better the subtleties of nature from that experience.

I regard my uncle, a great hunter and fisher, as an early defender of our natural environment, not one of its despoilers. So, too, it is today with the B.C. Wildlife Federation, a powerful conservationist organization. So, too, it is today with Ducks Unlimited, creators and preservers of duck habitat on a grand scale. "Ah," the critics say, "but that's simply so they'll have more ducks to shoot at." That, in fact, may be true, but let's measure performance by results, not by motivation.

So, too, it is today with the North Shore Fish and Game Club in my riding. Their adopt-a-fish diploma hangs proudly in my office. I set loose some chum fry, as I told the Legislature about a year ago, and received diploma recognition of that. This organization, funded by our local Coho Society festival, teaches our school children about the need to protect salmon habitat — all fish habitat on the North Shore — but at the same time, after all, it's the North Shore Fish and Game Club. They go out fishing and they go out hunting, but they do a wonderful job for conservation.

[1145]

True nature lovers don't rent nature videos or watch the great outdoors on IMAX. They actually get off their sofas and experience it and, thereby, learn to protect it. That's what hunters and fishers do.

Thus, I have no hesitation in commending the spirit behind the private member's bill. It confirms our commitment to hunting and fishing as a British Columbia cultural heritage. Recreational fishers and hunters will vigilantly defend their territory — our territory — and its occupants, both furred and finned, against the encroachments of civilization. I applaud them for that. Beleaguered Mother Nature needs all the friends she can get.

G. Trumper: I was not going to speak to Bill M204 as I listened to many of the members here stating their reasons for supporting it and the reasons and interests

they had. But as I sat here and thought about it, I went back to when I first came to this country, which was up in northern Alberta, and felt that I had to bring forth a few points which may or may not have been brought up by other members. I do speak in support of The Hunting and Fishing Heritage Act.

As some of you may have noticed, Canada was not my birthplace. I am a Canadian by choice. My husband's family, for those of you who have some knowledge about guns, made Greener guns, which are very well known amongst the gun manufacturing fraternity. When he came to this country, he brought this Greener gun which I know many people who have seen it envy. When I came to Canada, I came to northern Alberta, to a small town of 500 people. I had come from London, England. Everybody in that little community knew who I was. I didn't know one soul, except for my husband. At that time we were not yet married.

At that time there was no medicare in the north, so you relied on your patients to pay you in some way or another. Well, up in the Peace River area, they then grew fescue and what they used to call rapeseed, which is now called something else.

B. Penner: Canola.

G. Trumper: Thank you — canola. In those times, you could get a last snowstorm or frost either in May or June. In fact, the first year I was up there, we had snow every single month. Their crops suffered from that. If you had a late frost or late snowstorm, they couldn't get their crops in. If you had an early winter, beginning of September, they never got the crops off. Money was very tight up in the north area. Now, I am not a hunter — somebody once did try to teach me how to shoot and decided I was absolutely useless; I was not coordinated at all — but we had to survive and were having our bills paid by what people went out to hunt up in the north.

In our first year we lived on moose meat. I swear it was the oldest moose in the bush. I think it stood still while my husband shot it. I had no idea how to cook moose meat in those days. I learned very quickly. So we had it in every shape and form. We had large flocks of Canada geese that obviously stopped on their way going north, and I was the one who was always taken out in the evening as a spotter because I was the one that could see where the geese were coming in, so that they could go out in the morning and hunt. I also never plucked the birds that came in either. We lived on moose meat. We lived on elk that people gave us in many shapes and forms. We lived on the birds people went out and shot. We lived on some things the trappers would bring in.

[1150]

We had no money for meat. In fact, we had one cheque that used to come in every month from the federal government, which was \$150. Our secretary, who used to run the reception desk, used to wait till that cheque came in every month so we could pay her, because we didn't have any money in the bank. I'm not

sure you'd find many people around today who would do that. She was an absolute gem.

That's how we survived, and that's how a lot of people survived up in the north and today still do. We move from when we were up in the north to today, and my youngest daughter is married to somebody who hunts, and his father hunts. The meat they eat today is wild meat, because as far as they're concerned, it is a lot healthier to eat than the meat we all go hunting for in the meat markets.

As he said, there is a great deal of concern from various people on what farmed fish are fed and some of the vitamins, etc., that they are given. But if you only knew what goes into some of the feedlots in Canada and with your beef.... We never query about the beef and pork that we eat. That is why they very rarely eat meat from the meat market. It is always the game and the venison they have hunted each year. I believe they are right.

I think it's also very important to understand that there are a lot of people still in British Columbia, once you get out of the urban areas, that may well hunt for recreation, as has been stated by some of my hon. colleagues here in the House. Those people — and I'm not talking about the people who come in from the States to get their trophy; certainly, they do provide employment to people — who go out, and have said so in this House today, for recreation, and they enjoy it, also eat what they hunt.

That, I think, is the most important issue and thing we have to remember about hunting. Maybe on occasion they like to be able to brag about the large beasts they were able to drag out of the bush. Maybe it is very encouraging for some of them to have that one particular trophy. But when they go out for their recreation, they — more than many people in urban areas who talk about preserving and protecting our rural areas and the parks, the land, the countryside and the animals.... That's why they're out there. That's why they live in the rural areas. They want to live there, they want to bring up their families there, and they, probably more than anybody, go a long way to protecting what we have in British Columbia.

I believe the comments that were made, particularly for many of the concerns raised by residents in Victoria.... I think there's a great deal of truth that there is a lack of understanding in the urban areas about what happens in the rural areas today.

I come from a community that has a large number of people who go hunting. We have elk on Vancouver Island. It's really unfortunate that there is poaching of our very precious elk herds on Vancouver Island, but the majority of people who go hunting go for one reason: to enjoy the recreational part of it. But they also make sure that they're bringing meat home to their families.

The one thing I do on a fairly rare occasion is.... As many of you know, I live in the salmon capital of the world, in spite of what the member for North Island may say about where he lives, and I am usually lucky when I go fishing. I'm not taken very often, because

usually the people who take me are not too pleased when they come home and see I'm the one who's got the fish, and they've been out there practising with all their gear to get their salmon.

[1155]

I think it's very important that this bill is supported. I think it's very important that people understand the values of rural British Columbia. I think it's very important that we never forget the values of hunting and fishing in British Columbia. In many other places in the western world it is gone. Urbanization has taken place in Europe. In Britain it is fast going. Here in Canada it's one of the things that's made us very independent. It made our forefathers very independent. They were able to live off the land. I believe it is something we must treasure, and we must value. I am very pleased to be able to support The Hunting and Fishing Heritage Act.

W. McMahon: It's a pleasure today to rise and speak in support of Bill M204, The Hunting and Fishing Heritage Act. I think I bring a different focus today to this discussion. I was born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta, in the city. I did not have any particular contact with people who hunted for recreation. I moved to Victoria in the early seventies and, again, was really not connected with hunting and fishing.

In 1987 I had the pleasure of moving to the East Kootenays, and I was always quite surprised when people were going hunting on the weekend or were going hunting even after work. I talked to a lot of people initially to say: "Why are you doing that? Do you realize what you're doing?"

Since 1987 I have gained an incredible respect for people in the rural communities that I represent and also for what they have taught me about hunting and fishing and conservation. They really are conservationists. My colleague from Victoria-Beacon Hill talked about ecotourism, and my area abounds in ecotourism and hunting and fishing and tourism — back-country and outdoor recreation.

There are a number of issues that I believe my colleagues have addressed as the debate has gone on over the last few days, and I still have comments to make. But noting the time, I move adjournment of debate.

W. McMahon moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. G. Bruce moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 11:58 a.m.