



4th Session, 37th Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT OF

DEBATES OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

(HANSARD)

**Monday, November 3, 2003**

**Morning Sitting**

**Volume 17, Number 15**

THE HONOURABLE CLAUDE RICHMOND, SPEAKER

ISSN 0709-1281

**PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
(Entered Confederation July 20, 1871)

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR  
Honourable Iona Campagnolo

**4TH SESSION, 37TH PARLIAMENT**

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
Honourable Claude Richmond

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Premier and President of the Executive Council.....	Hon. Gordon Campbell
Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations.....	Hon. Greg Halsey-Brandt
Deputy Premier and Minister of Education .....	Hon. Christy Clark
Minister of Advanced Education.....	Hon. Shirley Bond
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.....	Hon. John van Dongen
Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations.....	Hon. Geoff Plant
Minister of Children and Family Development.....	Hon. Gordon Hogg
Minister of State for Early Childhood Development.....	Hon. Linda Reid
Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.....	Hon. George Abbott
Minister of State for Community Charter.....	Hon. Ted Neibling
Minister of State for Women's Equality .....	Hon. Lynn Stephens
Minister of Competition, Science and Enterprise .....	Hon. Rick Thorpe
Minister of State for Deregulation .....	Hon. Kevin Falcon
Minister of Energy and Mines.....	Hon. Richard Neufeld
Minister of Finance .....	Hon. Gary Collins
Minister of Forests .....	Hon. Michael de Jong
Minister of Health Planning.....	Hon. Sindi Hawkins
Minister of Health Services.....	Hon. Colin Hansen
Minister of State for Mental Health.....	Hon. Gulzar S. Cheema
Minister of State for Intermediate, Long Term and Home Care.....	Hon. Katherine Whittred
Minister of Human Resources.....	Hon. Murray Coell
Minister of Management Services.....	Hon. Sandy Santori
Minister of Provincial Revenue.....	Hon. Bill Barisoff
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General .....	Hon. Rich Coleman
Minister of Skills Development and Labour.....	Hon. Graham P. Bruce
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management.....	Hon. Stan Hagen
Minister of Transportation.....	Hon. Judith Reid
Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection.....	Hon. Joyce Murray

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Deputy Speaker.....	John Weisbeck
Leader of the Opposition .....	Joy MacPhail
Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole .....	Harold Long
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly .....	E. George MacMinn
Clerk Assistant .....	Robert Vaive
Clerk Assistant and Law Clerk .....	Ian D. Izard
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees.....	Craig H. James
Clerk Assistant/Committee Clerk.....	Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms.....	A.A. Humphreys
Director, Hansard Services .....	Anthony Dambrauskas
Legislative Librarian.....	Joan A. Barton
Legislative Comptroller .....	Peter Bray

Published by British Columbia Hansard Services, and printed under the authority of the Speaker by the Queen's Printer, Victoria. Rates: single issue, \$2.85; per calendar year, mailed daily, \$298. GST extra. Agent: Crown Publications Inc., 521 Fort St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 1E7. Telephone: (250) 386-4636. Fax: 386-0221.

**[www.leg.bc.ca](http://www.leg.bc.ca)**

Hansard Services publishes transcripts both in print and on the Internet. Chamber debates are broadcast on television and webcast on the Internet.

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS

Abbott, Hon. George (L)	Shuswap
Anderson, Val J. (L)	Vancouver-Langara
Barisoff, Hon. Bill (L)	Penticton-Okanagan Valley
Bell, Pat (L)	Prince George North
Belsey, Bill (L)	North Coast
Bennett, Bill (L)	East Kootenay
Bhullar, Tony (Ind. L)	Surrey-Newton
Bloy, Harry (L)	Burquitlam
Bond, Hon. Shirley (L)	Prince George-Mount Robson
Bray, Jeff (L)	Victoria-Beacon Hill
Brenzinger, Elayne (L)	Surrey-Whalley
Brice, Susan (L)	Saanich South
Bruce, Hon. Graham P. (L)	Cowichan-Ladysmith
Campbell, Hon. Gordon (L)	Vancouver-Point Grey
Cheema, Hon. Gulzar S. (L)	Surrey-Panorama Ridge
Chong, Ida (L)	Oak Bay-Gordon Head
Christensen, Tom (L)	Okanagan-Vernon
Chutter, Dave (L)	Yale-Lillooet
Clark, Hon. Christy (L)	Port Moody-Westwood
Cobb, Walt (L)	Cariboo South
Coell, Hon. Murray (L)	Saanich North and the Islands
Coleman, Hon. Rich (L)	Fort Langley-Aldergrove
Collins, Hon. Gary (L)	Vancouver-Fairview
de Jong, Hon. Michael (L)	Abbotsford-Mount Lehman
Falcon, Hon. Kevin (L)	Surrey-Cloverdale
Hagen, Hon. Stan (L)	Comox Valley
Halsey-Brandt, Hon. Greg (L)	Richmond Centre
Hamilton, Arnie (L)	Esquimalt-Metchosin
Hansen, Hon. Colin (L)	Vancouver-Quilchena
Harris, Roger (L)	Skeena
Hawes, Randy (L)	Maple Ridge-Mission
Hawkins, Hon. Sindi (L)	Kelowna-Mission
Hayer, Dave S. (L)	Surrey-Tynehead
Hogg, Hon. Gordon (L)	Surrey-White Rock
Hunter, Mike (L)	Nanaimo
Jarvis, Daniel (L)	North Vancouver-Seymour
Johnston, Ken (L)	Vancouver-Fraserview
Kerr, Brian J. (L)	Malahat-Juan de Fuca
Krueger, Kevin (L)	Kamloops-North Thompson
Kwan, Jenny Wai Ching (NDP)	Vancouver-Mount Pleasant
Lee, Richard T. (L)	Burnaby North
Lekstrom, Blair (L)	Peace River South
Les, John (L)	Chilliwack-Sumas
Locke, Brenda (L)	Surrey-Green Timbers
Long, Harold (L)	Powell River-Sunshine Coast
MacKay, Dennis (L)	Bulkley Valley-Stikine
McMahon, Wendy (L)	Columbia River-Revelstoke
MacPhail, Joy (NDP)	Vancouver-Hastings
Manhas, Karn (L)	Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain
Masi, Reni (L)	Delta North
Mayencourt, Lorne (L)	Vancouver-Burrard
Murray, Hon. Joyce (L)	New Westminster
Nebbeling, Hon. Ted (L)	West Vancouver-Garibaldi
Nettleton, Paul (Ind. L)	Prince George-Omineca
Neufeld, Hon. Richard (L)	Peace River North
Nijjar, Rob (L)	Vancouver-Kingsway
Nuraney, John (L)	Burnaby-Willingdon
Orr, Sheila (L)	Victoria-Hillside
Penner, Barry (L)	Chilliwack-Kent
Plant, Hon. Geoff (L)	Richmond-Steveston
Reid, Hon. Judith (L)	Nanaimo-Parksville
Reid, Hon. Linda (L)	Richmond East
Richmond, Hon. Claude (L)	Kamloops
Roddick, Valerie (L)	Delta South
Sahota, Patty (L)	Burnaby-Edmonds
Santori, Hon. Sandy (L)	West Kootenay-Boundary
Stephens, Hon. Lynn (L)	Langley
Stewart, Ken (L)	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows
Stewart, Richard (L)	Coquitlam-Maillardville
Suffredine, Blair F. (L)	Nelson-Creston
Sultan, Ralph (L)	West Vancouver-Capilano
Thorpe, Hon. Rick (L)	Okanagan-Westside
Trumper, Gillian (L)	Alberni-Qualicum
van Dongen, Hon. John (L)	Abbotsford-Clayburn
Visser, Rod (L)	North Island
Weisbeck, John (L)	Kelowna-Lake Country
Whitred, Hon. Katherine (L)	North Vancouver-Lonsdale
Wilson, John (L)	Cariboo North
Wong, Patrick (L)	Vancouver-Kensington

## LIST OF MEMBERS BY RIDING

Abbotsford-Clayburn	Hon. John van Dongen
Abbotsford-Mount Lehman	Hon. Michael de Jong
Alberni-Qualicum	Gillian Trumper
Bulkley Valley-Stikine	Dennis MacKay
Burnaby North	Richard T. Lee
Burnaby-Edmonds	Patty Sahota
Burnaby-Willingdon	John Nuraney
Burquitlam	Harry Bloy
Cariboo North	John Wilson
Cariboo South	Walt Cobb
Chilliwack-Kent	Barry Penner
Chilliwack-Sumas	John Les
Columbia River-Revelstoke	Wendy McMahon
Comox Valley	Hon. Stan Hagen
Coquitlam-Maillardville	Richard Stewart
Cowichan-Ladysmith	Hon. Graham P. Bruce
Delta North	Reni Masi
Delta South	Valerie Roddick
East Kootenay	Bill Bennett
Esquimalt-Metchosin	Arnie Hamilton
Fort Langley-Aldergrove	Hon. Rich Coleman
Kamloops	Hon. Claude Richmond
Kamloops-North Thompson	Kevin Krueger
Kelowna-Lake Country	John Weisbeck
Kelowna-Mission	Hon. Sindi Hawkins
Langley	Hon. Lynn Stephens
Malahat-Juan de Fuca	Brian J. Kerr
Maple Ridge-Mission	Randy Hawes
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	Ken Stewart
Nanaimo	Mike Hunter
Nanaimo-Parksville	Hon. Judith Reid
Nelson-Creston	Blair F. Suffredine
New Westminster	Hon. Joyce Murray
North Coast	Bill Belsey
North Island	Rod Visser
North Vancouver-Lonsdale	Hon. Katherine Whitred
North Vancouver-Seymour	Daniel Jarvis
Oak Bay-Gordon Head	Ida Chong
Okanagan-Vernon	Tom Christensen
Okanagan-Westside	Hon. Rick Thorpe
Peace River North	Hon. Richard Neufeld
Peace River South	Blair Lekstrom
Penticton-Okanagan Valley	Hon. Bill Barisoff
Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain	Karn Manhas
Port Moody-Westwood	Hon. Christy Clark
Powell River-Sunshine Coast	Harold Long
Prince George North	Pat Bell
Prince George-Mount Robson	Hon. Shirley Bond
Prince George-Omineca	Paul Nettleton
Richmond Centre	Hon. Greg Halsey-Brandt
Richmond East	Hon. Linda Reid
Richmond-Steveston	Hon. Geoff Plant
Saanich North and the Islands	Hon. Murray Coell
Saanich South	Susan Brice
Shuswap	Hon. George Abbott
Skeena	Roger Harris
Surrey-Cloverdale	Hon. Kevin Falcon
Surrey-Green Timbers	Brenda Locke
Surrey-Newton	Tony Bhullar
Surrey-Panorama Ridge	Hon. Gulzar S. Cheema
Surrey-Tynehead	Dave S. Hayer
Surrey-Whalley	Elayne Brenzinger
Surrey-White Rock	Hon. Gordon Hogg
Vancouver-Burrard	Lorne Mayencourt
Vancouver-Fairview	Hon. Gary Collins
Vancouver-Fraserview	Ken Johnston
Vancouver-Hastings	Joy MacPhail
Vancouver-Kensington	Patrick Wong
Vancouver-Kingsway	Rob Nijjar
Vancouver-Langara	Val J. Anderson
Vancouver-Mount Pleasant	Jenny Wai Ching Kwan
Vancouver-Point Grey	Hon. Gordon Campbell
Vancouver-Quilchena	Hon. Colin Hansen
Victoria-Beacon Hill	Jeff Bray
Victoria-Hillside	Sheila Orr
West Kootenay-Boundary	Hon. Sandy Santori
West Vancouver-Capilano	Ralph Sultan
West Vancouver-Garibaldi	Hon. Ted Nebbeling
Yale-Lillooet	Dave Chutter



CONTENTS

Monday, November 3, 2003  
Morning Sitting

**Routine Proceedings**

	<b>Page</b>
Private Members' Statements.....	7699
Mining	
D. MacKay	
Hon. R. Neufeld	
Surrey's economy	
D. Hayer	
Hon. K. Falcon	
Tourism	
W. McMahon	
Hon. T. Nebbeling	
Physical fitness	
S. Brice	
Hon. G. Abbott	
Motions on Notice.....	7707
Role of resource industries in health and education infrastructure (Motion 2) <i>(continued)</i>	
B. Penner	
P. Bell	
J. Nuraney	
Arts and cultural tourism on Vancouver Island (Motion 29) <i>(continued)</i>	
G. Trumper	
R. Visser	
Transportation infrastructure (Motion 49)	
D. Hayer	
B. Penner	



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2003

The House met at 10:04 a.m.

Prayers.

### Private Members' Statements

#### MINING

**D. MacKay:** This morning I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about mining and how British Columbia has missed the boat. During my recent travels with the mining task force this past summer, I realized after talking to Fording Coal how much economic activity is generated from the mining industry throughout the province.

[1005]

Fording Coal, in the southeast part of our province, generates approximately \$1.5 billion worth of economic activity from the coal industry. When we visited Highland Valley Copper near Kamloops, I discovered that they generate about \$750 million of economic activity each and every year. In the past ten years, it's estimated, British Columbia lost between \$750 million and \$1.25 billion in exploration costs alone — just in exploration costs.

If we compare B.C. to the rest of the provinces in dollars spent on exploration, the numbers are quite staggering. Between 1980 and 1991 B.C. spent on average \$239 million, which equals approximately 26 percent of the Canadian average, on exploration. Between the years 1992 and 2003 B.C. spent an average of \$72 million, which equals 11 percent of the Canadian average. You cannot have a healthy mining industry without spending significant dollars on exploration. How significant? Probably in the area of \$200 million annually.

For more than a dozen years B.C. has consistently closed more mines than it opened. In fact, during the 1990s two mines closed for every mine that opened. With no new mines coming on stream to replace those nearing the end of their operating lives, it is just a matter of time before the province will have lost the better part of a \$4 billion, high-wage, job-generating industry in the heartlands.

The irony is that we in B.C. are home to some of the best mineral potential in the world. Today in B.C. we have six coalmines, five base metal mines, one precious metal mine and a number of smaller mines and quarries. The 12 mines and coalmines represent only a fraction of the number of mines operating during the decades prior to the NDP. Regulations are what chased them from this province. Parks and protected areas. In British Columbia we have 13 percent of our land base set aside for parks and special areas.

The land resource management plans in process in the northwest have seen some other challenges, such as the Cassiar-Iskut-Stikine, which now has 26 percent of the land base set aside and excludes mining from that area. The Lakes District has 34 percent set aside be-

cause of land resource management plans. If you look at the provinces of Quebec or Ontario and compare how much land they have set aside, Ontario has 1 percent of its land base — not 13 percent — and Ontario has 4.5 percent of its land base excluded from mining.

Corporate capital tax also chased the mining industry from the province. A waste of potential revenues from this industry has put the social programs we rely on at risk.

What have we done since we've taken over as government? We have generated the two-zone land use, we have eliminated the corporate capital tax, we have introduced a competitive corporate tax rate, and we've reduced red tape. Why is all this necessary? It's necessary because we understand the value of the mining industry and the revenue generated from the mining industry. We appreciate the jobs that are generated.

People benefit in a variety of ways. It's quite interesting when you start looking at what mining does and how we benefit from the mining industry. For those people who are on zinc diet pills, that comes from the mining industry. Let's look at the tools and bricks that build the homes we live in — thanks to the mining industry. The airplanes that we all travel back and forth from our constituencies on — thanks to the mining industry. Transportation, automobiles, public transit, energy transmission, energy generation — none of those are possible without the mining industry. The ability to communicate with one another — once again, thanks to the mining industry.

One thing I hadn't really thought about until I started looking into this was the food that we eat. That comes from the mining industry, from the tractors and the ability to turn the soil over and deliver the product to market.

[1010]

Health care delivery.

What more can we do as a province? The mining task force was introduced, and we have travelled throughout the province to make recommendations to the minister on what more we can do to bring back the mining industry. We compete in a world market. We have to be able to compete with the rest of the world — hydroelectric power, our ability with independent power production, Coast Mountain hydroelectric. The mining industry wants accessible power, which is not available north of Meziadin Junction. Coast Mountain Hydro will change that.

Highway infrastructure — \$609 million on rehabilitation and new resource roads such as the Stewart-Omineca, a connector road which would open up new mineral-rich portions of this province and improve the access to port facilities. New roads are good business.

Port facilities at Prince Rupert, Stewart, Kitimat — we have to improve those. We as a province do not want to be left behind again. The global population in 2000 was 6.1 billion people. This is projected to reach 9.3 billion by the year 2050.

The mining sector plays an important key role in achieving a better quality of life for the poorest in the world. This is achieved through access to clean water,

the delivery of water, better agricultural techniques, transportation to market, electrical generation and transmission. These are items critical for growth and expansion. Evolving countries need mining for a better quality of life, and so do we.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the floor to the Minister of Energy and Mines to respond.

**Hon. R. Neufeld:** Thank you to the member for Bulkley Valley-Stikine for those very true words, actually, about the mining industry and what it means to the province of British Columbia. Under the leadership of our Premier, Premier Campbell, this government — prior to the election — said that we want to bring mining back again to the province, as it once was. That's a big job. Each one of us in this Legislature knows what kind of a job that's going to be. We are working hard — this government — under the leadership of our Premier, to make sure it happens.

Some of the issues we've dealt with have really been problems of the past. I hate to continue to blame the last administration, but it's only fair to blame the last administration for a lot of things that they accomplished during their term in office, in ten years. They made British Columbia an economic wasteland. People didn't want to invest their hard-earned dollars. I'm not talking about just the major companies. What happens with the major companies, if they're on the stock exchange, is that they have to return a value to their shareholders. They could be people in this Legislature, people on the street — people who invest in mining stocks hoping that they're going to see a return on their money. The last administration didn't want to see a return on that money and did a huge amount of things that ensured that those companies would move their operations to another part of the world.

The member so rightfully laid out a number of things, such as taxation. The last government taxed as high as they could possibly tax, higher than anybody else in the country. Whether it was mining or any other industry in the province, they decided they didn't want that industry to invest in British Columbia, and they increased corporate taxes to some of the highest in the country — 16½ percent. This administration reduced that to 13½ percent, and we say and have committed to the Finance minister to maintain a level playing field across this country with other jurisdictions. They had the highest personal income tax rates in the whole country.

We reduced those personal income tax rates so that people who work in this industry, the workers, can actually take a bit more of that money home to do what they want to do with that money. We removed the corporate capital tax. That's a tax on debt, and every industry complained about that. Specifically, when you look at the large mining companies that were working then in the province and some that closed, it was a huge amount of dollars.

[1015]

This government is trying its darnedest to work as hard as it possibly can to bring back that investment

into the province, and those jobs from the private sector that come out of that industry are some of the highest paying in British Columbia.

We need mining in our everyday lives — whether it's in this room, whether it's walking down the street or whether it's flying an airplane, as the member so rightly stated. It doesn't matter what we do. Mining provides some ingredient in our lives through food, through transportation and all of those kinds of things. So we looked a little further, and we introduced a flow-through share program that harmonized with the federal share program. That brought some investment to British Columbia.

We looked at reducing regulations. We were a prescriptive province. We told everybody exactly how they should do it from the time they got up in the morning until they went to bed at night or finished their work. We think the people can actually figure that out for themselves a lot better than government, sitting in Victoria, trying to do that for them. So the health and safety code was reduced by 30 percent, needless regulations, while still maintaining health and safety in mining in the province — the best of any jurisdiction in Canada right here in B.C. with that reduction of 30 percent.

We put forward a mining task force, so members of the Legislature could participate by going out into the province and talking to people and to the industry about what we could do better on the land base. There are so many things we've done for mining, and we want to see that industry come back.

I thank you very much for the few minutes I've had to be able to relate to the member for Bulkley Valley-Stikine about issues that he brings forward.

**D. MacKay:** I would like to thank the Minister of Energy and Mines for his comments and support and understanding of how important the mining industry is to the people of this province, not just for the jobs it creates but for the quality of life we all enjoy. As a province we have committed to restoring the mining industry to its place in our economy where it rightfully belongs. We in this province have been blessed with generous and rich mineralization. We need to find it first, and then we need to mine it.

It's interesting when you look at British Columbia compared to the rest of the world and look at the amount of land that we have set aside in parks and protected areas and you compare us with a country like Chile, which is just below 12 percent. We're just over 13 percent. Chile is a very active mining place right now. A lot of our people from Canada have actually gone down there to mine because it's a good place to mine. There are some big differences. They have set aside roughly the same amount of land. However, they're doing something different down there than we're doing in Canada, which has attracted the mining industry.

I'm glad we're finally making some changes that will bring back the mining industry to this province. The mining industry in this province has turned

around. Instead of leaving the province for opportunities elsewhere, like Chile and other parts of the world, they are once again looking at the potential to develop the rich bounty that was bestowed on this great province. As an advocate for the mining industry, I will continue to watch with great interest as the mining industry once again clamours to explore the province.

In the northeast the energy sector is creating a boom in the communities. In the northwest we know we have a long way to go, but we are committed to working with the mining industry to explore and develop mines in British Columbia, particularly in the northwest part of the province where there is so much mining activity taking place right now.

I was very excited by the amount of activity, by the amount of drilling that's going on, by the amount of exploration and by the enthusiasm being expressed by people in the mining industry that I have spoken to during my travels this past summer. I have people coming into my office from the mining industry talking to me about how excited they are about what's happening in the mining industry and the opportunities that are going to be available.

We're looking at ways of training people in the mining industry. We don't have any place to train people for mine exploration or for reclamation, so there are a number of great opportunities that the mining industry is going to present in the future for the young people of this province and for all of us who enjoy the many benefits that we derive from the mining industry.

With that, I would like to thank the Speaker for the opportunity to once again talk about the mining industry and the great opportunities that await this wonderful province.

[1020]

#### SURREY'S ECONOMY

**D. Hayer:** Over the past year or so, British Columbia has been really challenged. We have faced and continue to fight against catastrophic wildfires; U.S. protectionism against the forest industry and against our cattle industry; SARS; a worsening U.S. economy; the Canadian dollar increasing more than 20 percent in a short time period, causing export woes; 9/11; Afghanistan and the Iraq war; horrendous flooding; a devastating pine beetle epidemic; and a host of other factors that challenge our ability to reform the economy and return prosperity to this great and wonderful province. Yet despite all these economically disastrous events and international sanctions, British Columbia is emerging even stronger. This province, regardless of difficult challenges and hard times in many sectors, is on track to create an economic climate that is once again vibrant and hopeful for all.

The challenges that these issues have brought to the Finance ministry must surely be trying. As the minister stays true to his course to balance the budget for the 2004-05 fiscal year, what I know is that this minister will accomplish that goal of a balanced budget. He will

do it with the support of the people of this province. They know that not only is this government committed to that goal; they know that even though we have truly gone through a year from hell, our future is very bright.

It's so bright, in fact, that in September of this year the oil and gas sector in the northeast quarter of this province purchased an unprecedented \$418 million in exploration and development rights. That sale in September not only usurps the largest month ever in oil and gas rights sales, it almost doubled the previous record of sales in the entire year. That was the highest Canada has ever seen. More than 35,000 people are directly employed in B.C. in this industry, and there are many, many more spinoff jobs. That is good news.

The good news isn't only in the energy sector in the northeast quarter. It is in other natural resource sectors as well, and it is throughout this province. Kelowna suffered through catastrophic wildfires and is now experiencing an enormous building boom. Whistler, Squamish and the Pemberton Valley faced devastating floods but will rapidly rebound because of preparations for the 2010 Olympics, which this government, many volunteers and Premier Gordon Campbell worked so hard to get for us. The lower mainland and other parts of B.C. will also benefit greatly from the Olympics. They will bring us tourist dollars, construction jobs and national-international investment.

Even with all that, right now, in spite of any of the disasters our province has faced over the past few months, our economic flame is burning bright. That means we can afford to provide a social safety net that so many must count on. That economic flame provides the health care, the education, the family support that so many need in this province. I want to tell this House that right in my own riding of Surrey-Tynehead, that flame is burning very brightly. Surrey-Tynehead is the second-largest growing riding in British Columbia. Housing construction is booming. In fact, throughout the lower mainland we are seeing phenomenal growth in construction. Growth which supports good-paying jobs is a key indicator that the government is doing the right thing. People have faith not only in the government but in their own future. The home is the biggest investment most people will make in their lifetime, and they are doing it in record numbers throughout the lower mainland.

When we have the people, we have the skills, the workforce and the diversity that attract investment. In fact, only last week we learned that J.P. Morgan Chase and Co. will open a huge international call centre in my city of Surrey, relocating this operation from New York to British Columbia. This operation is global in scope. One of the reasons for its relocation here is the multi-cultural ethnic diversity of the workforce that the city of Surrey and British Columbia offers. In fact, the greater Vancouver area and my riding are representative of this fact. Greater Vancouver is home to people who speak more than 90 different languages. That makes us extremely attractive to the company that will be talking to people throughout the world.

[1025]

When this call centre opens its doors next spring, it will have 850 employees, rising to 1,600 people in the very near future. That big employer joins the second call centre, which was opened in Surrey last year.

In my riding of Surrey-Tynehead, Teal Cedar Products Ltd., owned and operated by Tom and Dick Jones and their family, is building a new sawmill to accompany the existing one, which I and the member for Surrey-Cloverdale toured a few months ago. This new mill means many, many more new jobs for my constituents.

Very close to Teal Cedar Products in Port Kells is the six-mill complex of S and R Sawmills, which employs more than 500 people and is owned by Chick and Marilyn Stewart. They are also owners of the famous Northview Golf and Country Club in Surrey-Tynehead riding.

We even have the movie industry taking great interest in our community, and we often see location shoots throughout Surrey. The spinoff effect of all these existing new operations will create hundreds of new jobs. They will encourage even more companies to locate in Surrey and in my riding.

Another factor which attracts business to this province and particularly to my community of Surrey is the government's commitment to reducing red tape and regulation which has stifled business development in British Columbia for more than a decade. This government promised in its *New Era* document that we would reduce red tape by at least one-third. I know we are marching steadily towards that goal, and we are now seeing that it is having a very beneficial effect on our business growth.

I want to commend the Minister of State for Deregulation for his outstanding effort in reducing regulation. We can credit his action for encouraging investors and job creators to return to this province. Now I will ask, Mr. Speaker, to give the floor to the Minister of State for Deregulation to respond.

**Hon. K. Falcon:** I want to thank the hon. member for Surrey-Tynehead. It's no secret to those in this House — the hard work that that member does on behalf of his constituents and indeed on behalf of all of Surrey, working tirelessly to spread the good news of what's happening in government in terms of changes to policies and how that can impact on the business community.

The member correctly points out some of the achievements that are being made in the province of British Columbia. I think it is important to recognize the importance of those achievements, particularly in light of where we're coming from in British Columbia.

I don't need to tell and remind too many members of this House that we have over a decade of real financial mismanagement in the province that we're trying to clean up. The previous government was increasing spending much faster than the rate of economic growth, surely a recipe for disaster if there ever was one. They added more than \$2 billion a year in taxes onto British Columbians. They reduced the annual

take-home pay of working British Columbians by over \$1,700 a year.

You know, the one thing I'm so proud of about this government is that we actually think about those folks. We think about the truck drivers, the taxi drivers, those that are working hard trying to raise their families and struggling to make ends meet. We think about the impact that has when a government pulls \$1,700 a year more out of their pocket than it's entitled to. They introduced nine consecutive deficit budgets. They doubled the total debt of the province and essentially had the worst economic record in the country. So here we are. We're in last place in terms of economic growth.

That's the inheritance that we got from the previous government, and we're working hard now to try and turn it around. The way we're doing that is we made some new-era commitments — fairly straightforward. We said we were going to reduce the regulatory burden by a third. We said we were going to ensure that British Columbians' base personal income tax rate was the lowest in the country by the end of our term. We said we would restore opportunity, hope and prosperity once again to British Columbians.

We've made some progress, as the hon. member pointed out. We've cut over 70,000 unnecessary regulations, reducing the red tape burden in the province of British Columbia — 27 different tax relief measures, including getting rid of the corporate capital tax, cutting personal income taxes 25 percent and cutting corporate taxes 20 percent to make sure we're in line with Alberta, one of our major competitors over the last decade. We've brought in targeted tax cuts to try and encourage growth in things like new media, the production, software development, manufacturing, mining, etc.

[1030]

Under the leadership of the Minister of Labour, we changed the Employment Standards Act to make sure our employment standards reflect the reality of what the twenty-first-century workplace looks like.

We're starting to see some real positive signals coming out. In spite of all the challenges we faced, which were enumerated by the hon. member for Surrey-Tynehead — drought, fires, pestilence, everything else that we faced in British Columbia — we are seeing some positive signs: a growing small business sector, which is important; growing exports, which I think is very exciting; and the second-strongest job creation record in the country in spite of the fact that we have faced unbelievable challenges. That is something to be proud of.

There's more good news on the horizon, because the one great shining opportunity we have in British Columbia is the 2010 Olympics. The 2010 Olympics are going to allow the world for the first time to really focus its attention on British Columbia, all of British Columbia, and those benefits — those 131,000 new jobs that are predicted — are going to ripple right across the economy of British Columbia. I can tell you that I am very excited about those opportunities, and that's because of one thing. All of this is because of one thing.

It's because we've got a leader and a Premier who recognizes we have to chart a new course.

Whenever you chart a new course, it's not going to be without its challenges, and we're meeting those challenges head-on. Next year in the introduction of our budget, under the leadership of our great Minister of Finance, we will be introducing the first honestly balanced budget that this province has seen in well over a decade, and that is also going to send an important signal.

Let me conclude my remarks by pointing out something that the hon. member for Surrey-Tynehead mentioned, and that is the exciting growth that's taking place not just in the member's riding of Surrey-Tynehead but, indeed, right across Surrey. I can tell you that when a company like J.P. Morgan Chase, one of the largest firms in the world, is looking around and trying to make a decision about where to locate a call centre to deal with back-office operations, credit cards, investment accounts, etc.... They're scouring the world. They're looking everywhere. I had the opportunity to meet with their senior executives. I can tell you they looked all around the world, and they selected British Columbia. It's for exactly the reasons that were enumerated by the hon. member opposite.

I now conclude my remarks, feeling confident in the future of British Columbia.

**D. Hayer:** I want to thank the minister for his words of wisdom. I know that we as a government can keep on improving and learning from our experience to provide the best government we can.

I also want to commend Premier Campbell on his exceptional effort to encourage foreign trade and investment in this province. His visits to New York, Texas, the White House in Washington, D.C., California, China, India and other foreign centres are letting the world know that British Columbia is again open for business. The message is having a huge impact on the economy of this province — indeed, a profound effect on my riding of Surrey-Tynehead.

We may have had a bit of a bumpy ride these past few months, but with the efforts this government is putting into revitalizing this economy, I know the future is bright for British Columbia and for all its citizens.

#### TOURISM

**W. McMahon:** I have risen in this House before to talk about tourism, and I think now is a good time for me to update the House again on what is happening. Before looking at our successes, it is also important to acknowledge the challenges we have faced in the province's past year. Avalanches, SARS, mad cow disease, softwood, fires and flooding are challenges at any one given time, but all in one year has been excessive by any stretch of the imagination, and all of these challenges have impacted tourism.

Tourism is a vital industry to British Columbia, one that contributes nearly \$10 billion to the provincial

economy and offers a host of employment opportunities throughout our province. Tourism supports the communities I represent, and we are proud of what we have to offer.

We know tourists come to British Columbia for many reasons — some to enjoy the city life that Vancouver and Victoria have to offer, but more come to experience the natural beauty and outdoors that is found just beyond the city lights. They come to experience our back-country adventures, our mountains and our ski hills, our world-class resorts and our multitude of golf courses.

[1035]

Let's focus for a minute on what we are doing right now to make this field stronger. As government, we recognize the immense contribution of tourism to this province and its impact on all our communities. Tourism is truly a universal resource that we can develop in communities and regions throughout the province. The Kootenay region has approximately 20 destination resorts, and a fair number of them are located in the East Kootenay area I represent.

As government, we want to see our resorts grow and thrive. The Premier appointed the Minister of State for Deregulation to lead the B.C. resort task force. This task force is working with the resort operators and first nations to enhance resort development and partnerships in B.C. and to identify and eliminate barriers to resort development and expansion. We want visitors to stay at our resorts, and we want them to enjoy and explore our back country. Every year more people come to British Columbia's interior to explore the untamed wilderness.

Last year we experienced the horrific force of avalanches. Lives were lost. Twenty-nine people from across Canada and the U.S. lost their lives due to the avalanches, 24 of those in British Columbia. A constituent recently reminded me that winter and avalanches will not wait. Our back-country tourism industry has enormous potential to grow, but safety must come first. The coroner in Revelstoke recently recommended that commercial ski and snow-tour companies be required to subscribe to the Canadian Avalanche Association's avalanche forecasting system as a condition of land tenure in the mountains. I couldn't agree more with that recommendation.

We must take every possible precaution to protect people who venture into our back country, and the best way to ensure their safety is to make sure they and their guides are fully aware of the risks and how those risks can change on a daily basis. I support this recommendation, first and foremost, because it increases safety. However, it is also necessary if we are to attract more tourists to our areas. People want a breathtaking experience, but they don't want to put their lives at risk to do it.

The safer we make our back-country exploration, the more people will come and support our industry and the communities that lend themselves to these activities. In a recent announcement by the Solicitor General, \$125,000 in annual funding over three years

has been committed to enhance avalanche awareness and to support the avalanche bulletins issued by the Canadian Avalanche Association in Revelstoke. It was great news for back-country enthusiasts and the tourism operators who promote outdoor excursions, and it was thankfully received.

Just three weeks ago B.C. and Alberta signed a memorandum of understanding to undertake joint efforts to market and promote tourism to key overseas and North American markets. These markets include the U.S., Asia, Australia and parts of Europe. Doesn't it make sense? To market together will make both provinces stronger.

My riding borders Alberta. We enjoy their support as part-time residents. In fact, a good portion of the riding is known as Alberta's playground. This is an exciting prospect as we look to develop these existing markets and combat the negative effects that SARS, mad cow, the fires and terrorism have had on our tourism industry in recent years. B.C. tourism is a product that needs to be packaged and marketed to the world.

The Minister of Competition, Science and Enterprise committed \$750,000 to support targeted marketing efforts to make our tourism industry more competitive. This builds on the \$500,000 that was already dedicated to B.C.'s regional tourism associations in their efforts to respond to a lagging sector. He has introduced a new initiative to revitalize our resource industries, encourage growth in new and emerging sectors, build new partnerships with first nations and open up our transportation infrastructure to support new economic opportunities.

A regional project manager will drive the initiative on the ground in each of the six heartland regions. The managers will work with the MLAs, provincial agencies, the federal government, local authorities, the private sector and first nations to implement priority economic development opportunities in the regions. The regional project managers will travel widely and meet regularly with MLAs and other stakeholders in economic development.

The success of these managers will be measured by meeting specific targets, such as new jobs created, new business startups and new investment in the respective regions. This is part of a strategy to draw tourists to our beautiful province. In addition, a number of federal, provincial and territorial conferences have been held in the past year to look at developing our tourism industry across the country.

[1040]

Earlier this spring the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for tourism struck a ministerial task force to address these issues. At an earlier conference held last fall, identified issues that impact travel and tourism were discussed, such as the air travellers security tax, air service to rural and remote communities, cross-border security and development of tourism-related opportunities in northern and aboriginal communities. Part of this is education. As well as the tourism courses offered through the College of the

Rockies, we now have a first nations tourism certificate program being offered.

I've said it a number of times in this House, and I'm going to say it again because it's so important: we won't have a tourism industry if we can't get the tourists to our regions. That is why improvements to the Trans-Canada Highway, which are now underway, must continue. We have a lot of work to do on that stretch of highway that connects us to the rest of the country, and we can't afford to rest until it has been upgraded significantly.

I now take my seat to allow the Minister of State for Community Charter an opportunity to respond.

**Hon. T. Nebbeling:** Let me first of all thank the member for Columbia River-Revelstoke for once again rising in the House to talk about an industry she has been vigorously promoting as an opportunity for the Kootenays ever since she came into this House.

I'd like to remind the member that I became an immigrant to Canada in 1977 for one reason only, and that was the tourism potential that I saw in the Sea to Sky area. I have seen how successful the power of tourism and marketing the right product can be. Whistler was a small community of 250 people that today is a world-renowned resort, with 10,000 people who live and work in the resort, plus winter and summer part-time workers.

The basis that tourism creates sets tremendous opportunities for any person who wants to be in that industry. Is it in retail? Is it in the restaurant business? Is it in the hotel business? Is it in working on the mountains? Tourism, to me, has always been an opportunity for this province because of its unique landscape. It really was a mystery to me that during the nineties, with the former government, there was very little support for the tourism industry in marketing this magnificent product that British Columbia is. As a matter of fact, during the nineties the funding for marketing the tourism product of British Columbia came down considerably, thereby really missing an opportunity for British Columbia not only to promote us as a magnificent province but also to enhance the industry.

One of the things this government was always committed to was to immediately focus on how we can boost the opportunities here in British Columbia for the tourism industry and where the opportunities are. Of course, the Kootenays have been identified right from the beginning in this whole debate about enhancing tourism and doubling the number of visitors to this province. The Kootenays were immediately seen as a jewel of opportunities.

Through various steps, including very much the member's reminding us constantly of the opportunities in the Kootenays, we as a province have formed a kind of partnership with the Kootenays. We have committed funding for the airport in Cranbrook so that overseas flights can actually come directly to the Kootenays rather than having to land in Vancouver or in Alberta. We have committed to make the Kicking Horse Canyon a safe route for people to come into the Kootenays

to experience all the tourism opportunities there. That partnership is working.

The members representing the Kootenays are very vigorously pursuing the opportunities and the benefits and are constantly involved in bringing people together to talk about these opportunities. There are a number of results already, as the member has mentioned. I think all these resorts have the potential to become not just bigger but more desirable. We have seen in this province that with a strong tourism-driven strategy, we have the opportunity to showcase to the world that, indeed, British Columbia is a place to come to — a place to visit, a place to enjoy and a place to talk about when visitors go home. That's one of the big things, of course, when you bring people here. If we have one satisfied customer, that customer goes back to wherever he or she came from and talks to ten friends. Of these friends, more will come back.

[1045]

The 2010 Olympics and Paralympic Games that we are going to enjoy in this province, of course, are a phenomenal catalyst. That's why it is so important that today we focus not just on how we are going to showcase British Columbia but also on what we are going to showcase. What is the product going to be? The work of the member and the various committees in the Kootenays is clearly focusing on making that product as attractive as possible.

I hear too often people talking about the industry not having a lot of merit in developing careers. Well, let me tell you again from experience in Whistler, many of the people who over the years came to Whistler to work in the resort are leaders in these communities today, are leaders in tourism. I believe the Kootenays are going to do exactly the same for their area and be an example for British Columbia that we cannot miss. With the work of the members and all the other committees, I'm sure we'll succeed in achieving that.

**W. McMahon:** I want to thank the minister for his comments. As you heard, from the nineties to the two-thousands, just look where we're going. It is a new and exciting time for British Columbia as we prepare for the 2010 Olympics and Paralympic Games. The eyes of the world are going to be on us. It's truly an opportunity to shine, and I think it's an opportunity for us to show our colours.

Last year Fernie was home to the world freestyle event, which hosted world-class athletes. This summer Farnham Glacier just outside Invermere saw athletes in training. Canadian Olympic sponsors who would normally look to South America or Europe for summer training opportunities have set up a pilot project aimed at summer training near Panorama. It's some of the best terrain they have ever seen anywhere, and there's no doubt in my mind that those pristine conditions will create a Canadian Olympic ski champion or two in 2010.

The region was recently highlighted in the *Calgary Herald*. The word is getting out about the natural training facilities we have in British Columbia. We have a

tremendous sports tourism opportunity. We will attract athletes from around the world to train. It's up to us how many and how we convey that interest into economic development and job creation for our communities.

Just this past Friday I met with former Olympian and gold medallist Doug Anakin in Invermere. I've known Doug for many years. He was a member of the 1964 bobsled team that won gold at the Winter Games in Innsbruck, Austria. It was only the second time Canada had competed in the bobsled event, and he is still excited today as he talks about his experience and the years he has spent following the Olympic movement.

Today our youth are training for 2010, and we should be doing everything we can to support them. They're excited, B.C. is excited, and so am I.

#### PHYSICAL FITNESS

**S. Brice:** I rise in the House today to discuss what, in my opinion, is our most precious resource. No, I'll not be talking about forestry. I'll not be mentioning hydroelectric power. I won't be talking about mining. Our most precious resource here in British Columbia is our children and their well-being. Today I'm going to talk about something which is critically important to their future: physical fitness.

Medical studies have shown that a moderate amount of physical activity is one of the keys to a long, healthy and productive life. However, evidence points to the fact that the people of British Columbia, and similarly all other jurisdictions throughout North America, are living an increasingly sedentary lifestyle. The result is a decline in physical fitness and a rise in obesity across the province, particularly among children.

[1050]

This trend, of course, is the result of a number of societal shifts including the increase in the use of automobiles, automated equipment, computers, television and so on. So what is the result? It is estimated that 2,000 British Columbians die each year, and obesity-related costs will soon overtake the costs of tobacco-related illness. It is estimated that obesity-related illness costs the provincial economy as much as \$830 million a year. As many as 47 percent of British Columbians are insufficiently active for optimal health benefits, and numerous health studies have concluded that a moderate amount of physical activity allows a person to lead a more productive and healthier life.

Recognize that what we call health care is really sickness care. Hospitals and clinics are not health centres; they exist to treat illness. Health centres are skating rinks, swimming pools, badminton halls, walking trails and golf courses. Communities which focus heavily on sport and recreation opportunities are really investing in the health and well-being of their citizens. A physician who recommends walking, swimming or cycling is just as surely prescribing toward the future wellness of his patients as a physician who relies exclusively on prescription drugs to lower blood pressure,

reduce cholesterol, stave off diabetes and treat heart disease, hypertension, osteoarthritis and a wide range of other illnesses.

Along with diet, lack of physical activity is now recognized by experts as the second leading preventable cause of death after cigarette smoking. On a positive note, compared to other provinces, British Columbia does very well in the healthy life indicators. In fact, B.C. has the highest rate of physical activity in the country. However, it is estimated that 35 percent of B.C. residents still do not exercise regularly and 16 percent never exercise or exercise less than once a week.

Sadly, many who fall into this category of insufficient exercise for optimal health are our youngest British Columbians. Unless the families, communities and governments take action to reverse this trend, we are setting up some of our children for a hideous future of health problems. For children in the seven-to-eight-year age category, 38 percent of boys and 33 percent of girls are classified as overweight. Implications for their future quality of life and the potential billions of dollars added to the future health budgets are staggering.

How is it possible that we — the society that dotes on our kids and protects them with bike helmets, seat belts and vaccinations — are setting up one-third of them for possible chronic disease as they grow? Diet and lack of activity are two major components. Much has been said about fast foods and processed foods, and these play a major role in the obesity epidemic. However, I want to focus at this time on the lack of physical activity.

Sadly, participation by children in exercise programs and sports has gone down noticeably among lower-income families. Good public policy can lessen the burden of poverty and support all of our families in pursuit of healthy and fit children. What can be done provincially? The Minister of Education has introduced a requirement for graduating students to document physical activity in a graduation portfolio. It is expected that through this approach, young people can acquire skills and get involved in activities which will enable them to have lifelong involvement in physical activity. While some students will account for their physical requirements through team sports, many others will choose physical pursuits which allow them to be involved on an individual basis.

The province has made a major investment to the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games. This star-studded event carries with it the catalyst to have every B.C. community plan for healthy, fit residents. Since we all can benefit from regular fitness, I personally have committed to walking 10,000 steps a day, which health educators claim will ensure a reasonable level of fitness. To ensure this requirement is met, I wear a pedometer, which measures and reinforces this daily requirement.

In my community of Saanich South, I have joined up with a grade 6 class at Royal Oak Middle School. These students and their teacher, Angus Stewart, have been provided with pedometers and have made a commitment to work with my office and Dr. Lara Lau-

zon, from the University of Victoria, to track improvement in fitness and, with its improvement, in academic achievement. This is an exciting local initiative, and I'm sure this small but significant program will help this particular group of children by making physical activity an integral part of their life.

[H. Long in the chair.]

[1055]

I feel strongly that we have an obligation to promote healthy lifestyle choices. I'm hoping that some day the government will establish a day of fitness in British Columbia in order to underscore the need for families and communities to take seriously the looming health crisis. By establishing a fitness day, communities and individuals can plan events which will get people moving and allow folks who may not regularly exercise an opportunity to have fun and hopefully change lifestyles.

Through the Ministry of Health Planning there could be targets established and yearly measures taken to assess the overall fitness of the population. As stated previously, obesity-related illnesses cost British Columbia's health care system approximately \$380 million annually, or 4.5 percent of the total direct health care costs in the province. Through public policy and education, happily, we have seen a decline in smoking, and it is predicted that obesity-related costs will overtake the costs of tobacco-related illness. Now is the time to draw resources and attention to this issue of fitness. It makes sense financially as well as from a quality-of-life point of view.

I look forward to hearing a response from the Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, who I know has a personal interest in sport and fitness.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** First of all, I want to thank the member for Saanich South for her very thoughtful comments on the important issue of sport and physical activities. I am delighted to respond to it as a minister responsible for sport in British Columbia. Occasionally I try to be fit as well — not always successfully.

The key to a healthy province, in my view, is to develop a lifelong love of sport particularly, but not exclusively, among the young people of British Columbia. I think it's vital for people of all ages, not just kids, to have that love of sport and that love of physical activity. My mother is a youthful 81 years old and walks miles a day. I think activity is key to her health. My 17-year-old son plays football, runs and snowboards, and sport and physical activities are very much central to his life as well. It's important that we have that level of activity right across the continuum of ages.

As the member noted, B.C. is the most active province in Canada. I think we can all be proud of that, but we've got a way to go. When we have close to half of the population of British Columbia not getting sufficient exercise to derive health benefit, we know we've got a way to go. There is plenty more we need to do as a government and as a society to build that culture of

physical activity so that more and more people are getting involved in that type of activity.

The statistic that concerns me even more is that about two-thirds of kids in British Columbia are not getting sufficient activity or are inactive. Childhood obesity has tripled in the last 15 years in British Columbia, and that should be of enormous concern to us all. Our bodies, when they were designed — whether it was half a million years ago or whatever — were designed for activity, for hunting and for gathering. Our bodies haven't changed that much, and inactivity and inappropriate diet — certainly we're having the combination of those two these days — take a big toll on our bodies, starting right from when we're very young. It's important that sport and physical activity become more and more an intervention in the lives of young people. I think the most important intervention we can have is to ensure that our kids are active.

As has been noted a couple of times in earlier statements here, British Columbia has a fantastic opportunity in 2010 to (a) host one of the premier athletic events in the universe, (b) showcase our wonderful province to the world both before and after the 2010 games and, I'd say perhaps just as importantly as the first two, (c) build our amateur sport system in British Columbia and build on physical activity in the province in the years as we approach 2010.

[1100]

There are really two elements to the strategy we've undertaken. One is to build on excellence to ensure that we see young British Columbians moving from playground to podium as we move towards 2010. The second important element — again, I think it's just as important as excellence, or probably more so — is participation. If we don't have broad participation by young people in summer and winter sports, we won't have the excellence that we're all looking for. I had the privilege just last week of announcing the province's funding, in partnership with the federal government, for the Aboriginal Youth FIRST excellence program. This will be an opportunity to help aboriginal youth benefit from sport and physical activity. They'll be in a specialized and positive training environment. We'll be seeing, I think, more aboriginal athletes moving to the elite level, but we want to encourage participation from them as well.

We're trying to do the same thing across the entire province through Action Schools! B.C., which is a partnership of the Ministry of Health Planning; Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services; and Legacies-Now. Currently, we're in the pilot project phase of this at Vancouver-Richmond. We will be looking to increase physical activity in schools and communities all across the province by next fall.

It's vital that as legislators and community leaders, we do all we can to set a strong example for young people in this province. I know that as we do so, we'll be building a healthier province and a better province.

**S. Brice:** I'd like to thank the minister for his thoughtful response. I know his strong interest in this

issue. Obviously, all sectors of society must be engaged in focusing on fitness for the population at large and our children in particular. Parents, educators, physicians and legislators have a huge stake in turning this obesity trend around.

Along with sound public policy, as I stated before, I think government must crank up its role. Much is being done, but in order to reach higher public awareness, every opportunity must be seized to enhance the fitness of the public. Designating a physical fitness day, using every opportunity to use our bully pulpit, and with strong public policy, we can support families and communities to ensure that our children stand the best chance for becoming strong, fit adults.

**Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to standing orders, hon. members, unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with Motion 2 without disturbing the priorities of the motions preceding on the order paper. Is there unanimous consent?

Leave granted.

#### Motions on Notice

#### ROLE OF RESOURCE INDUSTRIES IN HEALTH AND EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

*(continued)*

**B. Penner:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to all members of this Legislative Assembly, and what a fine morning it is. It's my honour this morning to have a chance to speak in support of the motion, put forward by the member for Yale-Lillooet, that this House recognize the contribution of resource development in rural British Columbia to the health and education infrastructure of all communities.

I like to tell people that the riding which I have the pleasure to represent represents something of a cross-over constituency. We are close to the urban lower mainland part of British Columbia, but we are part of the heartland of the province at the same time. We still have an important forest sector in our economy. We still have close access to agricultural production. There are many people — especially this past weekend, I noticed, when I was travelling about the constituency — who enjoy taking advantage of our fisheries resource, whether it's in the Fraser River, the Harrison River, the Chilliwack River or a number of the tributaries to those bodies of water.

In many ways Chilliwack-Kent, the district I have the pleasure to represent, is part of the heartlands of the province. At the same time, we have the major urban influence in our community as well. As I've said, we're not that far from greater Vancouver and the urbanization of the province that we see there, so I think people from the eastern Fraser Valley are uniquely situated to appreciate the convergence of the importance of natural resources in terms of supporting the health and education and other social services that all of us have come to depend upon.

[1105]

Now, hardly a day goes by that somebody doesn't come up to me with a new idea for spending money. Those are in addition to the ideas that I have about where we could spend more money. There's no shortage of ideas about how to spend money. The only shortage of ideas seems to be about how to raise that money. Well, it's important to remember that forestry, for example, is still the single biggest driver of the provincial economy when you add it all up across all the communities in the province. I'm not going to be shy here about saying that I support a vigorous, healthy, responsible forest industry for the province of British Columbia.

Recently there's been a lot of controversy, at least reported in the local newspapers in the riding I represent, regarding some forest activity that's taking place in the eastern part of Chilliwack. In fact, some members here will have heard comments or seen clips on television about protestors upset about logging in an area referred to as Elk Creek. Well, let me tell you a little bit about Elk Creek. This is an area I actually hiked in quite extensively when I was much younger — thanks to my father, who pushed me off the couch as a young child and at some point dragged me, kicking and screaming, up various mountainsides. For that I'm eternally grateful, because I got to see a number of tremendous places that I wouldn't otherwise have had any experience with.

One of those areas was Elk Creek, and above the falls that exist there is an area that we refer to as the Pimple. There weren't very many people hiking in that area, but there were a few, and our family was among them. Imagine my surprise when two years ago this area suddenly became an area of much interest for environmental groups, who said that this was an active area for tourism and hiking and all kinds of outdoor activity. Well, simply speaking, it certainly wasn't until it became the centre of attention about two years ago. I can speak to that, having been there probably more than 20 or 25 or maybe 30 years ago as a very young man at that time. There was not much interest in that area in terms of outdoor recreation.

However, flash-forward to the current time, about two years ago when I met with a number of people who said: "Mr. Penner, we're concerned about proposals for logging in this area." I said, "Okay, let's go take a look," so I went up with the leading proponent of stopping all that logging activity, at least on the Crown land, in that area and said: "Tell me about your concerns." "Well, there are a number of old-growth trees here that were not logged the first time."

Listen to that sentence. That sentence tells you that, in fact, the area was logged before, and that's true. It was done in the 1920s and 1930s, before there was mandatory reforestation required by law. Yet despite that, the area grew back quite beautifully, and that's why it's an area of interest today to certain groups. Anyway, I digress. So I said: "Tell me more about your concern. You're worried about a few of these old-growth trees. How many are there?" "Well, we don't

know, but maybe there are 50; maybe there are 70." "All right. What else might you be concerned about?" "Well, there's this creek here, and we want to make sure the creek isn't impacted or adversely affected in any way by the logging." "Okay. Anything else?" "Well, we'd like to see a community trail established," I was told, "so other people can come up to this area and enjoy the surroundings, the scenery, and make this more of an active area for outdoor recreation."

As I've already noted, it was an area that was pretty difficult to access, and it required a lot of bushwhacking and fortitude in order to penetrate the rainforest jungle that it is. So I said: "Right. I think I can support that idea. I'm not sure if we can deliver on it, because located just below the Crown land is a large number of private parcels of land. In order to establish any kind of right of access, you're going to need cooperation from private property owners."

So off I went. I met with a number of ministers — including the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management, our Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection and our Minister of Forests — and said: "My constituents, at least some of them, are telling me they'd like to see the old-growth trees protected; to make sure that the riparian zones, the creeks, are respected and protected; and, if possible, some kind of community trail get established."

[1110]

Well, that was two years ago. Fast-forward to today. The Western Canada Wilderness Committee has gotten involved, and they now say there should be no logging at all in this area. The argument has gone from saying that we should protect the 50 to 70 old-growth trees, which it now turns out are about 100 — in fact, after the Ministry of Forests has gone up there to catalogue the area, it turns out there are about a hundred of these old vets that were missed the first time logging took place — to saying there shouldn't be any logging of any trees of any kind anywhere near this working forest around Elk Creek.

That's one position. Well, keep in mind that that organization is based in Vancouver, and of course, in Vancouver we see all kinds of services available — Vancouver General Hospital and a cancer institute. We've got universities, colleges and technical institutes — all of which are very good things and important things for moving people forward — but they all consume a vast amount of tax-dollar resources in order to provide those services. Where do you think those tax-dollar resources are supposed to come from but from economic activity that takes place around the province, including in our forests? As I mentioned, forestry continues to be the single most important industry when you consider the impact around the province on all of the communities.

I have not been willing to accept the position that there should be no logging at all in the Elk Creek area. I've gone up there again as recently as a few weeks ago to take a look at some of the selective harvesting that's now taking place. What I forgot to point out here to the members assembled this morning is that the logging

plan that was approved by the forest district manager this past summer — after two years of review, by the way, and consultation — is essentially a plan for selective harvesting in a very small percentage of the area around Elk Creek. Of the area around Elk Creek, 95 percent is not included in this logging plan. It's not affected by the proposed or current logging operation. Within the 5 percent area that is included in the logging plan, the majority of the trees are actually being left, in addition to the old-growth trees that I've mentioned — about 100 or so that have now been identified through the good work of the Ministry of Forests.

We've got a situation where at the end of the day — even outside of that 95 percent area that's not being touched in this logging plan — within the 5 percent area that is approved, a majority of the trees are being left standing. In fact, 60 percent in most of that 5 percent area are being left standing. It's called selective logging.

I thought that a few years ago environmental groups were calling for the province to adopt a system of selective logging. I think the Speaker can remember, from his time when he served in this Legislative Assembly in the 1980s, that the cry at the time from environmentalists was: "No more clearcuts. We should go to a system of selective harvesting and maybe use helicopters so there's less impact on the land base."

Well, guess what, hon. members. That is exactly the plan that has been approved for the small amount of selective harvesting at Elk Creek. It's selective harvesting in a 5 percent area of the land base. I'm not about to jump on the Western Canada Wilderness Committee's bandwagon and say there should be no logging at all in this area.

Incidentally, in the 1990s you'll remember that we went through this rather controversial and lengthy land use planning process where environmental groups, first nations, industry groups and others sat around tables in different regions of the province to look at how much of the land base should be protected from any economic activity and be set aside for protected areas or parks.

We went through that process in the nineties, and you'll remember that the previous government set a goal of 12 percent. There should be 12 percent of the province protected. At the end of the process — well, we're not even at the end of the process yet; there are still a few tables to report in — we're already at 12.3 percent provincewide that's been set aside for parks or protected areas. In the area that I represent, in the Chilliwack forest district we're now at 22 percent of the land base being set aside for parks and protected areas. That means, obviously, there's less area for economic activity to take place.

Was Elk Creek considered during that period? I'm advised that it was. Was Elk Creek recommended for protection during that time? I'm told that it was not. It is not part of any park or protected area. Why was that? I can only conclude that perhaps it has something to do with the fact that it was already an area that had been logged previously and that those agencies and

different groups that were represented around the table came to the conclusion that there were higher-priority areas that needed designation as a protected area or a park. As of today I'm told that the selective harvesting that's taking place in that very small area around Elk Creek is essentially complete.

[1115]

This past weekend I tried very hard — from numerous angles in Chilliwack, from the Fraser Valley floor looking up to the hillside — to actually see where this controversial logging had taken place. I couldn't see any sign whatsoever from any location on the valley floor of any type of logging activity at Elk Creek. If you had read the local newspapers, you would have thought you'd see a massive clearcut on the hillside. But of course it's not a clearcut; it's selective logging. That's why, frankly, I am not surprised that when the people in Chilliwack look up on the hillside, they can see no sign of the logging at all. Yet it has generated considerable work for a number of people over the last two months and will continue to provide work as those logs are shipped out to mills in British Columbia for processing.

I just wanted to add that perspective on this motion put forward by the member for Yale-Lillooet and say that all of us need to remember that when we go to the doctor, when we send our kids to school, when we want a pothole filled on a road or on a provincial highway, that money has to come from somewhere. Traditionally — and even today, Mr. Speaker — that money, at least a large part of it, comes from resource activity that takes place out in the heartlands. We have to keep that in mind as we make further decisions about this province.

**P. Bell:** I thought a bit this morning about the context of my riding, and I thought it was worth all members of this House hearing about some of the sorts of economic activity that take place in the riding of Prince George North.

In my particular riding I have six sawmills. Those six sawmills produce enough lumber every single day to build 1,200 homes throughout North America. That translates into 300,000 homes per year in terms of lumber production from my riding. In addition, I have five pulp mills in my riding that produce high-value paper that is distributed throughout North America, Europe and Asia. In fact, the paper that is produced from one particular pulp mill in my riding is of such high quality that it is one of only two pulp mills in the world that can produce paper thin enough to actually produce an entire New York phone book in one volume. It is of very high quality.

In addition to that, I have two chemical plants, an oil refinery and one of the highest-production mines in British Columbia. What does this all spell? It spells incredible revenue to the province. It spells incredible wealth to the province that goes to the gist of the motion from the member for Yale-Lillooet — that being that the value of the commodities we produce actually

fires the engine that drives the health care system and the education system forward in this province.

I would urge all members and all citizens of British Columbia to drive up and down Highway 97, because I think a single trip up and down Highway 97 makes it very clear that the wealth of this province maintains the education system and the health care system of the province. I would suggest that people just need to look at the trucks and the railcars when they go back and forth. You know what? When the railcars go from rural British Columbia to urban British Columbia, they're loaded; when they go from urban British Columbia back into rural British Columbia, they're empty. That tells you what funds the education system and the health care system in the province, and that's the people of the heartlands — the people from ridings like Prince George North who consistently provide the revenues that are necessary to ensure that we have the type of health care system and the type of education system that are necessary in order to sustain our province from a long-term perspective.

So I'm very proud of the work that we do. Mr. Speaker, 71 percent of the wealth of this province is driven from rural British Columbia; 41 percent of the budget of this province is the health care system. A further 25 percent of the budget of this province is the education system. Rural British Columbia is a direct supplier and funder of those processes.

I am very pleased to speak in favour of Motion 2, and I congratulate the member for Yale-Lillooet on bringing this forward.

**J. Nuraney:** I, too, rise to speak to the motion proposed by the member for Yale-Lillooet. As the members have spoken previous to me, it is very important to understand that we must not talk about the dichotomy between the rural and the urban areas. I think it is important for us to understand that we are all one part of British Columbia. The resource industry in the interior — in the heartlands, as we call it — plays a very significant role in our revenue-producing so that we can meet our commitments to the health care and educational systems that are in place.

[1120]

It is important, therefore, to understand that the government looks upon its creation of wealth in terms of revenue — from resources and from direct taxation. When that industry, the resource sector, is not operative and is not healthy, it has a direct impact on the revenues of this government. So it is important to understand the intertwining relationship between the resource sector and the commitments of the government that it has to fulfil.

I had an opportunity of late to travel with the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. In the course of my travel, I could not help but clearly understand the problems we also have in terms of developing the resource sector in the heartlands. There are the groups, the vested interest groups, who are trying to delay or perhaps make it difficult for us to move ahead with the development of these resources.

But it must also be said that we are blessed with the abundance of natural resources, and we must find ways of developing this sector.

What is also more important, in my opinion, is that we have seen some devastations that have taken place in the communities in the heartlands because of the decline in the traditional industries like forestry — and that, too, because of the protectionist measures that have taken place south of us in the United States. It is all the more reason why we must allow our communities in the heartlands to develop these resources so they can diversify their economy for the sustainability of the communities in the heartlands.

Another thing that was noticeable, as we travelled, was the effect of the global economy. As the major players in the world try to seek efficiencies, they try to maximize their profits. They try to maximize their efficiencies. What has also happened is that some of these sectors in the interior, which were the service trades and the feed-ins to these corporations, have suffered because these corporations have now decided to move away from those areas in terms of seeking efficiencies. That, too, makes me say that it is important for us to develop the resources so we are able to give those communities better opportunities to move ahead in their lives.

There is no question in my mind that the development of the resources directly helps meet our commitments in health care and education, and I have the great pleasure this morning to stand here in support of the motion that is brought forward by the member for Yale-Lillooet.

**Deputy Speaker:** Members, the motion is Motion 2 on the order paper.

Motion approved.

**Hon. G. Bruce:** I call the motion in the name of the member for Nanaimo, Motion 29.

**Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to standing orders, hon. members, unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with Motion 29 without disturbing the priorities of the motions preceding it on the order paper.

Leave granted.

ARTS AND CULTURAL TOURISM  
ON VANCOUVER ISLAND  
(continued)

**G. Trumper:** I am pleased to rise to support this motion brought forward by the member for Nanaimo, who we all know has a great facility that has been built in Nanaimo, which certainly supports the arts.

The arts are a vital economic force in our communities, be they large or small. Over 60,000 people in British Columbia are employed in the arts and culture sector. They are an expression about how a community defines itself. The arts contribute to the growth of safe,

secure and healthy communities — communities that are creative, whose citizens are encouraged to be creative.

[1125]

The government supports the arts communities through \$11 million in annual funding to the B.C. Arts Council, and certainly we are committed to supporting the arts as part of the 2010 Olympics. The arts in the smaller communities are an expression of how the community defines itself. The community I live in, the Alberni Valley, has a high number of people employed in industry and also has a thriving arts community that adds to the economics and the vibrancy of the community.

For instance, the Capitol Theatre, which used to be a very small movie theatre years ago, just recently became a theatre and received a renovation of over \$800,000, which was donated by an individual in the community who left a large legacy to this particular theatre. It's a small theatre, but it adds and gives great programs and great plays to the community and is certainly well attended. I certainly want to wish all the very best to this particular group that has taken on the challenge of renovating the small theatre, because I know it will add to the wealth and the richness of our valley.

We have a very well known choir called the Timbre, which has been to New York and has won many awards. It is led by a very well respected member of the musical community in the valley. Her husband was a very well known teacher in the high school that got our school programs to a very high level, which have been recognized right through the country. We have a very active arts council in the community. It leases a lovely old building that was left to the community by its owner. It has wonderful displays of art, particularly at this time as we see December coming closely, and those show many of the talents we have within the community.

The music program in our school system is well known. We have some excellent music teachers who have taken our music programs in the school system to great heights and have won many awards. When they give concerts, they are very well attended by the community, because we just know how talented our young people are. That gives those children such a great basis as they move forward into adult life. It's a talent and a gift they will never lose, which will enrich their lives as they go through.

Also in the Alberni Valley, we have seen a development of the aboriginal culture. The Hupacasath band have been running cultural canoe trips with their culture's canoes, which have been done very well this year. They have in their plans to build a cultural centre within the community, right on the river, in which they hope to be able to show their culture to tourists and to the community and to enrich the gift that they give to the community as a whole with their great traditions that today they are still continuing.

We also have in our valley a very well known museum, a small museum but very well known for the

quality of its programs for a community of its size. We also have the McLean Mill National Historic Site, which shows what used to take place in the sawmills earlier on and is the British Columbia heritage site for the forest industry in British Columbia. Those things are all part of the arts and part of the culture of our community.

[1130]

In Qualicum, which is also part of my constituency, they have a thriving theatre in the summer and in the winter. They have converted the Old Schoolhouse, as it is known, to an arts centre, and it manages to portray many of the wonderful crafts and many of the art shows that take place within the community throughout the year. It also gives great concerts, be they jazz or whatever — various types of music which appeal to all sectors of the community.

Tofino had a music festival for some years, which large numbers of people came to and which was a great opportunity for the local people out in those small communities to get an appreciation of the gift of music that so many of us have — which, unfortunately, is not one of my talents. But I'm always very envious of those who have that quality and that opportunity to show off their great talents for the enjoyment of all of us.

The west coast first nations are also looking at showing their culture to the world. As you know, the west coast has become a great tourist centre for British Columbia. We have over a million people who go out to the west coast every summer and throughout the year to view the storms in the winter. That added ambience to the society out on the west coast, with looking at being able to see how our first nations, how our first citizens lived.... They are also looking at providing canoe trips in their traditional canoes, and they're also looking at enlarging on being able to show their traditions to the world at large, because certainly it is an international scene when you go out to the west coast.

All these things add to the richness of our communities, be they large or small, and they are very, very important to adding to the way we live, to the way we look at life. I can remember that many, many years ago my parents used to take me to many of the arts and the concerts that used to take place in Britain. There were times when I probably would have preferred to do something else, but it has certainly been a great opportunity for me to appreciate the arts and the gifts that they give and to certainly expand the culture that we have in our lives.

I am very pleased to support this motion from the member for Nanaimo.

**R. Visser:** This is an important motion for a number of reasons, but I just want to read it: "Be it resolved that this House recognize the positive impact of arts and cultural tourism on the economy of Vancouver Island." I think arts and culture are important to the economy. That's true, but I think, more importantly, arts and culture become the cornerstone of our community and this Island.

We have a long tradition — up and down, north to south, east to west, frankly — of building an enhanced and world-recognized place for the arts, for writing, for painting, for sculpture, certainly from a first nations perspective — but I think a recognition of the development of a truly west-coast Vancouver Island culture. So I wanted to spend a few minutes this morning and run through some of the places where I find arts and culture in my communities and outline what they do and outline what they mean to the communities that I represent.

**Hon. G. Bruce:** The North Island?

**R. Visser:** That would be the North Island, sir.

One of the great places that I find is the museum at Campbell River. It has been recognized over the last few years as one of the best small museums in the province, and it's won many awards for its dedication to and preservation of the history and for the way that it portrays that history in and around Campbell River and the North Island. There are lots of things in there to see, lots of displays that are interactive, and you can touch and feel and wander through and get a sense of where we came from.

[1135]

You start in the first nations. You can go and wander through some of the great carvings, the coppers and other things that have been loaned to the museum by our first nations neighbours. Or you can go into the gallery itself and listen to the stories of the house of Siwidi and the "Chief of the Undersea World," Komogwey, and you can hear some of those stories that have been loaned by the families to the museum so they can be retold, using masks and voice. The kids and everyone who visits there can be told of the richness that first nations have bequeathed to us in our communities.

You can travel and look at some of the things that go on in terms of forestry. They have, I think, a 1914 white logging truck in there and a whole host of displays on what it was like to show up in the jungle, as it was called, with huge trees, and how the settlers of the day and the forestry people of the day literally conquered the landscape.

One of my favourite pieces is the steam donkey. I've personally been involved in it over the years. It was donated. It is a 1908 Empire built in Vancouver and purchased in 1908 by the famous P. B. Anderson. It worked up and down the coast, and most interestingly it was bought in 1932 by Clarence Boardman. I never knew Clarence, but I did know his son Doug Boardman. Doug Boardman worked with my father on the log barges back in the sixties. We got involved in rebuilding the steam donkey because George Murdock and Lesia Davis at the museum wanted it to be working. They wanted to be able to fire up the old boiler and run it on Canada Day long weekends and other times.

I think that's important. It was a big challenge, and the community got together — the boilermakers and

others — to rebuild this thing and make it into a working model. It's been a long process, but the work has been very rewarding. People like Alfie Goodrow and Jodie Woodland and Norm Fair and all the others that have been involved have done a wonderful job.

The most interesting thing for me is that we had it in our shop for a while, and as they were rebuilding some of it, Doug Boardman came up and visited. He's in his eighties. We were talking to him about our plans, and he was telling us stories about the days at the head of Knight Inlet when they were logging with it. He was telling us stories of how it worked or why it didn't work or some of the quirks that it had and how you had to treat it just right or you couldn't get the head of steam up. We said: "Well, you know, Doug, it used to run at 200 psi or 170 psi, but we're going to have to back that down to get some approvals." He said: "Well, that won't do." I said: "Why won't that do? We'll run it at 50 psi. We're not going to be yarding big logs." He said: "No, it won't do, because the whistle won't sound the same." I said: "Doug, you're the only person on this planet right now who knows that the whistle won't sound the same."

That story is important because that's part of our culture. That's a fellow I knew when I was a kid. I've known him all my life in a passing way, and he came and told me a story that happened in 1932 on a hillside in Knight Inlet. That's part of our culture. That's what the museum can preserve.

They were bequeathed the Matsunaga fishing boat, the *Soyokaze*. It was a small, double-ended live cod boat that was seized at the beginning of the Second World War as part of what I think we remember as a dark part of British Columbia history, as the Japanese fishing community had their assets seized and sold, and they were interned in camps in the interior. They rebuilt that boat with loving detail and care, and it sits there outside the museum, under cover, as a reminder for all of us in the community that we have that in our past and that we need to remember that. We need to celebrate that; we need to understand that. I think they do a good job of providing us that context in our culture.

[1140]

The museum is a great place, but we have lots of things in our community that remind us of culture and art and history and where we come from and where we want to go. Some of the things that I find fascinating are things like the.... We have, of course, the Campbell River Community Arts Council. The president is a friend of mine, Ron Kerr. He's a sculptor, a landscape artist and a landscaper. He went and purchased 40 or 50 big blocks of marble and started whittling away at them with his son and others, and the whole community came around him a few years ago to sculpt things from marble.

He's perpetuated and done a lot of hard work in the arts community and the Community Arts Council and the Sybil Andrews Cottage — who was a famous artist from Campbell River. They support each other. They support the community. They find ways to enhance

and to bring those artists' work into the public mainstream and cause that interaction, that action-reaction between artists and their broader community that I think is so fundamental. We have the Campbell River and District Public Art Gallery.

We have something that came out of all of this that I find one of the most rewarding weekends of the year in Campbell River, and that's the Transformations on the Shoreline, the Campbell River Shoreline Arts Society. It's a driftwood-carving contest. They turn three-, 3½- or four-foot diameter fir logs, all five or six feet tall. There are 30 artists. They show up in and about the July long weekend. They start on the Thursday, and they have to be done and ready for judging on the Monday.

It's fantastic. Thousands of people stop all day long to watch these folks work with their chain saws, their power tools, their carving tools. Because it occurs on the shore of our community and you drive by it every day — or lots of folks do — you notice a week out that there are all these logs standing on end. They have their bark on them, and they're waiting. Then not two weeks later, there they are — carved — and they stay there for three or four months as the community looks at them and interacts with them. I think it's one of the greatest draws we have. It's fantastic, because you see that transformation. You see these artists, and you understand, right before your eyes, the connection these people have with their medium and the vision they hold, where they go — where they started from and where they wind up.

You know, this year I was just delighted when Jerry Strelhoff won — I was also a judge this year — with his sculpture *Angel Fish*. It was outstanding. It was these three angelfish entwined in seaweed. It was unbelievable that that could emerge in such a short period of time from this piece of wood. It was fantastic. All of the other artists, who did just amazing and wonderful things with those pieces of wood, were fantastic.

We really try to celebrate the arts in Campbell River. We celebrate writing. We have the Haig-Brown Festival and the Words on the Water Festival, where we bring writers from around the world in the sense of the gift that Haig-Brown gave our community from his writings, his connection to the land, his conservation ethic, his views on fishing, his life and time as a magistrate but his life and time mostly as a fly fisherman on the Campbell.

Those are all critical. Painter's Lodge hosts Painters at Painter's every year, where we bring artists from around British Columbia and they spend the weekend with folks. They paint and they talk to folks. It's completely open. You can wander up to great artists like Victoria's Robert Amos or Toni Onley, and you can have conversations with them as they work in these beautiful gardens.

[1145]

It's not just in Campbell River that it's important. There are other things too. Frankly, one of the great gifts I've had is knowing a fellow named Bill Henderson for years and years. Bill's a master carver in Campbell River with the Campbell River band. I'll spend

some time with Bill at his carving shack at the edge of the water down by the Campbell River, and I get to see, hear and feel the stories. You can run your hand over the log as it's becoming a totem, or you can hold the piece of cedar in your hands prior and feel its weight before it becomes one of his famous masks. His nephews Greg and Junior and the gift that he's passing on to them, which was passed on to him by his father, Sam Henderson — many of whose works grace the museum next door.... It's an amazing thing to feel how light that mask can become or how powerful that piece of cedar can become in your hands when Bill's finished with them and the stories that come with it.

That repeats itself up and down the Island, as first nations cultural tourism and ecotourism become features of our part of the world — Village Island tours — you know, trips up to the head of Knight Inlet, trips to the old villages, the midden villages, the clam beaches and the clam beds. All of those things have become a great draw to our part of the world. I think there's a lot to offer there.

The village of Tahsis, as it rebuilds itself — as it drags itself out of this pain it finds itself in once the sawmill had closed — has put arts and culture at the top of the list as part of their future. They now have an artists' community there. They have bought houses and have found Tahsis to be a place where their art comes through and shines through, and that's important. We see it in Port Hardy; we see it in Port McNeill. They all have art councils. They all have great artists. They all have great first nations artists. They all celebrate those successes every year, and they try to attract people to come and take part in it. It's a very great thing.

We have some great first nations museums — the U'mista cultural centre. Some of the greatest artifacts in history of the first nations people on the west coast of North America are in the U'mista cultural centre on their cultural tours. I think these things we do, which are promoted in our communities from arts and culture, help drive the economy. That's for sure. We bring people from all over the world to visit.

All of these things we do actually build our communities. They actually are the foundation of our communities. It's what we have become, and it's what we will become over time. We need to look back. We need to reflect on our history, first nations and otherwise. We need to know that logging played a role, that fishing played a role, that mining plays a role and that settlement plays a role in the taming of that wild environment.

I think this is an important motion. I think this is important because we know how valuable it is to understand our culture, and that's something we need to celebrate more. I'm fully in support of this motion, and I'm very proud of the member for Nanaimo for bringing it forward.

**Deputy Speaker:** Members, the question is Motion 29.

Motion approved.

**Hon. G. Bruce:** I call Motion 49 in the name of the member for Surrey-Tynehead.

**Deputy Speaker:** Members, pursuant to standing orders, unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with Motion 49 without disturbing the priorities of the motions preceding it on the order paper.

Leave granted.

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**D. Hayer:** I rise today to move Motion 49:

[Be it resolved that this House recognize the importance of improving transportation infrastructure for the benefit of the economy.]

It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to speak on such a crucial issue that is important to my city of Surrey and the province as a whole. Transportation is what drives the economy in this province, be it by ship, air, rail or road. All those areas are interconnected, for without one the other cannot operate efficiently.

[1150]

British Columbia is a huge economic engine of Canada, generating raw materials, manufactured goods, even agricultural produce — most of it destined for export. Without an efficient and effective transportation network, those goods and services could not get to the consumer; nor could the workers who produce those goods get to mine, harvest or manufacture them. I have talked about transportation challenges in my riding many, many times in this House since the election of May 2001. I have spoken to the Minister of Transportation, to my caucus colleagues and before in this House that my riding of Surrey-Tynehead, and the whole city of Surrey, is highly dependent on this province's network of roads, bridges, ports and railways.

We manufacture goods, we house workers, and we have many service people who need to get to work with ease and expedience. Without an efficient transportation network, everything slows down, and that costs money, to say nothing of the inconvenience. In the past couple of years we have seen a dramatic change in the way our road networks are being developed in Surrey. I know the Ministry of Transportation is looking at many other ways to improve the life of many businesses, workers and ordinary residents in my constituency.

Just recently this House heard that 176th Street, which is also known as Pacific Highway, is to be upgraded to four lanes from the U.S. border crossing to Highway 1, the Trans-Canada freeway. We also learned that Highway 10 running through Cloverdale and South Surrey will be widened to improve traffic flow and the connections between our major freeways and the ferry terminal at Tsawwassen. Let's not forget about plans for construction of South Fraser perimeter road, which will be constructed with input from the

local residents and will speed the flow of commercial goods along the Fraser River corridor.

I have also spoken many times with the minister regarding the improvements to interchanges on the Trans-Canada, Highway 1, at 152nd Street, 160th Street and 176th Street and to add a new overpass at 156th Street and 168th Street. I know she is looking at these improvements which, as my constituents frequently tell me, are not only vital for economic well-being but also crucial to the lifestyles of their families, as time away from home in lengthy traffic jams is time taken away from the family.

Transportation improvements are the persistent concern of my constituents at community meetings, in my constituency office, at my monthly coffee meetings, at the last annual picnic we had — which over 2,000 constituents attended — and at many other functions I attend in Surrey-Tynehead. I know that TransLink is working on a new project that will create another bridge across the Fraser River linking north-side residents and businesses with those on the south side in the Port Kells area of my Surrey-Tynehead constituency, improving the flow of goods, services and commuters.

I have had many good meetings with TransLink and my constituents regarding this new crossing, which was mostly satisfactory to most of the members of my constituency. Again, this crossing will have a profound benefit to the economies of both sides of the Fraser River, and it will reduce some of the traffic which now has to use the Port Mann Bridge. It has been over 40 years since the Port Mann Bridge was completed. A lot has changed since then. A lot more people live here and use that route. According to the most recent census information of 2001, my riding of Surrey-Tynehead is the second-fastest-growing constituency in this province, with a current population of more than 65,000 residents. I am encouraged by the conversation I had with the Minister of Transportation. I know she is looking favourably to one day announcing expansion of the Port Mann Bridge. While that project will be expensive, it will improve immeasurably the economic benefits to the province as a whole, and specifically to Surrey, with its business dependence on cross-boundary commerce and the many, many commuters who spend precious time every day snarled in traffic.

[1155]

In fact, not only is there huge support for expanding our Port Mann Bridge, but at our Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in Surrey, we heard from witnesses who told us they're willing to pay extra for it. Even the Surrey Chamber of Commerce said at those meetings on October 10 of this year that it supports the twinning of Port Mann Bridge; the widening of Highway 1, the Trans-Canada Highway from 200th Street to Vancouver; and helping to build the South Fraser perimeter road.

At this time I would be remiss in not talking a little bit about the Gateway program, which is the potential setup and improvements to the regional road network

that would significantly improve the movement of people and goods along and across the Fraser River — the gateway to crossing greater Vancouver as well as national and international markets. The program is designed to increase access to trade and industrial facilities, reduce travel time, improve neighbourhood liveability and take significant steps toward completing the region's road network — all contributing to making the lower mainland a better place to live and work and do business in.

The Gateway project includes the South Fraser perimeter road from Port Kells in my riding to Deltaport Way in south Delta, providing significantly improved access to industrial areas, travel-time savings for residents and a free-flow route for tourists accessing the ferries to Vancouver Island. It is also looking at the perimeter road on the north side of the Fraser River, at the new Port Kells crossing of the Fraser and the twinning of the Port Mann.

Primary estimates suggest the infrastructure investment would be in the range of \$3 billion. I hope that detailed consultations with governments and communities and road users leading to the Gateway project will begin soon.

While I could go on at length about the huge economic benefit this improved transportation network will have for the lower mainland and for this province, I also want to hear what other members of this House have to say about how transportation improvements will help both their communities and their constituents. I know from my travels to all parts of this province that transportation is a key issue, no matter where you live in British Columbia.

**B. Penner:** I'm the next person on the list of people to respond to this motion put forward by the member for Surrey-Tynehead. Certainly, it's a motion that I would like to talk about at some length and to talk about the great work that's taking place in the district of Chilliwack-Kent, the riding I have the pleasure to represent.

Great construction projects are currently underway — including a new overpass that we've waited for, for decades in my community — as a result of this government's willingness to move forward in cooperation with the city of Chilliwack. I could also tell members about the drive I took yesterday up the recently paved Chilliwack Lake Road. You can now go all the way to the lake. The road is paved all the way — again the result of our heartland strategy, recognizing the importance of transportation.

I will not go into those details because I note the time, and I note, by the looks on members' faces, that they have a growing appetite. So I will reserve my right to participate in this debate further, but at this time I move that the House adjourn debate.

B. Penner moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. G. Bruce moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

**Deputy Speaker:** The House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. today.

The House adjourned at 11:58 a.m.