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6TH SESSION, 37TH PARLIAMENT

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MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2005

The House met at 10:04 a.m.

[H. Long in the chair.]

Prayers.

Orders of the Day

Hon. G. Bruce: Members' statements, Mr. Speaker.

Private Members' Statements

COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOCIAL SERVICES — A VISION

R. Nijjar: I am speaking today on a very important issue called community capacity development — community capacity development in the Ministry of Children and Family Development, in the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, and in our social services where we have so many great social service organization societies that contract through the government and do work on behalf of the government and the people of British Columbia.

[1005]

Many times governments before ours have tried to revitalize and restructure children and family development care and social services, and there have been varying degrees of success. This government attempted a restructure earlier in our term. It was the most aggressive, it was the most forward-thinking, it was the most evidence-based, and it was one that struck at the heart of what all social service organizations and all those who work in the ministry — staff who know about social capacity development and evidence-based results — were saying for years and years and decades and decades.

As we moved forward, I was very proud about taking away a centralized, Victoria-centred approach to service delivery models and allowing communities to develop their own capacity, to make up their programs that suit their needs based on their assessments. When communities start working with themselves and when organizations start working with each other within each community, you start building the capacity, the knowledge, the best practices, and you start refining the service for the needs of that particular community.

British Columbia is a vast province, the size of western Europe. We have only four million people in such a large land. Different communities have different needs, different styles and different cultures. If we ever continue with a Victoria-based model, we'll never meet the needs of those that are disenfranchised and those that need the services. So I was very happy.... We must move forward. This government must continue and all organizations must continue with a decentralized plan where we allow societies to grow and build that community capacity.

In my area of Vancouver-Kingsway we have some prime examples of community groups that are doing exactly that and that have been doing it for years, and we have tried to foster that over the past three years. We have what we call the Windermere family of schools. Windermere high school is one of the two schools in my riding, and there are, of course, the elementary schools — the feeder schools. There are about eight of them. The children that graduated from grade 7 go to Windermere. The Windermere family of schools, we call it.

There's a youth worker at the high school. What he does is help the young people, the high school students, reach back to their elementary schools and mentor the youth there, the students, on things like drug and alcohol, on bullying, on depression and suicide, on sex — on a variety of issues that are common these days for young people. Our community centres and our neighbourhood house work with them to reach out to the young people and to allow the high school students to develop their own programs the way they think the grade 6s and 7s would be able to understand and connect with the message.

Because we allow the young people to design their own programs for the younger students, it has become a great, great success that is being modelled and copied not only in the Vancouver and B.C. area but throughout Canada. There are requests from Ontario to see the model — how young people are being able to reach out to other young people. We're very proud of that.

[1010]

It happened not because government created a program and said: "This is how that program must be run." It happened because we said: "Here is funding for a youth worker. Let that youth worker, with his or her community, develop the program that meets the community's needs."

My community is about 55 percent residents of Chinese heritage. It is the most multicultural riding in all of Canada, according to Stats Canada, so we have language and culture challenges. Communication is a major issue.

Renfrew Park Community Centre partnered with SUCCESS, which is a Chinese immigrant services society. SUCCESS sent one of their community workers to be stationed at Renfrew Community Centre to try to attract the seniors, based on their language and culture, and bring them in so that they can then learn about health and wellness, education, finance and protecting themselves as seniors from fraud and those that prey on them.

With the help of the community groups and the Renfrew Community Centre, SUCCESS was able to grow that association to 800 people. There are 800 seniors who are part of the Renfrew seniors club at Renfrew Community Centre. After seven years, SUCCESS is now able to pull away their staff person, and that network of seniors is now self-sustaining. With assistance from the services at Renfrew Community Centre, which come from a variety of levels of government, that organization is now self-sustaining. SUCCESS can

now move on to another neighbourhood that sees the value in community partnerships.

Kingsway Road is the commercial road in my riding. The rest is almost 100 percent single-family dwellings. We have had our challenges with a variety of buildings that are for lease, with prostitution and drugs being sold there at nighttime. We have made a community group with neighbourhood houses, the city, the MLA's office, community centres, the schools and businesses to work together to resolve the problem — again, community capacity development.

G. Hogg: It's a pleasure to respond to the member for Vancouver-Kingsway with respect to the issues of community capacity. I've had the privilege of visiting him in his riding and a number of the service providers in that riding and of hearing and seeing firsthand the quality of services that are starting to grow there.

Research and studies and current evidence — even intuition — tell us that the closer the decisions are made to the people they affect, the higher the probability of us having success with respect to those decisions. When the decisions involve those people, when they are involved in the context of the community, then successes increase exponentially.

We have lots of examples of that historically in this province and, indeed, around the world — our experience with residential schools with the aboriginal communities, where we put institutions together and said that if we take people out of the context of their community, somehow we're going to return them and they're going to be better off. Of course they weren't.

With the issue of the developmentally disabled, we put them in institutions and somehow felt that that was a better place for them. Certainly, our experience showed us that it was not.

With children in care.... Often we have apprehended children, taken them into care as the first line of response rather than looking at the ways we can develop support for them within the context of their family and of their community. We know that the outcomes for them will be much better if we do that.

In Vancouver-Kingsway the Children's Foundation has taken a very proactive, positive approach using the best evidence we have. They have, in fact, taken an institutional setting where they were dealing with special needs children, and they started to deal with them in an outreach program, leaving them within the context of their families and their communities. They're having far better successes and, because it's less costly, are also being able to deal with far more special needs children. They're dealing with more and having better successes as a result of using community-based capacity and the evidence coming from that.

Research tells us that in youth justice with low-risk, low-need youths, when we involve them in our system, they're twice as likely to reoffend than they are if we leave them alone, because they stay within the context of their community. When we pull them out, we create an environment in which they're more likely to offend.

[1015]

John McKnight, the social theorist, has told us that big government and the institutional approach create hierarchies and ineffective control and accountability systems. He uses the example of New York City where in their welfare system, only 37 percent of the budget they put into welfare actually makes it to those in need of welfare. The rest of it is burned up and eaten up by the system in trying to create greater accountabilities and pressures within it, without looking at service.

Systems, therefore, often become the opposite of what their original intent is. We see crime-making corrections systems and problem-making child welfare systems, because we're not engaging in capacity and not engaging in a way that evidence tells us we should be. These systems tend to fail because we leave out a major social domain, and that is community.

Communities and institutions learn from different ways, different systems. Therefore, because we learn differently, there's a disconnect. Institutions learn by studies and by statistics. Individuals learn by stories. Institutions can deliver a system and can deliver a service, but they can't deliver care, because they tend to be power-based. Community-based organizations are based on consent and are far more effective and accountable than institutions when they function at their very best.

McKnight argues that society does not have a problem with effective human services, but that the real problem is weaker communities and that big governments — by their structures, by their hierarchy, by their power — reinforce weaker communities. They create and support weaker communities by putting structures and crutches in place for them, rather than allowing them to grow and service and provide.

What we need to do, if we use the work and research of Robert Putnam, is develop social context and social capital. We need to ensure that we have community engagement so that we can have them. Some members remember Robert Putnam, but they don't remember him in a visceral way, a way that allows them to connect emotionally. It's a very distant, intellectual way that some of the members see and understand that. We need to make sure we take that from the conceptual framework and bring that into emotional connectedness, where we can see the interaction necessary to affect positive change.

It's the type of change the member for Vancouver-Kingsway has talked about, has seen and has experienced in his community, where we are actually getting consensual relationships. We are getting decisions made closer to the places where they affect people and, therefore, are having better outcomes. It's not relying on statistics and studies but relying on the real stories of real people in real communities.

That way, I think, we will ensure we have better services. We'll actually be able to move from a context of hierarchical service to a nature where we will have consensual services that people will be engaged in. Communities will be proud of what they have to offer, and governments won't be imposing and dividing

them up. The federal and provincial governments are so good at dividing communities, based on how we organize ourselves around ministries.

We have to move beyond that and ensure that we allow communities to develop a sense of their social capacity, of their social vision, of their social plan for their communities. We have to respond to that in effective ways so that we can provide them with funding, with processes and with accountability to provide that service.

R. Nijjar: Government must continue down this path of allowing community capacity development, allowing social capital to harness itself. There are a lot of pressures against it. It's the nature of change. There's a lot of structure already in place that is comfortable where it is and resists that change either out of self-protection or out of fear.

We must continue down that path. The only way we can provide the best possible social services, the best possible services to those in need, is if we get over the top of that mountain to the other side. The only thing at the other side that can be there is a community capacity development model.

When the member for Surrey-White Rock was the Minister of Children and Family Development.... Never before, I would say, in the whole history of social services and the history of the Ministry of Children and Family Development — no matter what name it was under — did community groups come under one umbrella and agree to a model. Never before was there such a sensible, logical model. They were crying out for that for years and years, where they have the power instead of Victoria having the power, where they use their skills and their tools rather than us using our skills and our tools.

You saw bureaucrats say: "I want to stay in the ministry, even though I have a chance to retire. I've been here for 20 years. Never before have I felt the opportunity to really do what I've been saying needs to be done." Never before have there been social service organizations that have a political slant against this government, which said: "Because the right thing is being done, we are going to come under one umbrella. We're going to work together." Never before was there such a positive energy for such a positive thing.

[1020]

If we are going to serve the people of this province, the people most in need, we must all come together under the model of community capacity development. I urge any government at any time to do just that.

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN
— B.C. TEACHER REGISTRY

L. Mayencourt: It's a pleasure to rise and speak about the need for a provincial or federal registry of teachers in Canada.

This morning's *National Post* quotes the Education minister from British Columbia, who has asked the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, to create a

national teachers' registry. He wants schools to have a better way of finding out if an employee, a teacher that they're about to hire, has a record of misconduct within a school district in some other area. This comes not because we want to pick on people, but rather because we have had instances in our history — our recent history — where teachers who have been engaged in very inappropriate behaviour with students have slipped through the cracks and simply moved from one district to another.

We have seen many, many different cases of this. One of the unfortunate things that we've had to deal with as we look at teachers within the school system that may be less than perfect is that it is often the wish and the desire of the school district to not get engaged in a legal battle but to try to smooth the waters by allowing the individual to simply resign. Maybe that helps that district, but it certainly does not help the district that then hires that individual.

I think of a young lady who was in the Mission school district just a couple of years back, who was fired for erratic behaviour. She was going through emotional problems and needed to be taken out of that school district. But the school district didn't find it in their hearts to notify the school district she was moving to that there were some serious problems with this individual. As a result, that teacher went into a Surrey school, became employed there and actually set that school on fire.

We have an incident in the Fraser Valley where Serg Lebedoff, who worked as a substitute teacher in the Fraser Valley, was disciplined by a neighbouring district for behaviour that was of very, very questionable wisdom, because he allowed himself to become involved in a sexual relationship with a young student.

Now, I really believe that the minister is on to something. I think we have a great obligation to teachers and to students — to teachers to protect the integrity of their profession, and to students because we feel it is very important that students understand that in the power relationship between teacher and student, there will not be abuse of that kind tolerated in British Columbia.

I have been doing a little bit of research as part of my safe schools initiative and taken a look at some of the ways that other jurisdictions have sought to address these issues. One of the issues that has come up is all around conduct between adults in the school system and individual students.

One area that I've looked at is New Brunswick. New Brunswick has come out with a policy which is very clear on laying down the ground rules around behaviour, around behaviour management and around misconduct so that we have a crystal-clear understanding of what is appropriate and what is not appropriate. This policy applies to every adult in the school system, and it applies to every student in the school system. It doesn't matter whether the student is in the school or the student is on a field trip or at a basketball game or what have you. When that student is the responsibility of the school district, it is incumbent upon them that

the school district protect that student from any kind of abuse from teachers or from other adults in the system.

[1025]

You know, we're looking at ways to try and make the education system better. The policy here is to deal with things that harm students or impede learning, and we know the effects that this can have on young people. It can last for a lifetime. What New Brunswick has done is talked about three different categories: abusive behaviour, misconduct and inappropriate behaviour management.

Abusive behaviour is defined as behaviour by adults in the school system which is directed toward a pupil or pupils and has one of the following components: that it's counter to the position of trust conferred upon adults in the school system, that it's inconsistent with the Human Rights Code or that it is inconsistent with the Criminal Code. Now, failure to report on these very important things is abuse as well. So this policy seeks to encourage school districts to actually look at this abusive behaviour and deal with it.

Secondly, misconduct. That's negative conduct directed towards pupils that would be judged inappropriate by reasonable people. It's less severe than the abuse we mentioned earlier, but it has damaging effects on the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of students. These effects may or may not be intended.

The third category is inappropriate behaviour management — personal attacks on students' character; continuous use of sarcasm; undue non-constructive criticism in dealing with students; and habitual, uncontrolled temper.

There are many examples of this in our school system here in British Columbia, and obviously it is true across Canada. So I am very much in support of the minister's efforts to create a registry across Canada to deal with this issue. The Minister of Education may be unable to coerce or get consensus from the Ministers of Education across Canada to actually create this registry. But I would like to encourage our minister — regardless of whether or not he can get Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and all of these others to the table — to say this is an important issue. I think it's important that we create a registry here in British Columbia.

This registry is simply put in place to protect our children from a few bad apples amongst an otherwise excellent teaching profession in British Columbia. As parents and adults we need to know that our kids are going to be looked after with the very highest of integrity. This innovative idea would allow to us make sure that teachers working in our schools are safe to be in contact with our students, and it would make clear what constitutes inappropriate behaviour by a teacher, who to report it to and what actions should be taken.

I understand that the member for North Vancouver-Lonsdale has some comments in this regard, so I will welcome her comments at this time.

K. Whittred: I'm pleased to respond to the remarks of my colleague from Vancouver-Burrard.

Every day parents send the very best kids they have to school. They send those kids to school probably assuming, I think, three very simple things: (1) that they're going to be cared for, (2) that they're going to be safe and (3) that they're hopefully going to learn something.

These are pretty basic assumptions that parents have. I think there's not a person in our society that disagrees with those. I think everybody that is in our community — whether they be parents, whether they be students, whether they be teachers, janitors and so on... All agree with those very basic assumptions. Everybody in the system wants our children to be safe at school.

A school is a complex community. It's not just a place where there are students and teachers. There are, in fact, students and teachers, but there are also volunteers in that school. There are a great many auxiliary staff. There is the public. Schools are open to the public. Security and safety can be quite a challenging issue.

However, the one that we're here to deal with specifically today is the idea of a registry for those teachers or, I'm assuming, others in the system who have been convicted of an offence — that they be put on a registry so that there is not the opportunity for them simply to go and move on to someplace else. It's a way to get rogues out of the system. I think teachers welcome that as well as anyone else. It's a tool that could be used to get those occasional individuals who are a blight on the profession out of the system and to make sure they don't move on to some other area. However, I do want to emphasize that this is one tool, and I certainly support the minister on that. I really can't see a downside to it, but it is only one tool.

[1030]

I mentioned before the complexity of dealing with student safety. I think it actually starts, in terms of teachers, with the very initial screening and teacher-training that goes on. I'd like to share with you an experience of mine, and that was a student teacher I had one time who was completely inappropriate and who ultimately failed her teacher-training. That young woman is today teaching somewhere in the Cariboo in a private school. I point that out simply to say that even a registry would not catch that individual, because there would have been no opportunity. That's why I point out that it's only one tool and that other, more complex answers need to be found.

We need to look at the kind of in-service that is offered to our teachers. We need to make sure that teachers have adequate resources and the ability, in terms of time, to deliver those resources. We need to look at curriculum, particularly in what those of us in the education field call the affective domain. That means that area that affects behaviour. This is where things like curriculum development... What kinds of books do we use? What kinds of examples are used in teaching kids? Do these examples model behaviour that we would believe is acceptable in our communities?

I think we need to look also at the accountability of senior administrators. I am always a little bit as-

tounded to find, when one of these people slips through the cracks, that nobody seemed to notice that there were ten years missing on this person's résumé. It seems to me that if someone's hiring someone, they might ask that question.

I conclude simply by saying that the registry is something I support the minister on. I do think the issue is way more complex than that, and we shouldn't sit back and think that a registry is going to solve problems around safety for our children in schools.

L. Mayencourt: I am grateful to the member for North Vancouver-Lonsdale for her comments. I guess my view on it is a little bit different than hers.

I do think it's essential that we as a society sit down and lay out what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour; that we have some solid consequences for that behaviour; and that individuals in school districts — be they a school trustee or a school superintendent or a teacher or even the janitor in a school district — need to be very clear about the relationship they have with students in our school system. I want to be very, very solid on this because I do not want people to think that I am of the opinion that this is not a complex problem.

What I will say is that this is a problem that has gone on for far too long. We have individuals like Robert Noyes who travelled from district to district to district, abusing children along the way until finally we caught up with him in another jurisdiction. That's an unacceptable state of affairs as far as I'm concerned.

I am all for making sure that we appreciate the duties and responsibilities of teachers, but I also understand they are responsible for a certain level of decorum and respect towards the students, towards the parents in the school district and towards us all as a society. The fact that teachers can freely leave school district A and move on to school district B, C, D, E and F without anyone knowing that they have abused students, that they have had sex with students, that they have been inappropriate, that they have bullied students is not acceptable in British Columbia.

[1035]

I am very, very eager to see what the minister has coming forward in terms of a registry. I hope that he will be defining abusive behaviour very clearly, that he will define misconduct very clearly and that he will define inappropriate behaviour management very clearly. What we have to be clear about, when we decide what the acceptable levels are, is that we have to enforce it. We have to have courage. We have to stand up for kids and for families in British Columbia.

We have to tell people that there are limits. The limit, in the case of students and teachers, is that teachers are in a position of trust. They should not abuse that trust, and if they do, everyone that goes and looks at their résumé should be able to see that so they can make an informed decision about whether that person is someone they want to bring into their district. I know that there have been cases reported in the press where individuals have been hushed up, where school districts have decided not to report on the incidence of

inappropriate behaviour by a teacher. That has resulted in a teacher moving to just one, two, three districts up the road. That's not acceptable in B.C. It's not acceptable in Canada.

I encourage the minister to continue his very intense work to create a national registry to protect kids, not only in British Columbia but in every province in Canada.

THE GATEWAY TO ASIA-PACIFIC

R. Lee: Located at the Pacific Rim, British Columbia is closely related to the regions in the Asia-Pacific. We are interconnected in history, people, culture, geography and economy.

Historically, Canada has had a very close relationship with Asia-Pacific regions. It's widely believed that the aboriginal peoples in Canada arrived from Asia thousands of years ago by way of a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska. Many of them settled in British Columbia, as it's known now, while others chose to continue to the east and the south. More recently, in 1788, a British fur trader, John Meares, recruited 50 Chinese smiths and carpenters from Guangdong and Macao to Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island to help him build a 40-tonne schooner — namely, the *North West America*, the first European ship launched in the Pacific Northwest.

I happen to have been born in Guangdong, and I lived in Macao for several years before I came to British Columbia in 1971. My grandfather came to Canada in 1913. He was a farmer.

The history of British Columbia shows the supply of Chinese labour was indispensable in opening up this great province. They worked as shipbuilders, goldminers, railroad builders and farmers. Mr. John Meares wrote in his memoirs at that time: "If, hereafter, trading posts should be established on the American coast, a colony of these men should be a very important acquisition."

Many immigrants have arrived in British Columbia since then from the Asia-Pacific region. Waves of immigrants from India and Japan were also attracted to British Columbia in the last 30 years. Immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and the ASEAN countries have all increased substantially and contributed many of their unique cultures to our society. This interconnection of people and cultures actually positions British Columbia well as the gateway of Canada to the Asia-Pacific.

Geographically speaking, British Columbia is the second-closest region in North America to Asia. Alaska is the closest, but few people live in that cold land. Ports in coastal British Columbia have the distinguished advantage of saving time and cost in transportation. Goods from Asia by sea entering at Prince Rupert can be delivered to Chicago with a savings of at least two days compared to delivery time with a U.S. seaport. Goods from other provinces in Canada, of course, must go through our land to gain access to the water of the Pacific Ocean.

Because of our geographic advantage, products originating from British Columbia dominate the export market to Asia. In 2004 exports from British Columbia accounted for one-third of all exports from Canada with APEC destinations, excluding the Americas. This \$8.3 billion of exports maintains many jobs in this province.

[1040]

One very notable rapid growth is the exports to mainland China, which increased from \$756 million in the year 2000 to \$1.709 billion in 2004, or 126 percent over four years.

British Columbia imports from these Asia-Pacific countries accounted for about half of all imports of the province. This number showed that the economy of British Columbia and the economies of Asia-Pacific countries are closely dependent on each other.

On February 2 and 3, 2005, the Caucus Committee on Asian Economic Development had the opportunity to listen to many prominent community and business leaders expressing their views on how to increase investment from Asia-Pacific countries and how to increase our exports to these countries. The participants included John Wiebe, president of the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada; Earle Drake, vice-chairman of Canada China Business Council; Florence Gordon, president of Richmond Chamber of Commerce; William Cheuk, president of the Chinese Federation of Commerce of Canada; Michael Lam, director of Canada Singapore Business Association; Valli Chettiar, president of Canada-India Business Council; Robert Fairweather, president of the International Financial Centre; Guibert Ho, president of the Malaysia-Canada Business Council; Carmelita Tapia, president of the ASEAN Canada Business Council; and Mary Mahon Jones, CEO of the Council of Tourism Associations of British Columbia.

To be an effective gateway to the Asia-Pacific, it was suggested that B.C. needs a mission and strategy on our role in global economic development. B.C. should establish a council to meet regularly on how to focus our resources in marketing. B.C. should have trade offices abroad. B.C. should help small and medium-sized businesses improve their competitiveness in the global market. B.C. needs an office here to meet and greet foreign dignitaries and business people and to show them opportunities. B.C. should empower the business bilateral associations by establishing a resource centre. B.C. should communicate with the federal government regarding the problems of overseas business people getting Canadian visas.

I am pleased to see that on February 9 the Speech from the Throne clearly announced a British Columbia gateway strategy. Some of these concerns have been addressed. The government now has a clear mission and strategy, which is the Asia-Pacific gateway strategy.

The Premier has a clear vision of the mission:

"We have a golden opportunity to become North America's foremost crossroads to the Asia-Pacific. B.C.'s role as the nation's Pacific gateway, our multicultural so-

ciety, the diversity and wealth of first nations cultures, B.C.'s world-class education and research capacity, and the province's transportation and trade infrastructure give us a strategic advantage over every other province and allow us to lead the way in accessing the growing economic opportunities in the Asia-Pacific."

At this moment I know that my colleague, the member for Richmond Centre, is eager to offer some comments.

G. Halsey-Brandt: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to carry on this topic, certainly critical in my constituency and throughout British Columbia, on the Asia-Pacific gateway strategy.

First, I would just like to recognize the member for Burnaby North and his very hard work at building connections in trade, education and culture in his ongoing role as the chair of the Asian Economic Development Committee. I serve on that committee with him, and we've had some excellent meetings. We're rolling ahead, and we look forward to greater progress in the future.

Indeed, we are uniquely positioned here in British Columbia to carry out this strategy. As everyone knows from their social studies classes — if they can reflect back on school — in terms of geography, we are a gateway to Asia, and Asia is a gateway to North America because of the great circle route. As you know, on a globe we're closer to Asia because of the curvature of the Earth. If you're flying to China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia or India, you're probably going to fly over Alaska. That way is much, much closer than going through L.A. or San Francisco.

[1045]

We're also very fortunate here in British Columbia that in our time zone we can carry on business both in Europe and in Asia in the same working business day, which puts us ahead of many of our competitors.

Secondly, from a cultural aspect we're uniquely positioned as well, because of hundreds of thousands of our immigrants who have come from East Asia and South Asia. They've come with business ties — with business there and friends there who carry on business. They've come with cultural ties to Asia, and they bring that benefit to us here in British Columbia. They can do business with their friends and the businesses they've left behind, with new businesses here in British Columbia.

Of course, if you're looking for expertise, we have to look no further than those new immigrants in terms of understanding the business practices, laws and accounting practices that affect businesses in Asia. We should be using our local population more and more to help us develop those very important trade links. I think that was a resounding message that we heard from the Asian Economic Development Committee members.

I would like to talk briefly, uniquely focused, about tourism. The more tourists that come here.... They go back and talk to their friends and neighbours about it, and we increasingly build it. We've really turned it around since the decline that happened after 9/11 in

2001. In last summer's quarter we had a 37 percent increase in the number of Asian tourists here to British Columbia. What we heard from the tourism industry is that we have to develop our products here in British Columbia as draws and as promotions.

I can think back to my visit to Prince Edward Island a number of years ago and all the tourists from Asia I saw going to Anne of Green Gables cottage. Well, here in British Columbia we can surely rival that and focus tourism resources on British Columbia.

Another area is our commodities that we have in British Columbia — whether they be oil or gas, forest products, pulp and paper, lumber, plywood, fish and agricultural products, coal and other minerals such as copper — which are all in demand in the growing economies of Asia. What we have to do — and I think we have a lot of consensus around this — is take our exports to a higher level. We need more manufacturing exports in terms of our technology, environmental products, educational products, nursing and engineering training. We need overseas trade and tourism offices, and we need a consistent marketing of British Columbia with the B.C. brand abroad.

In my concluding remarks I just want to talk a wee bit about four partners that we work with in building this gateway strategy. The first is the port of Prince Rupert. I was up there with the Finance Committee in the fall. We were thrilled with the optimism in the city of Prince Rupert, with the expansion of the CN Rail partnership, upgrading of the trackage to the port, the new container terminal.... They were looking for funding and, of course, British Columbia is there as a funding partner; we're looking for more funding from the federal government. And the coal and grain port is expanding in Prince Rupert.

Here in my community we have the Fraser River port, which is the main stem of the Fraser River from Steveston to Surrey and to Maple Ridge. The volume out of that port makes the Fraser River port the second-largest port by volume in Canada, generating over \$2.1 billion in local economic output, with 12,400 direct jobs and about 350 businesses depending on that port-related activity.

The Fraser River port posted another record year in 2004. The port handled over 325,000 container units, up nearly 30 percent from the record volume of 2003. Container shipments at the Fraser River port have been up every year that this B.C. Liberal government has been in office in British Columbia, and now they are at more than six times their level in 2001.

The port of Vancouver is the largest and most diversified port in all of Canada, trading \$29 billion worth of goods with over 90 trading economies every year. Port activities, as we know in the lower mainland, generate over 62,000 jobs in total. They're expanding. They're increasing their potential in the port of Vancouver. They're also increasing the infrastructure at Delta Port for the container docks and Roberts Bank coal port is expanding as well. Their partners, CN and CP Rail, are investing funds and upgrading their trackage as well.

[1050]

The final partner I just wanted to talk briefly about — I can't let it go by — is the airport. YVR is spending \$1.4 billion and expanding their facilities. There are new international gates and runways at YVR to handle over 15.7 million passengers that we've got coming in. This is truly a great Asia-Pacific gateway strategy. Working with the chair, we're going to build it even greater.

R. Lee: I would like to thank the member for Richmond Centre for his comments.

I am pleased to see that concrete steps are taken in the throne speech to strengthen our gateway status. An Asia-Pacific trade council will be established to advise the government on where and how best to target our resources. A network of B.C. trade and cultural centres in key international markets will be built to promote making B.C. products. And a B.C. competition council will be set up to review B.C.'s competitiveness.

The government of Canada also realized the importance of the rapid growth of Asia-Pacific opportunity. Recently, in the February 23 federal budget, it was announced that the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada would get an injection of \$50 million in this endowment to continue its work to build networks between Canadian and Asian business leaders and to unearth potential market opportunities that will benefit both regions.

The government also announced that many students from Asia-Pacific countries are attracted to British Columbia by our study environment, multicultural society and excellent learning institutes. Here we must capitalize on the strength in providing quality education to our advantage. It's widely believed that after foreign students experience our education system, they will become veritable ambassadors between two cultures. The relationships built among cohorts will last many years and could lead to closer business relations. Our education system must accept the challenges of globalization.

Last week I was at the inauguration of the professional master's degree program of international leadership established through collaboration between Simon Fraser University and Capilano College. I am also looking forward to witnessing the signing of an MOU on another innovative dual-degree program developed between Simon Fraser University and Zhejiang University in China, one of the top universities there. Under this arrangement, a B.C. student will be awarded two degrees by two universities upon graduation.

We must also encourage our students' outreach by establishing a new One World scholarship fund to help B.C. students earn their degrees and diplomas in other non-G-8 countries, helping to create new relationships for B.C.

By the government's high level of commitment in advancing these initiatives, I am confident that this strategy will work and that we will be stepping into a golden decade of opportunities with the Asia-Pacific.

TIMBER FOR TOMORROW:
SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY IN B.C.

M. Hunter: I want to speak this morning about a subject which is close to the hearts of many people in my region of Vancouver Island. I want to talk about timber for tomorrow and about sustainable forestry. In preparing for this, I dug out Peter Pearse's report of November 2001 entitled *Ready for Change: Crisis and Opportunity in the Coast Forest Industry*. I think it's important to just remind ourselves of what Dr. Pearse said at that time:

"As this report is written, British Columbia's forest industry is reeling from new U.S. trade actions against Canadian lumber.... The coastal sector, particularly, is facing a declining raw material supply, excess manufacturing capacity and obsolete equipment. Low returns on capital have deterred investment, high costs have reduced competitiveness in world markets for forest products, and a weak Japanese market and growing foreign competition have added to the barriers to U.S. markets. My purpose" — Dr. Pearse's purpose — "in the following pages is to explain the crisis the coast forest industry now faces and why it must undergo major change."

[1055]

This government has addressed part of that change over the last four years in substantive ways, but I want to focus a little bit on some of the symptoms of the debate which, addressing Dr. Pearse's analysis, have come up. One of those issues is the export of logs. I have to say right off the top that I do understand the concern that's being expressed. People see logs being exported. They think that's jobs leaving the province. I understand that people feel themselves to be in a corner. They're fighting for their jobs.

Just last week Brascan announced that it would buy the coastal assets of Weyerhaeuser. That creates uncertainty amongst millworkers and forest workers. I understand that. In fact, many years ago — 15 years ago — I went through similar concerns and agonies over a GATT case on British Columbia salmon and herring, where some similar questions were asked. I think that if there's anybody who understands the concern that's out there, it's me.

I think we need to look at some of the facts. Again, I want to go back to part of the analysis that Dr. Pearse provided to us back in 2001. He said this about the coast:

"Most of the existing mills on the coast are designed to process large, old-growth logs. They are not appropriate for manufacturing second growth and for practical purposes cannot do so economically, because they employ unsuitable technology and are in unsuitable locations. The industry has been slow to reconfigure its manufacturing plants to accommodate second-growth timber, due in part to government regulations that require companies to maintain their existing mills."

I might interject that one of the changes we introduced was to remove that appurtenancy requirement. To resume: "It is also due in part to the existing surplus capacity in coastal sawmilling and the poor financial performance of the industry in recent years, all of which have impeded new mill construction" — and

therefore the ability of the industry to get on with the job.

We inherited an industry in this government that had serious, substantial financial and performance problems that were 25 years in the making. The issue of the export of raw logs is, as I say, symptomatic of the discussion and the debate that's going on in the industry about how the industry is regenerating itself. One of the concerns is that we're losing jobs.

Well, let's look at some of the facts. In 2004 only 1.45 percent of the B.C. annual allowable cut was exported out of this province without any form of processing. That's not a big number. I think we need to understand something that I came to learn, because I didn't know it before I took this job: we actually do have private land in significant quantity, particularly on southern Vancouver Island and the coast. I'll get to that in a minute.

On Crown land, logs must be offered for sale in British Columbia before they can be exported. It's interesting that only in British Columbia is this requirement in place. No other province has such a requirement.

On the private lands, the owners of those lands can do what they want. I can tell you that this is one member who believes that any proposed restrictions on private land holdings in terms of what they can do with the products of their land.... I'm not interested. I don't support the Canadian Wheat Board being able to tell farmers where they can sell grain. I don't support telling private land owners what they can do with their products and the results of the husbandry of the land they own.

The fact is that if you take the private and Crown-owned lands in coastal British Columbia together, 95 percent of the harvest of those lands is processed in B.C. Now, I said I understand why some workers are concerned. It's perfectly natural, but I think we need to take a bigger picture.

Part of that bigger picture is the fact that there are some estimated 2,000 people working in the woods because we are allowing log exports on a selective basis and after the surplus test is met — 2,000 workers and their families directly in the woods plus the truck drivers plus the equipment suppliers plus the grocery store clerks where these folks spend their money. I have to be concerned about these families, too, in this debate. It's not just about the person in the sawmill who might see logs leaving the country. It's also those who cut the logs in the first place and the contribution they make to our economy.

[1100]

I think the question that should be asked is: why is it that the price of a log in Canada, in British Columbia, is less, as a rule, than the same price for that log in the United States, in the Pacific Northwest or in Japan? Until we resolve that question, which in my view will be resolved through investment in high-efficiency, high-productivity coastal sawmills.... Until that happens, the trade is going to continue. That's the nature of international trade. It's the nature of companies trying

to make profits, and I don't think that a regulation just put in place is appropriate to stop that. We will stop it by a policy of rejuvenating the forest industry. That's beginning to happen. The \$1.3 billion investment by Brascan Corp. last week in this province is big news. It's the biggest investment in the forest sector in a long, long time, and it will have an interesting impact.

The other thing that isn't talked about very much is that the United States, in an average year, exports four times as many logs to British Columbia as it imports from us.

I look forward to the remarks from my colleague from North Island, who is also going to talk about this subject.

R. Visser: There are few topics that engender such a visceral response from constituents as the notion of raw log exports. You drive up and down Vancouver Island and across British Columbia, and you see the bumper stickers about banning raw log exports. I hear about it in e-mails and in person from all across this province. I think, in many cases, it's probably one of the most misunderstood and mistrusted pieces of forest policy that exists today. I appreciate the member for Nanaimo's analysis of this, because it is exactly true.

I'm going to start by saying that my constituency is tree farming country. We grow trees, and we employ people to harvest trees. We take those trees, and we sell them into what should be a marketplace. It is my opinion and the opinion of many in my area that we do not receive the appropriate return on those trees or that the market isn't reflective of those trees and what their value is over time. There is a disparity between what people can pay south of the border or in Japan and what they can pay in British Columbia. It's an interesting disparity, one that I think we need to pay attention to and one that I think both the member for Nanaimo and Peter Pearse addressed; that is, the inefficiency in the coastal sawmills and the retooling that is required.

Log exports are an interesting phenomenon. If you go to the northwest and you trace it back a little bit over time, they have waxed and waned depending on the marketplaces out there and depending on governments of the day and their biases — or you would think so. That is absolutely untrue. All during the 1990s there was a roller-coaster of exports — they rose and they fell. They were there to meet some specific needs.

If you go to the northwest of this province where our cutting permit out of the Morice forest district or the Kitsumkalum or one of those could have as much as 60 percent to 70 percent of pulpwood in it and if you know that today pulpwood is trading at \$25 to \$28 a cubic metre on the coast of British Columbia and that your average delivered log cost is north of \$80, you don't have to do much math before you realize that you're not going out there logging.

In Terrace, in towns like that, the fact that this government stood up and said that we will put in an OIC that blankets these three forest districts for a 30 percent export is a brave thing to say. It's a brave and appropriate thing to say, because every other government

has done exactly the same thing; they just never told you about it. They did it one-off — a little bit here, a little bit there. Sometimes it was for their friends, and sometimes it was for others. The fact that you stand up and say that this is what we're going to do, and this is why we're going to do it... The fact that they can export — and most of that wood goes to Japan and other places — lets them into the woods. It lets those loggers get back to work and lets those towns start to at least have some sense of an economy. It's the right thing to do.

The fact that they had never got to 35 percent is even more interesting. It hovers around 20 percent. They are all surplus-tested. They are all offered to buyers here in British Columbia, with any sawmill, should they so choose to pay the domestic — not the international but the domestic — log price. That's the right way to build public policy: clear, open and appropriate.

[1105]

The other thing that's happened in the last couple of years that I find fascinating is... There's a little sawmill in Campbell River owned by TimberWest that actually did retool, did make the investments it needed and did hire the people it needed to get the job done. They went to three shifts, they got efficient, and they had to compete for logs. Where did they compete for logs? From their private lands. They are now paying, and can pay on average, the international log price for second-growth fir.

That is phenomenal. That is the right thing that has to happen if we're going to succeed in this global forest economy out there. We have to get efficient. We have to get smart at what we do. It happened in the interior. It has to happen on the coast, and it will happen on the coast.

Does that mean there's going to be change? Yes, it does. But it means that coming out of that change is survival. It means that coming out of that change, we're going to be able to have a return on the capital that we employ in this coastal forest industry. We are going to be able to retool this industry in the harvesting side and the tree-growing side as well as the manufacturing side. We need to look for new markets. We need to look for new products. We've got to figure out what we're going to do with coastal hemlock, because it's struggling at the moment.

I want to thank the member for Nanaimo for raising this topic. It is an important one, and I look forward to his concluding comments.

M. Hunter: I'm going to go back to my bible on forestry, Dr. Pearse's report. He talks about the 1990s. He says:

"It seems clear that the 1990s marked a turning point in the development of the coastal forest industry. During this decade, political priority turned from expanding the forest industry to ways of containing it. Through a wave of provincial regulatory controls on industrial forest operations, including the massive Forest Practices Code, vast areas of forest land were withdrawn from commer-

cial use for wilderness parks and other protected areas. A superstumpage was imposed on timber harvest."

That was the NDP record. On this particular issue of log exports, I have to say that the NDP still doesn't get it. Like in 1991, when Mike Harcourt promised to ban raw log exports, the leader of the NDP — whose name, I believe, is Carole James — is proposing the same again. Well, her own members from back in the 1990s had a couple of things to say about the NDP's record on this. A Misty MacDuffie of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and Mehdi Najari, an NDP member of the Saanich South constituency, said in January 1995:

"More than four million cubic metres of raw logs have been exported from B.C.'s public lands since the NDP has been in power. It's obvious the NDP has done nothing to create a link between access to public timber and concrete commitments for value-added manufacturing."

Monty Mearns is quoted in the *Nelson Daily News* in 2002. "Monty Mearns, a local president of the Woodworkers union, said: 'The export of raw logs has been going on for decades, and concerns about it have been raised in the past.' He questioned why Zirnhelt" — that's former Forest minister David Zirnhelt — "is choosing to discuss it now. 'He and his government were as guilty as anyone else,' Mearns said. 'The NDP were well aware of it for a number of years.'"

In conclusion, this issue, the debate over raw log exports, is healthy and is helping us debate the future of our forest industry. To make sure that forestry is sustainable in British Columbia, the people of British Columbia have a choice: to move forward with a government that intends to make our forestry industry sustainable, or they can go back to a government party which shows it's not capable of doing that. In fact, the NDP's record is well summed up if one looks back at the ill-fated jobs and timber accord. It promised 22,000 jobs and resulted in 8,000 people losing work.

Deputy Speaker: That concludes members' statements.

Hon. B. Locke: I call Motion 22.

Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with Motion 22 without disturbing the priorities of motions preceding it on the order paper.

Leave granted.

Motions on Notice

ROLE OF RURAL REGIONS IN B.C. ECONOMY

B. Bennett: The motion reads as follows:

[Be it resolved that this House recognize and acknowledge that British Columbia's rural regions are participating in the province's economic recovery.]

Hallelujah. They definitely are.

[1110]

Carole James was recently up in the Kootenays and advised us that, in her opinion, rural B.C. was not participating in the economic recovery here in this province. She's obviously not acquainted with my region in the East Kootenay. In fact, the whole region — all of the Kootenays — has the lowest unemployment rate since 1973. Message to Ms. James: she better get with the program. Our unemployment is better than it has been in decades.

In my riding of East Kootenay real estate is up everywhere, even in the small towns — towns like Elkford with 2,500 population — that haven't seen a buoyant real estate market again in decades. You can hardly find a piece of residential real estate.

There is also commercial investment. Retail is up in the Kootenays. International corporations are locating in our larger towns, like Cranbrook.

Forestry. The forest companies are going full tilt right now. Tembec is the major forest employer in the East Kootenay. They just invested \$17 million in some new retrofits and expansion of a sawmill in my riding.

Mining. Elk Valley Coal Corporation is hiring as fast as they can get the people today. In fact, last week the Minister of State for Mining and myself helped open up a new recruiting office right on Highway 3, one of our two trans-Canada highways in this province. This new recruiting office has a big sign out along the highway: "Hiring now." Then it has a sign below that saying what type of workers they're looking for. Elk Valley Coal Corporation is investing \$150 million this year in expansion and is trying to get their production up at their five mines.

Tourism. The ski resorts are expanding. Golf resorts are opening up. And of course, our airport in Cranbrook will be expanding, all in preparation for the wonderful opportunities that will come to the tourism industry because of the 2010 games — in fact, opportunities that are already here.

I don't know where Carole James has been, but I can tell you that recently the Urban Futures Institute said quite clearly that the dominant engines of British Columbia's economy are its natural resources — in fact, this is a quotation from the Urban Futures Institute report — and hence, the resource regions of the province.

"While urban and, specifically, metropolitan economic activities are important contributors to the province's economic base — they account for approximately one-third of this base — two-thirds of provincial export income is earned by the forestry, mining, fishing, energy and agricultural sectors, which are predominantly non-metropolitan."

When I heard that U.S. Sen. Max Baucus was invited to Fernie this past Friday, I couldn't imagine what unscrupulous, traitorous twit had sunk so low as to invite this guy to British Columbia. This is the guy who has brought forward legislation in the U.S. Senate that would see \$4 billion of Canadian softwood money forfeited to U.S. mills that have refused to reinvest in productivity. This is the guy that's been fighting the reopening of the U.S. border to Canadian cattle. In fact,

last Friday he reiterated publicly that he opposes the opening of the U.S. border to Canadian cattle on March 7.

This is the fellow who opposes a routine coal exploration permit granted by the B.C. government, despite the fact that in his own state of Montana there are 30 operating mines. We've got five operating coalmines in the watershed that feeds the water to the state of Montana. We've been sending them crystal-clean, fresh, pure water for the last 100 years.

Now, it was satisfying to hear Senator Baucus admit that the Canadian position on softwood is a stronger position than the American position. I'm not sure that he intended to say that, but that's what he said.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Senator Baucus's trip was who invited him. About 150 loggers and miners and ranchers crammed inside the Fernie seniors centre trying to get Senator Baucus to actually answer some questions about his positions — his often-quoted and oft-repeated positions — on Canadian natural resources. About 140 of those folks left with me after it became clear that the senator had never intended to meet with working people.

Those that wanted to meet with Senator Baucus stayed. The only people left in the room were the NDP candidate, the former member for East Kootenay, and her NDP entourage of the disappointed, the disillusioned and the disaffected, all of whom have spoken out against our government over the past three and a half years and who remain desperately committed to being unhappy despite the burgeoning economy all around them.

[1115]

It's hard to believe. But maybe it's not so hard to believe, because the history of the NDP and the resource industry in the East Kootenay tells a very interesting story. A former member — not the immediately preceding member — who served two terms, was called the worst Mines minister in British Columbia history by a president of the Mining Association of B.C. My opponent in the election in 2001 referred to a coal-fired power plant as another Chernobyl. I didn't get the opportunity then, so let me explain to her that a nuclear explosion has nothing to do with coal.

It is no surprise that NDP supporters were behind the invitation to Mr. Baucus. The NDP claims to be a party of unionized workers and ordinary people, but look at their actions, not their words. There were 13,000 forestry jobs killed with miles of red tape, high taxes and ridiculous policies. Half the mines and half the mining jobs gone.

The NDP admitted many times that they didn't like mining, and it certainly showed. Yet big union leaders try to tell unionized workers how they should vote. Workers have a right to vote in their own self-interests and in the interests of their families. This May I ask the hard-working forest and mine workers in rural B.C. to stop and think before they vote. Your boats are being lifted by a rising tide of economic prosperity in British Columbia that is being powered by the resource indus-

tries in rural B.C. that you work in. Remember, a few short years ago, how desperate the forest and mining industries were in British Columbia.

There is hope today. There is confidence and investment and job creation today. So come with us into a decade of prosperity. Don't let us be dragged back into the past. Let's go forward into the future and claim the benefits we have all worked so hard to earn over these past few years.

Hon. R. Neufeld: I rise to speak briefly about this issue that just happened but an issue that's been ongoing for quite some time within the ministry and with Montana. First, I want to state, and I've said to officials in Montana on numerous occasions, that B.C. values its water, its resources, its splendour, its country and its mountains as much as anyone does. We've demonstrated that in British Columbia by actually putting 12 percent away into parks and protected areas.

When I asked individuals in Montana how much land they had put away for the same purposes, no one could answer. I'm not sure whether they couldn't answer or they just didn't want to answer, but it was an interesting comment from most of them, the media included: "We're not sure how much we've put aside."

I can understand to a degree why people from Montana — I'm not talking about Mr. Baucus here; I'm talking about the people from Montana, the Freds and Marthas — want to make sure that their water that flows into Glacier National Park is maintained the same today, tomorrow and into the future. We've committed to doing that. I mean, I can't imagine why a government — any government, anyone in this Legislature — would want to stand up and destroy a watershed. That's not in our plan, never has been in our plan and never will be in our plan. Actually, for the permit that my ministry issued to go to an area that already has industrial activity, that already has logging taking place.... Logging has taken place there for quite a long time. There has been activity in that area with people — in fact, Fording Coal — doing some tests numbers of years ago via permits issued by the NDP, by the way.

[1120]

We want to maintain as clean a record as we possibly can. In fact, when there was a permit requested for a mine much closer to the border.... Let's put this in perspective. This particular permit that was issued to remove maybe 90,000 tons of coal at most is about 50 kilometres north of the border. The other one last year was very close to the border, and there had been some discussions about that one before we came to office. We decided, in the best interests, that we should leave that one be.

But that doesn't mean that we should quit all activity in British Columbia, because as the member for East Kootenay spoke.... He was there to witness what took place when Mr. Baucus crossed the border to come into British Columbia to Fernie — a community, by the way, where about 25 to 30 percent of its budget comes from the coalmining industry in that member's constituency — and talked about how terrible Canadians

are for even thinking about this. It is quite unbelievable to me that a senator who has led the charge, killed thousands of jobs in British Columbia in the forest industry over the years, killed lots of operations in the cattle industry with the BSE situation, who doesn't seem to give a darn about British Columbia at all.... When he talks about science, he doesn't want to use science when science is there to show him the difference or reality. It's all about political posturing for Mr. Baucus.

I want to commend the member for East Kootenay for the job he did. I read with interest the newspaper clippings this morning and was kept up to date on what took place. I'm glad to see that British Columbians employed in our resource industries, whether it's in mining or whether it's in agriculture and ranching or whether it's in forestry, came out and supported the member, saying: "Look, we have the rules and regulations in place." My ministry does, Water Land and Air Protection does and Sustainable Resource Management does, and we would manage those things very well. I know we would, because, as I said from the outset, there is no one in this government that wants to ruin the water from that point to the border and then go across the border. Why would we do that? That would be rather silly.

But Mr. Baucus has enjoyed some notoriety over the years in some of his way-out statements and has been able to gain the hearts of some Americans, especially as it relates to softwood. When Mr. Baucus hits reality, when the World Trade Organization through NAFTA agreements that were signed by the U. S. and Canada all of a sudden loses all those legal hurdles, he is still out there saying: "We're going to keep the money because we don't care, and we're going to give it to our producers on the U.S. side." It demonstrates that this person doesn't really care about science. He doesn't really care about the legal world. He doesn't really care, I don't think, about Canadians. He doesn't care about those workers who live in the Kootenays and work in those resource industries. He actually only cares about his political hide. That's about it.

I read a press release that he put on line earlier on, saying things like — and I'm going to quote out of his press release: "I'm shocked that the British Columbia government would see fit to sneak across our borders in the dead of night to issue permits for a coalmine that Canadians and Americans do not support." Mr. Speaker, my ministry issued that permit. Nobody in my ministry snuck across the border into the U.S. to issue a permit. It is absolutely ludicrous. It's ridiculous to say we snuck across the border in the dead of the night. Actually, we do that at home. There is a ministry that just works right over here, in downtown Victoria, that actually manages that industry very well across the whole province. They issued that permit — not in the dark of night. Although I know that those people in my ministry work long hours, they certainly didn't.... [Applause.] We appreciate that, but I know they didn't do it in the dark of night. They did it in broad daylight with all the rules and regulations we have in place that

will manage our resources, our grandeur, our rivers and our water very well.

[1125]

It may be that Mr. Baucus hasn't done a good job in his state. I don't know.

It's interesting that they would oppose a coalmine when they have 30-some, as the member for East Kootenay said. They produce an awful lot of electricity with coal. They import energy from us in Canada, from Alberta and B.C. It's interesting that a person from a state like that that drills thousands of coalbed gas wells would oppose British Columbia doing the same, but it says to me he's a person who says he knows better than anyone else. He lets on to people to think that he's the top person. He understands WTO. He understands NAFTA. He can break the law when he wants to. He can oppose in Canada what he wants to. He can actually ask us to come, and he thinks we should come and talk to them before we issue a permit for the removal of just a few thousand tonnes of coal.

During our coalbed gas issues in that same area, I had staff go to Montana to explain to their regulators what we do. What was so unfair is that when our staff went there from Water, Land and Air Protection and from the Ministry of Energy and Mines — had I known this was going to take place, I wouldn't have allowed it — they got down there and got sand-bagged. Max Baucus and friends brought in a whole bunch of people that were opposed to any development any place, and they beat up our folks pretty good, even though we have rules and regulations that are just as good, or even stronger in some cases, as people have in Montana.

I said that from there on, no one will have to go to Montana to face that again from my ministry as long as I'm minister. I'll go, if need be, but I will not send our people down there again. They can actually send them to British Columbia, and we'll have a reasonable conversation with them to tell them how we do it and to find out from them how they do it.

Other crazy things that this senator, Max Baucus.... He's actually almost famous with some folks — famous with the likes of who I'm not sure. I'm going to quote another part of his outrageous press release. It says: "Issuing permits like this are clearly desperate and thinly veiled attempts by the British Columbia government to develop creative tactics to foot a bill for upcoming Olympics the province can ill afford, and they should just be honest."

Here's a guy again that says we can ill afford the Olympics. Where does this guy come from? Does he sneak in here in the dark of night and check something out here? He must. I don't know where this guy gets all his stuff from, but it's absolutely amazing.

I find it appalling that a senator of his stature and length of service would sneak across our border trying to rile up British Columbians against some of the things in a part of the province where these folks make their living. I think it's appalling, and I tell you that I want to commend the member for East Kootenay for what he did. That took a lot of courage. It took a lot of

courage and a lot of work for that member to go out and let the people know what was taking place so the right people were there.

I tend to agree with him about.... Maybe it is the NDP that actually invited him. Maybe it is the Greens that actually invited him. I don't know. But if you go to listen to what Carole James says about mining, she doesn't want mining to happen. She says she meets with the Mining Association of B.C. or the B.C. and Yukon Chamber of Mines but apparently has never done that.

Maybe they're that opposed to mining, and that's really the underlying issue here. They invited him because those are who seemed to stay in the room after all the people left with the MLA for East Kootenay. It harkens back to a time when the NDP released a permit for that same area. Hmm. No one phoned Max Baucus. I don't know if they did it in the dark of night. You never know with those folks. They did a lot of things that are just a little bit different than most people. But no one came up from Montana to oppose it at that time. It leads me to believe that this is political. It's ridiculous. It's actually.... I can't describe it here in words I'd like to use.

[1130]

It's appalling to me that a senator would come to British Columbia to oppose things we're doing in British Columbia, when he himself is standing publicly talking about breaking the law in reference to the softwood agreement and those kinds of things. It certainly demonstrates to us and to the member for East Kootenay what lengths the NDP may go to, to actually win a few sorry votes in that constituency on May 17.

Hon. P. Bell: I would like to share my thoughts regarding Sen. Max Baucus as well. I don't think it would be a stretch to say that Mr. Baucus is actually the enemy of British Columbia and the enemy of Canada. Here is a gentleman who makes it his life work to try and disrupt every industry that we have in British Columbia. He actually had the nerve to introduce a bill to the Senate that would indicate that the money that has been illegally held, according to NAFTA and according to WTO, by the Americans regarding our softwood dispute — take that money and actually distribute it to his friends, distribute it to the people that backed him in his last election process, distribute it to the people that actually funded his election....

It's absolutely despicable. Then when BSE came along, and it's been proven that British Columbia and Canada have some of the highest standards anywhere in the world in terms of dealing with food safety issues and specifically around BSE, he doesn't want to open up the border either.

Then along comes mining. Here is a little bit of an exploration project that's 35 kilometres from the border and has little or no impact on the environment. He doesn't want that either. I think Mr. Baucus should remember who his friends are, because clearly he has forgotten that Canada and British Columbia are friends of the Americans. He has displayed nothing but dis-

dain for Canadians, British Columbians and specifically the population of the East Kootenays. Anyone who is willing to sit in a room with that man and actually listen to him espouse his rhetoric and garbage clearly is not supportive of the British Columbia public. I just find that absolutely distasteful.

However, that all said, I do want to talk more specifically about the economy and about what the natural resource sector does for the economy, because it is certainly a passion of mine. It is incredible — the benefits that are accrued to the population of British Columbia regardless of whether it's in the lower mainland or in the different regions around the province. It's phenomenal — the benefits that we get as a result of the mining industry.

I just want to give some examples to the House, if I may. The Kemess South copper-gold mine is located in my riding — much to the disdain, I might add, of the member for Bulkley Valley-Stikine, who is planning on redrawing the riding boundaries. However, this mine generates \$194 million per year in copper, gold and silver, and it has 351 employees with a payroll of \$26 million. It spends \$24 million in capital expenditures around the province, \$88 million in goods and services and \$14 million in direct payments to local and provincial governments, as well as another \$17 million to electricity.

When you look at how that breaks out, Mr. Speaker, the Prince George area gets something to the tune of \$46 million of direct benefit. The northwest corner of the province is about \$6 million in payroll and another \$5 million in goods and services. The southwestern portion of B.C. gets about \$19 million worth of direct benefit. That's just a small mine. That's not a big one.

Let's look at one of the larger mines. Let's look at Highland Valley Copper, which is one of the most long-term mines in the province and is very sustainable. Every year \$378 million in copper, moly, gold and silver comes out of the mine — 900 direct employees and a payroll in excess of \$85 million. Do the math. The average salary in the mining industry exceeds \$90,000 per year. There's \$12 million in capital expenditures. I could tell you, Mr. Speaker — these are 2003 numbers — the number this year will be tenfold that. There's \$215 million on goods and services, and \$15 million in direct payments to local municipalities.

[1135]

Another good example is the Eskay Creek mine in the northwest corner of the province. The entire land base that is consumed by the Eskay Creek mine is smaller than the parking lot of the average mall in British Columbia. There was \$130 million per year in gold and silver revenues — and again this was in 2003 before the price boom — 258 direct employees, \$20.8 million in payroll, \$60 million in goods and services.

Let's look at the biggest one, because this really is what it comes down to in terms of benefits: the Elk Valley Coal Corporation that runs a series of mines in the member for East Kootenay's riding. A billion dollars a year in metallurgical and thermal coals; 2,360

employees; \$220 million in annual payroll; \$50 million in capital expenditures; \$430 million in goods and services; \$35 million in direct payments to local government. Those numbers are growing exponentially.

In 2003 we received about \$55 million in direct revenues from the mining industry in the province. This year that number could easily be well over double that, into perhaps \$120 million in direct revenues. Those revenues are what fund the health care system, the education system and the social service sector that we all care very, very much about. There are those direct revenues that are very meaningful. Without those revenues, you do what the NDP did in the 1990s, which is to spend more than you earn. That's why we ran up an additional \$17 billion worth of debt in that ten-year period of time. That is absolutely not sustainable.

What we did was borrow against our children's future through the 1990s. We said to our kids: "We can't afford to live the standard of living that we expect to live, so we're going to ask you to pay for it down the road." It's not going to be us paying for that debt. It is going to be our children. That is not something I'm prepared to endorse or move forward on.

Mining, forestry, energy and agriculture generate incredible wealth for all of British Columbia, and it's certainly something that we as a House need to continue to support. I'm very pleased to support the member's thoughts.

K. Krueger: I, too, rise to support the member for East Kootenay on his motion: "Be it resolved that this House recognize and acknowledge that British Columbia's rural regions are participating in the province's economic recovery."

I keep hearing Carole James say that she is touring all around the province and talking to what she refers to as ordinary British Columbians. I always think that is a bit of an insulting term, because I know extraordinary British Columbians all around the province — wonderful people who contribute to this province in so many different ways. I don't think people like being called ordinary, and they shouldn't, because they're not.

One of the British Columbians that I know well who is not ordinary at all is the member for East Kootenay, and I want to compliment him and his constituents on the reception they gave Sen. Max Baucus when he insultingly showed up to make the efforts that he did once again to damage British Columbia's economy and avoid employment for British Columbians. This man is a lousy neighbour. I've been hearing his name for so long, and I've never heard anything nice about him. He seems to be out to destroy our ranchers' livelihoods, our lumber people's livelihoods, and he clearly isn't in favour of us having mining employment. He is one very lousy neighbour.

He is an enemy of British Columbia. He's doing it, obviously, for his selfish little political reasons. He seems to ignore the fact that Canada is the best friend the United States has, and we've proven that time and

time again. When Americans believed — and we did too — that there were still terrorists on airplanes that were in the air, and the U.S. airspace was closed, Canada welcomed those planes landing all along our border, wherever they needed to land.

We've always stood in there for the U.S.A. time and time again over the many decades of our history. But when it comes to economic matters, Americans seem curiously willing to act as though we're not friends at all. That's not something that Canadians understand really well. To us, if you're a friend you're a friend all the way around.

This man is no friend of Canada. He's an enemy of Canada, and his behaviour has been very destructive. I want to compliment the member for East Kootenay and his constituents for being so upfront with him and dealing with him the way they did.

[1140]

The behaviour of Max Baucus and the Americans that he's been able to persuade to go along with him has hurt British Columbians in many, many ways.

I have a family named the Moilliets who live in a place called Avola in the North Thompson Valley, and they have a sheep ranch they've run for 100 years — generations of Moilliets. It has its centennial this year. They raise 1,600 lambs every year, and for the past two years their lamb prices have been the price of 40 years ago. That ranch is in trouble after 100 years of successful operation. Why? Because Sen. Max Baucus and his cronies have managed to throw the net even wider than we thought they would with regard to cattle crossing the border, and the Moilliets' lambs have not been able to cross the border.

We had an integrated industry where the lambs were slaughtered and processed in the States. We don't have the capacity in British Columbia to slaughter that volume of animals, because we didn't need it. We were cooperating with our friends and allies south of the border, and everybody was benefiting as a result. Well, we've had to learn the brutal lesson that we just cannot depend on the Americans for trade when we have people like Sen. Max Baucus constantly in there causing us grief and deliberately hurting Canadians.

In the long run this has hurt the economy of the United States and will continue to do so, as we seek markets elsewhere and seek new ways of getting things done without having to depend on people who are represented by the likes of Max Baucus.

Speaking to the member's motion, I want to make it clear to Carole James — who clearly doesn't talk to people who are getting things done around British Columbia, which is most of us. She is only talking to her NDP allies. She came up to my constituency the other day and tried to grandstand at a liquor store, and only ten people showed up to hear her. They were probably her own entourage.

An Hon. Member: How many?

K. Krueger: Actually it was fewer than ten, but I rounded it up for her.

We would be so embarrassed if the Premier of this province went anywhere, or if he did when he was Leader of the Opposition, and only ten people showed any interest in what he was saying. The B.C. Federation of Labour, who are clearly presuming to run the NDP's campaign themselves, apparently boycotted her little stunt, but it must have been very embarrassing for them all around. The fact is they don't know what they're talking about.

The economy of British Columbia has taken off. We're once again back in the position of leadership, which has always been British Columbia's natural position all of my life, except when the NDP have been in power. We have taken the frightful lemon they left us when they lost power — a ruined economy, an economy bombed down to the worst-performing in Canada and kept there for ten years by them — back to the status that we normally enjoy: being the best-performing economy in Canada.

My constituents and British Columbians all over this great province are benefiting tremendously. We've made fine lemonade from the lemon we were handed, and the proof of that is everywhere. In Barriere, in my constituency, one of the hardest-hit communities in our whole region because of the forest fires of 2003 and the employment loss we suffered as a result.... Home assessments went up 8.8 percent in Barriere this year over last year, because people have taken a real interest in Barriere. People are doing things in Barriere.

We were handed a lemon again by Mother Nature in the pine beetle infestation. Well, we're turning that into employment and positive things. The Minister of Forests recently awarded 300,000 cubic metres of pine beetle kill to the lower North Thompson society. We're going great guns in the North Thompson Valley, throughout our region and all around this province.

James Western Star is a big truck dealer in Kamloops. Rob James, who runs the dealership, told me recently that they normally sell two cement trucks in a year. In the last year they sold 23 cement trucks in British Columbia.

J. Bray: No relation to Carole.

K. Krueger: Absolutely no relation to Carole James.

Actually, I don't believe Carole James will ever sit in this House. The member for Victoria-Beacon Hill thrashed her in 2001, and he is going to thrash her again. I predict that she will never represent that constituency in this House. I hope that is true because it would be a devastating thing for the constituents of Victoria-Beacon Hill to lose that member. He is a fine member. He has stood up in this House time and again and gone after issues for them — more issues than I ever imagined could arise in such a small constituency compared to the large geographic areas we represent out in the interior. He has been a zealous, hardworking, wonderful member, and it would be an absolute shame to lose him. I want the people of Victoria-Beacon Hill to know that we treasure this guy, and we want him back on May 18.

[1145]

Speaking of cement trucks, the Lafarge cement plant in Kamloops was on the brink of closure. They had scaled way back. They had told me they didn't think they'd continue; the plant just wasn't busy enough. That plant has turned around and is absolutely roaring now. They can't keep up with the orders. Why? Because the B.C. Liberals have turned the economy around, and there again the heartlands of this province are driving the commodities forward and running the economy to the benefit of every British Columbian.

I find it really astonishing that people along the Trans-Canada Highway as it runs through the lower mainland are opposing our government's plans to twin the Port Mann Bridge and widen the highway. I don't think people like that realize that they live in a forest-dependent community. Every community in British Columbia is a forest-dependent community; 1/6 of all the revenues we have to pay for everything we do in British Columbia comes from forestry. Whether it's one out of every six nurses, one out of every six doctors or one out of every six social workers, everything we pay for makes communities forest-dependent communities in British Columbia.

These people want to bottleneck the highway. They say it'll only encourage more traffic if you have a bigger highway. Well, we've got to get your goods down to the ports, folks, or we can't afford to continue paying your bills. We've absolutely got to improve our infrastructure — which of course was another of the many deficits that the NDP left for us to contend with when the public washed them out of their position of power here in British Columbia.

We are proud of the way that we contribute to the economy and the well-being of British Columbians. We are proud, out in the heartlands communities, that we continue to send those commodities down to cause the burgeoning of the economy and to make things tick for British Columbia. We want our urban friends to know, to understand and to remember that all of British Columbia depends on the resources and the people of the interior, the heartlands of British Columbia. It's going to continue that way for many decades to come.

I congratulate the member for this motion highlighting the contributions of rural British Columbia. I congratulate him again for the very icy reception that Sen. Max Baucus got when he presumed to show up in Fernie, B.C.

B. Suffredine: I'm pleased to rise in support of the motion. I also share the view that Senator Baucus needed chastising for his conduct.

In my view, coming into British Columbia to hold public meetings is an improper interference with the sovereignty of British Columbia. If any member of this House had the temerity to go to Montana, attempt to hold public meetings and talk to them about what their government should do, it would rightly be viewed by them as the same — an improper interference with the government of that state. It's one thing to speak up in

your home community. It's another to go to another country and speak out on the governing affairs.

It doesn't surprise me, though, that Senator Baucus seeks to partner with the NDP and the Greens to subvert mining. That's consistent with the NDP practice over a decade. They wanted to get rid of mining. Now, Senator Baucus isn't stupid. We may not like him, but he isn't stupid. He knows that if he partners with the NDP, they'll destroy mining. That's his goal. He wants to protect his jurisdiction from competition in the coal industry. He's out there trying to protect the 26 coal-mines and the miners in his jurisdiction, just like he's been doing with beef and other things. It's no surprise to me that he's taking in the NDP on this one. They don't even know what they're doing for him. He's simply trying to protect his own industry.

Let me help Carole James and the NDP understand things a little better in terms of how the economy in the interior is benefiting. Let me give her some real examples.

When I began in 2001, it wasn't very long afterwards that the Columbia brewery came along afterwards and said: "We're investing \$12 million in a new brewhouse that will be the state of the art. It'll be the best brewhouse in the world." The reason....

An Hon. Member: It's because of your drinking habits.

B. Suffredine: Well, it wasn't quite my drinking habits, because I don't drink beer.

It is the best brewhouse in the world. It is the first major investment in a brewery in British Columbia in over a decade.

[1150]

They did that only because they were confident in the change of government. Following on that, they recently relocated all of the production of Kokanee beer from Edmonton to Creston. They've invested an additional \$20 million dollars in Creston, and the construction of the facility is underway as we speak. That is all benefiting employment in Creston.

In addition, in Creston you'll find places under construction like the Crestview village for seniors and the Swan Valley Lodge extended care facility.

Wynndel Box and Lumber just about ten miles north has invested in a number of value-added lines. They're producing great products that are really quite interesting. Rather than just dimension lumber, you'll see prefinished siding, where it's painted and dried before it actually leaves the building. The Huscroft sawmill has invested over \$2 million in retooling for value-added equipment.

In Nelson there are new subdivisions. That's the first time we've seen new subdivisions in Nelson in many, many years. There is a subdivision of about 42 lots going in on the lakeshore. There's the new Mountain Lakes Seniors Community with a 92-bed hospital and independent living facilities.

There is mining activity throughout the Kootenays. There's a major development occurring up in Trout

Lake where there may be a molybdenum mine starting soon. New Denver has Orphan Boy producing silver, we hope, this summer. Just outside of Nelson, Sultan Minerals has invested about \$7 million in a drilling program.

There was also a recent announcement that there may actually be an investigation for diamonds in the region between Nelson and Creston. Now, that's a pretty big long shot at this point. But its value is that people are actually willing to risk the money to look for things like diamonds or are willing to look for anything in the mining sector in our region. It's been a long time since mining was welcome in the Kootenays.

One other little example, or maybe a big example, is a company in my town called Pacific Insight Electronics. They've actually doubled their workforce since 2001. They make electronic things like headlight controls and automatic headlights on GM cars. They have a contract for a number of major suppliers. They don't just employ line workers at minimum wage. About half the people they've added to their workforce are people that earn over \$100,000 a year. That's big news in a place like Nelson — that we've actually doubled the size of a business like that in just four years.

Some of the things we don't see.... We don't notice all the Internet businesses that exist, because often they're little, two-person businesses operating out of someone's home. It used to be said in business that the three most important things are location, location and location. The Internet has changed all that. Now it means that an architect, an engineer, a writer or a researcher can work at home.

We've got some really unique businesses in the Kootenays that provide services and products directly to people around the world. We've got the Brilliant dam expansion — \$200 million invested at Castlegar.

B. Penner: That's brilliant.

B. Suffredine: It's brilliant. That's right. That's a whole whack of jobs for the Kootenays. It's often difficult to identify specifics like the ones I've just described because of the fact that often they are one or two-person businesses.

The member for East Kootenay alluded earlier to the real estate market. Housing starts and prices are one of the best indicators of how we're doing in communities.

In 2001 the town council in Creston created a composite photograph of the main street that they showed me where there were, I think, 22 vacant stores. They assembled them all together and made one photograph of this composite of a main street that is only about four blocks long. It was dramatic.

If you go back there today there are still a few vacant stores, but they are very few, and they couldn't make a photograph like that if they tried.

Let me talk just a little bit about the real estate in the area, because that's a good indicator. I got this from the Kootenay Real Estate Board's 2004 report. They say that 2004 was a record year in the Kootenays for vol-

ume. Now of course, the Kootenays isn't the market of Vancouver, but it's all relative. The real estate board brokered 268 real property transactions for combined sales of \$47.185 million. That represents a 35 percent in unit sales increase over the amounts reported for the preceding year and a whopping increase of 84 percent in total sales volume.

[1155]

In the Kootenays 2004 was a record-breaker for members. They have 4,082 property transactions for a combined sales volume of \$594 million. That's a 32 percent increase in unit sales to date over the same period last year, with an increase of 44 percent in sales volume.

Let me just highlight a couple of things. If I were to jump to the specifics of communities, Nelson had an increase.... Sorry.

B. Penner: Time to reboot.

B. Suffredine: Reboot. Yeah.

Larger markets experienced a slight unit sales decline, including Nelson, which showed a 6 percent decrease in units sold in comparison to 2003. Rossland was down a modest 3 percent. But on the price side, both of them rose dramatically. The average sales price of a detached, single-family dwelling in Nelson in-

creased 9 percent over 2003, but in Rossland the increase was 23 percent in one year. In Kimberley the increase was 19 percent; in Invermere, an increase of 45 percent; in Golden, an increase of 11 percent.

The economic impact of home sales, real estate purchases and sales translate into additional consumer spending of about \$28,000 per transaction. Based on that figure, 2003 home sales generated over \$2.6 billion in related spending and created 21,800 jobs. In that alone, in Nelson-Creston, approximately 154 new jobs were created just from real estate sales and the spinoff spending.

Noting the time, I move adjournment of debate.

B. Suffredine moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. B. Locke moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

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

The House adjourned at 11:57 a.m.