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

**THIRD SESSION, 38TH PARLIAMENT**

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Afternoon Sitting

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2007

The House met at 1:35 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

**Mr. Speaker:** Elmer George Sr., elder of the Songhees Nation, will lead us in prayer.

Prayers. [Elmer George Sr., an elder of the Songhees Nation, delivered a prayer in the Lekwungaynung language.]

### Introductions by Members

**Mr. Speaker:** Members, on behalf of all of us, I would welcome all the people who are here today on this very special occasion that is about to be put forward before this Legislative Assembly.

### Tributes

COSMOS RICHARD FRANK

**Hon. M. de Jong:** Mr. Speaker, on a day of celebration, I regret to inform the House of the passing of Hereditary Chief Cosmos Richard Frank of the Ahousaht First Nation. Chief Frank, aged 77, passed away on Monday here in Victoria. I know that all of us in this House, the Maa-nulth elders, chiefs and hereditary chiefs are saddened that he is unable to be with us in person physically, but we know that he is up there in spirit.

I would ask the House to join with me in observing a moment's silence for the passing of Hereditary Chief Cosmos Richard Frank.

### Introduction and First Reading of Bills

MAA-NULTH FIRST NATIONS  
FINAL AGREEMENT ACT

Hon. M. de Jong presented a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement Act.

**Hon. M. de Jong:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be introduced and read a first time now.

Motion approved.

**Hon. M. de Jong:** What an honour, on behalf of the government, to be able to introduce Bill 45, the Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement Act.

[1340]

This is the legislation that will enable the Maa-nulth First Nations final agreement, the first such agreement with multiple first nations under the British Columbia Treaty Commission process. This legislation will give that agreement effect.

The five first nations that comprise the Maa-nulth First Nations are all members of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. They are the Huu-ay-aht First Nation, the Ka:'yu:'k't'h'-Che:k:les7et'h' First Nation, the Toquaht Nation, the Uchucklesaht Tribe and the Ucluelet First Nation. These, comprising the Maa-nulth First Nations, represent in excess of 2,000 people living on Vancouver Island near Bamfield, Port Alberni, Ucluelet and Kyuquot Sound.

I know that there are many individuals — many of them are here in this chamber — who have toiled for years with passion and with dedication to work to the day when this final agreement could be presented to the House. It's because the Maa-nulth — their leaders, who we are going to hear from in a moment — have confidence in what this agreement can do for their communities, for their people, that this negotiation has ended with a successful treaty.

The Maa-nulth First Nations agreement-in-principle was signed in October 2003, and the final agreement was initialled last December. We're able to celebrate the introduction of this legislation because all five communities have overwhelmingly endorsed the agreement in a series of community ratification votes, culminating in a nearly 80-percent ratification mandate for the visionary leaders who negotiated this agreement.

The final agreement presents the Maa-nulth people with an unprecedented opportunity to begin building a better future — self-governing, self-reliant communities enjoying the same opportunities as other British Columbians to translate their energy, their culture and their passion into economic and social stability. The Maa-nulth First Nations final agreement will provide land, cash and resources to these five first nations and their communities so that they can build stronger and more prosperous futures for them, for their families and for all of their communities.

Treaties help bridge that socioeconomic gap that has separated us for so long. The Maa-nulth First Nations final agreement will create certainty for the Maa-nulth people and their communities but also for their neighbours in nearby communities.

It's an honour to bring this settlement legislation to the chamber and to pay tribute to Chief Charlie Cootes, Chief Robert Dennis, Chief Bert Mack, Chief Vi Mundy and Chief Tess Smith for their visionary and courageous leadership in helping to make this a reality. It's a historic day again for British Columbia, for the Maa-nulth First Nations and for members on both sides of this chamber.

I move that this historic bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 45, Maa-nulth First Nations Final Agreement Act, introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

### Tabling Documents

**Hon. M. de Jong:** I seek leave to table the following documents: the Maa-nulth First Nations tax treatment

agreement and the Maa-nulth First Nations harvest agreement, which are both referred to in Bill 45, and the real property tax coordination agreements for each of the five Maa-nulth First Nations.

Leave granted.

### Motions without Notice

#### PERMISSION FOR MAA-NULTH CHIEFS TO ADDRESS THE HOUSE

**Hon. M. de Jong:** Mr. Speaker, by leave, I move the following:

[Chief Councillor Charlie Cootes of the Uchucklesaht First Nation, Chief Councillor Violet Mundy of the Ucluelet First Nation, Chief Councillor Therese Smith of the Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nation, Chief Councillor Robert Dennis Senior of the Huu-ay-aht First Nation, and Hereditary Chief Bert Mack of the Toquaht First Nation be permitted to address this Assembly from the Bar of the House.]

[1345]

Leave granted.

Motion approved.

[Applause.]

**Mr. Speaker:** I welcome Chief Charlie Cootes to the Bar of the House.

#### Address from the Bar of the House

**C. Cootes:** Good afternoon. This is a great day. I would like to start off my presentation by thanking the Esquimalt and the Songhees people for allowing us to carry out this historic event in their traditional territory.

It is an honour to be standing here in the B.C. Legislature addressing our Maa-nulth people, who have made this long journey to come to be with us here today. It is an honour for me to be here addressing Premier Campbell and his government and, as well, the opposition party and other guests that have been invited.

The Maa-nulth treaty is an expression of our vision of the future. It is a vision that permits us to see a future filled with opportunities. It is a vision that removes the crippling institutions of our colonial era, and it is a vision that confidently embraces a new relationship with Canada and British Columbia. It is a vision that permits us to move forward and leave the pain of the past behind.

It is a vision that we share with B.C. and Canada, which we have reached through respectful negotiations. It is a vision that has as its foundation a mutual respect and coexistence, and it is a vision that we believe will improve the lives of not only Uchucklesaht citizens but also fellow British Columbians and our country as a whole.

Our communities have spoken confidently and overwhelmingly in support of this treaty. This treaty is

an acknowledgment of the unique legal status of the Uchucklesaht Tribe within Canadian Confederation. The treaty is an acknowledgment of the distinctiveness of the Uchucklesaht society.

The treaty will provide us with constitutional assurance of our right to remain distinct. At the same time, it permits us to participate in any meaningful and positive way with the rest of society. We are neither trapped in the past nor afraid of the future.

Our lands are protected to the greatest possible extent of the law. Our rights to access resources, fish, timber, water and so forth are assured at law and extend off of our treaty settlement lands.

As you know, there is a significant gap between aboriginal people in Canada and the rest of society in areas such as health, education and other social issues. Now we have a significant opportunity to construct viable modern economies that allow us to address and to remedy many of the social issues we face.

[1350]

We will free ourselves of the historic burden of a bureaucracy and reclaim our historic right to govern ourselves and determine what is in our own best interests. We will have the opportunity to revive, protect and express our language and our culture.

We have negotiated a social contract — a contract that is alive, like the parties to it; a contract that will be reviewed periodically to ensure that our mutual objectives are being met. As such, this is an agreement in which all British Columbians and Canadians should take pride. Our membership has given us direction and has endorsed what we have negotiated through their ratification of this final agreement.

Now that the final agreement has reached the B.C. legislative chambers, I hope that the governments of B.C. and Canada will respect what their governments have negotiated and also ratify this agreement in short order to create the first multi-first nation treaty under the BCTC process in British Columbia. [Applause.]

**Mr. Speaker:** Welcome, Chief Councillor Violet Mundy, to the Bar of the House. Ucluelet member Richard Mundy will speak on her behalf.

**R. Mundy:** Mr. Speaker, honoured Members, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Ucluelet First Nation Chief Councillor, I am honoured and humbled to stand here, where so many of Canada's leaders have come before me and so many will follow.

The peaceful transfer of authority is rare in history. With the Maa-nulth final agreement, we affirm old traditions and make new beginnings. In conjunction with other pioneering treaty nations, we are rewriting the history of treaty negotiations in British Columbia and in Canada. Ratification of our treaty has inspired membership to re-examine their identity as Yu-cluth-aht. There is renewed hope for the future as we embrace the principles that unite and lead us onward.

As we continue planning and preparing for our future in a post-treaty environment, innovation and inclusion will be paramount themes within the struc-

ture of our implementation strategy. This emphasis on community involvement speaks directly to the spirit of our new government, ones whose aspirations could never come to life under the dark shadow of an archaic Indian Act.

Implementation looms on our horizon. This will be the serious work of Maa-nulth leaders and citizens in every generation. However, I think it is the goal of everyone in this room to better understand how we as first nations can move forward and make the best of a system that has never before worked in our favour. Collectively, we are regaining our strength as first nations leaders and will be in a better position to heal the wounds of the past and begin to weave our people back into the fabric of society.

Our youth are getting smarter. Everywhere I go within the first nations communities, I encounter an increasing number of healthy and vibrant young people getting involved with important things — things that will have a positive impact on our people and the people of Canada for generations to come.

Today's children and youth will have the privilege of contending with the groundbreaking opportunities of tomorrow, because trade and industry potentials have been redefined under our treaty. We have negotiated a landmark in the history of our people. We are part of a revolution spurring controversy at the highest levels of local, national and international governments.

[1355]

Even after all these years of aspiring to improve conditions for our people, we have a long way yet to travel. We have a place, all of us, in this long story — a story we must continue but whose end we will not see. With passion and purpose, today we affirm a new commitment to live out our nation's promise of a better future. [Applause.]

**Mr. Speaker:** I welcome Chief Therese Smith to the Bar of the House.

**T. Smith:** Good afternoon. *Uk-tlaas Hu-palth-wa-tuu his-tiith Ka: yu: k't'h.*

My name is Therese Smith, and I represent the Ka:'yu:k't'h'-Che:k:tlas7et'h', where hereditary chiefs' traditional territories amount to 6,551 hectares of sea and land.

Your honour Mr. Lieutenant-Governor Steven Point, Premier Campbell, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly and all citizens of Canada and British Columbia, it is an honour to address you.

I must begin by saying we Ka:'yu:k't'h'-Che:k:tlas7et'h' are not without feelings. We are sensitive people. We love the sea and the land that has always supported us and provided us with a rich lifestyle. The generosity shown us in our *ha-holthe* has led us to a lifestyle rich in deep spirituality. We are known around the world for our feasting and potlatching system based on generosity and sharing of resources. We have always known how to share with our neighbours.

Since before this province was founded in 1858, our people have been uncomfortable about the invasion of

our private properties, the unauthorized extraction of our resources and the way in which our people have been treated.

Today, with the ratification of this agreement, we have the opportunity to address these ills. We can now begin to accept each other in a manner unprecedented in our history. We can begin to share in a realistic way the resources in the *ha-holthe* of our *Ha'wiih*. The profits of all resource extraction in our traditional territories must benefit our communities.

As of this point in time, we also have an opportunity to readjust and reshape our social relations. Until now, racism has played a very damaging role in the way our people have experienced education, labour and indeed citizenship in this province. After today we must build together as sisters and brothers. Coming to this podium presents me with the opportunity to address our new coming together.

The almost 800 pages of political and legal chapters, clauses and subclauses in the final agreement cannot and will not guarantee our people a better life, a fair share of our resources nor a place in the hearts of all British Columbians. We cannot legislate love.

It is through the intent and the spirit of these very long, tiring and costly negotiations that we shall get to a better place — all of us — as British Columbians.

[1400]

I also would like to take this moment to remember George Watts and all the things he made possible for us to be here today. His strong leadership and negotiation skills have accomplished much. These will certainly be appreciated for a long time.

George always said: "We need to move forward. We will make mistakes, but we will learn from them." I know he'd be happy for our people. So it is with hope that I come to this podium, and it is with hope for our shared future that I leave this podium.

*Tsi-tsi-kink-tliis kwaa-uk-tlin o'nits 'naas uhh-kuu tsu-shuuk iih-miis iisaak uhh-iish uu'yilth-k ko-maatk ko-us.* My prayers are that we can all look to the future with a new and greater respect and care for each other. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen of the Legislature. [Applause.]

**Mr. Speaker:** I welcome Chief Councillor Robert Dennis Sr. and Hereditary Chief Spencer Peters to the Bar of the House.

**R. Dennis:** *Klecko klecko, Songhees, klecko klecko, Esquimalt,* for allowing us on your traditional territory to be here today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, hon. Premier, hon. Leader of the Opposition, hon. Members of the House, ladies and gentlemen. It is indeed an honour to be in your House today to share a few words from a Huu-ay-aht perspective before you begin your discussions on the Maa-nulth treaty.

It is also my honour to stand here with our head chief [Nuu-chah-nulth was spoken.] Beside [Nuu-chah-nulth was spoken] stands his son [Nuu-chah-nulth was spoken] and also his other chiefs [Nuu-chah-nulth was spoken.] If you were in our house, those chiefs would be standing here today beside him.

Since the time of contact we have had an opportunity to see many things happening in our territory — many things that were beneficial to our well-being but, unfortunately, many things that were not good for our well-being. We suffered diseases, we suffered intrusion, and we suffered situations where we saw our children placed in residential schools. And then we saw our people removed from our lands.

Today we begin a road of reconciling that. Today, working with this House, this government and the opposition members, we can reconcile the mistakes of the past.

We entered this modern-day treaty with a goal in mind. The goal in mind was that we wanted to make lives better for our people. We wanted to see more of our children educated. We wanted to see more of our people earning a meaningful income within their homeland. Today we hope those things can become a reality. Working with you, we are positive that those changes will occur.

Since the time of contact we have seen resources removed from our territory, sometimes of little or no benefit to the Huu-ay-aht people. Our chiefs and his chiefs had to watch this happen, even though they did not want that to happen.

[1405]

Unfortunately, there was this legislation called the Indian Act that regulated how Indian people were going to live from the day they were born until they died. That legislation is not a proud history of our people and our chiefs. Today we hope to change that.

In the late 19th century there were records — they called them census records — that showed how many people lived in these different villages. In Kiix'in's village it showed that there were 207 people left after the diseases wiped our people out. Of those 207 people, ladies and gentlemen, 67 of them were fishermen and sealers.

Kiix'in's people were people of the sea. They were fishermen. They made a living on what they took from the sea. Through time, that has changed by legislation from the federal government that effectively removed our people from the fishing industry. Today we hope the treaty will rectify that terrible injustice that was done to our people.

We spent a lot of years educating the negotiators from Canada and B.C. about Kiix'in's culture and his people. It was a hard task, and I tell you that even today I think some of those negotiators still don't know what it's all about. So we will begin a new road. Maybe one day they'll wake up and realize that there is something to change. Something must change; something needs to change.

[Nuu-chah-nulth was spoken] envisions one day that he will be working side by side with the new elected government of Huu-ay-aht. Once again, his nation will stand proud to be Huu-ay-aht. Once again, his nation will gain the benefits of the resources of his [Nuu-chah-nulth was spoken] — or, as you call it, his territory. We hope that this treaty will begin to bring that vision to reality and true meaning of reconciliation.

Positive change can take place. Positive change will take place with us working together. We all represent different people, different communities. But at the end of the day, we need to work together so that our elders are looked after, our children are looked after and the people of each of our communities are looked after.

The treaty offers opportunities for all of us. The treaty is not just a treaty for Huu-ay-aht. It is not just a treaty for Uchucklesaht or Toquaht or Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' or Ucluelet. This treaty, in my view, is for all of us because today British Columbia can stand proud and say: "I was part of that change. I was willing to stand up and say things must change. Things cannot stay the same. Things cannot remain status quo."

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for allowing us to be in your House, allowing us to say a few words to the members here. Thank you. [Nuu-chah-nulth was spoken.] [Applause.]

**Mr. Speaker:** I welcome Hereditary Chief Bert Mack to the Bar of the House.

[1410]

**B. Mack:** To the honourable *hawith*, otherwise known as chiefs; to the hon. Premier; to the honourable ladies in this Legislature; and the honourable men, the gentlemen: I am very happy to stand here before you.

We have been through so much, and we have accomplished a few things at a time, mind you. But the day I heard Premier Campbell make a speech in Alberni, it was about hope, and hope is what we're looking for — our people. Hope is so important. Hope you can work with and accomplish, once you get the meaning of hope.

There are so many tracks. We have people out there that think we're on the wrong path. I don't believe we're on the wrong path.

What happened to my territory? There is not enough timber there to sustain my people, and the fish are disappearing in the bays in the ocean in front of my territory. I had to think of another trail where I could tell my people after I heard Premier Campbell say "hope," and that's what I came back and told my people. We have hope.

There are so many ways to look at where we're at now, and I know we are on the right track. I appreciate the people that say we're on the wrong track. To me, this proves that we have a good democratic system — when you can listen to the people, the opposition. I hope that these people will listen to us also.

The way of the opposition is not very clear to me, because I know where I stand. I just mentioned that all the resources are gone in my territory. I had to find a new way and a new path, and I believe I'm right.

To those people.... As I said, I appreciate the opposition, because it's given me more strength to prove that I'm on the right track. I hope someday they, too, will say the same thing I'm saying now. I have no animosity against these people. That's why I say I appreciate it. It gives me strength.

[1415]

My father was a leader that was on the trail of the treaty in the 1930s. I was seven years old when I first sat in a meeting with my father and his peers.

When I was 18, he turned over his chief's chair to me. I was 18 years old. But he never left my side. He was beside me till he was 84 and passed on. I will never forget what my father taught me, and that was the trail to the treaty. That was his aim, along with the people from all over B.C. I cannot mention every one of them that were the leaders on the trail of the treaty in 1930.

It has not been easy, but I never dwell on.... If anything does happen to me, I don't dwell on that. I dwell on the good things that I've learned, the good things I want to show people — that we are British Columbians, Canadians and our own tribes. I am proud to be in that position.

There are so many ways I've been through, as I said, since I was 18. I have met a lot of you gentlemen that are sitting here before you — and the ladies. And I've got to mention to the ladies that you're an inspiration to our young ladies. As of today they are trying to do the same thing you're doing right now, and I know some of them are going to make it. They admire you young ladies in this chamber. I should say something about the handsome gentlemen. I have known many, many politicians and ministers. To me, it's been a great adventure.

I must say, too, that I have never in my life run into segregation. I have never run into people that are against my people.

My father and my grandmother taught me how to be a gentleman. I hope I'm making it.

In this room there are so many people that I know. Some of the gentlemen and ladies in the Legislature I know, and I admire them. They don't give up what their beliefs are.

[1420]

I have already said this is a democratic country, and it's a good one, where you can say, "You're wrong," and where I can say: "I'm right." There has got to be a compromise somewhere.

With that, I think I'm over my ten minutes anyway. I wish to thank you people for listening to my peers, the Chiefs from the Maa-nulth Nations on their needs and aspirations. We all have the same. That, I believe, is why we can work together in the way we have been doing for the last four or five years — through the way we listen to each other.

[Nuu-chah-nulth was spoken.]

I'm not going to translate that, but it is good. [Applause.]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, we'll take a five-minute recess and reconvene.

The House recessed from 2:23 p.m. to 2:32 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

**Hon. P. Bell:** Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to do an introduction.

**Mr. Speaker:** Proceed.

## Introductions by Members

**Hon. P. Bell:** Well, it's become a bit of an annual event that I stand up on November 21 each year to re-introduce someone to the House who really needs no introduction. Last year, if memory serves me correctly, I introduced the member as an individual who had just entered the second half of her particular century. This year suffice it to say that it is the second anniversary of her 49th birthday or perhaps the 12th anniversary of her 39th birthday. But I would ask that all members of the House please join me in congratulating the member for Prince George–Mount Robson on another birthday.

**Mr. Speaker:** Look at the bright side, Minister. We're not singing *Happy Birthday*.

## Statements (Standing Order 25B)

### OAKLANDS CORNERS PROJECT

**R. Fleming:** I'd like to take a minute just to recognize a wonderful community project in my constituency of Victoria-Hillside, and I'm referring today to the community of Oaklands project, the Haultain at Belmont corners project. It initially started in August 2002 when Oaklands residents Lisa MacDonald and Kay Marshall stood on this unique boulevard talking one afternoon and decided that something had to be done to improve the economic vitality of the corners area and its use as public space.

They took their afternoon visioning session and began talking to other neighbours of theirs in the Oaklands area, and together they formed the corners project. The residents immediately set to work on the corners by doing some much-needed gardening on the overgrown and disrepaired area. Thereafter neighbours began meeting weekly, where they turned their vision into a commitment to create a safe, attractive, welcoming space conducive to neighbours meeting and talking and a gathering place that enhances the community of Oaklands as a whole.

That evolved into an application for and a recipient of a city of Victoria neighbourhood matching grant and the beginning of making physical improvements to this area. The corners group used the matching funds to purchase colourful bike racks, street furniture, large planters and a landscaped expansion of the existing gardens areas.

They also partnered with the Oaklands Community Association to get the city of Victoria to install new lighting for safety. The city utilized their crime prevention officer at Victoria police to help do an assessment.

Now on a spring or summer evening you'll often see Oaklands residents spending their evenings down at the corners planting, watering and pruning to maintain the planters and gardens. Kids in the neighbourhood have also become an active part of these projects and are proud to help the corners remain well looked after.

Residents are currently in the process of raising funds to create unique Oaklands banners for the business district and a safety-designed crosswalk with

bumped-out sidewalks as part of the boulevard space. A new business has just opened in the district as well.

[1435]

Each member here represents constituents who I know work long volunteer hours to make their communities a better place. I would ask the House to join me in thanking the following Oaklands residents who have revitalized their community: Shane Ford, Jim Kerr, Angie LaFontaine, Len and Val Stubel, Mary Jane Teachman and Cimarron and Sarah Corpe for their extraordinary volunteer work over the past several years.

#### MAA-NULTH FIRST NATIONS LEADERS

**R. Cantelon:** It's a privilege to rise today and salute the leadership of the Maa-nulth Nation. The man I know best is Chief Robert Dennis, but what I say applies to all of them. We heard Robert's voice today — a strong, clear voice, simple and direct — about seeking a better life for his people. He provided the vision and then the leadership to move his nation forward. He inspired hope and built expectations for a better life.

But building a vision means nothing unless you can provide leadership, unless something comes of it. Otherwise, visions are just dreams, empty dreams, and the people, just dreamers. Leadership requires the call to action. It requires the leader to step out in front with his ideas and stand the test of criticism. When you stand out in front of a pack, you become an easy target for criticism. So it takes courage. It takes courage to make decisions and to act.

Robert Dennis is such a man. He organized a logging company and employed white men to do it. Despite the unemployment in his nation, he recognized that the white people had skills and could teach his people. He recognized he couldn't stand by, and he sued the provincial government for rights that he felt were due to him.

That's where I became involved in a very small way. Robert approached me, again in his simple, direct way. He could have used an army of lawyers to sort things out, but he asked me. He said to me: "Ron, is the Premier still mad at me?" I took the message to the Premier and received a simple, direct answer back: "No. Proceed." And they did. We're happy to see the result here today in a very momentous decision.

I think all these leaders you heard today — so eloquent, so direct, so simple — deserve our respect and encouragement. They spoke very eloquently in a different way than we might expect a visionary leader to speak. They spoke directly from the heart to the heart of their people and have inspired them to new things. Let's salute all these great leaders.

#### WEST SHORE CENTRE

**C. Trevena:** It's my pleasure to stand in the House today and share with members the story of the West Shore Child, Youth and Family Services Society. It's a non-profit organization of a dozen partner members which serves the children, youth and families of Victoria's West Shore: Colwood, Langford, Metchosin, Highlands and View Royal.

It opened in 2005. The West Shore Child, Youth and Family Centre is a 38,000-square-foot facility on Wale Road in Colwood. It was built through the generous support of the Queen Alexandra Foundation for Children.

The multicoloured building — blue, purple, red, orange, gold, green and silver — reflects the theme of harmony in diversity. It's home to more than a dozen community organizations, including the Capital Families Association, the Pacific Centre Family Services and Métis Community Services.

The member organizations make great use of the centre's facilities, which include a community kitchen, youth training café, day care centre, three playgrounds and community meeting rooms. The gym is particularly well used by participants, young and old alike, and offers a place where children, youth and families can gather for exercise, health and enjoyment.

The centre's multifaceted programming serves all ages and encourages the development of social networks and connections, all in a people-friendly environment. Programs include a parent and tot drop-in, speech and language therapy, a young mom support group and a youth leaders program.

By fostering a cooperative and collaborative, innovative and respectful approach, the West Shore Child, Youth and Family Centre is a beacon in the community of Esquimalt-Metchosin. I thank those who, each and every day, share their education in the delivery of services at the centre and hope the House will join me in recognizing this exceptional organization.

#### TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

**R. Lee:** I will do my speech in Cantonese.  
[Cantonese was spoken.]

[1440]

[I rise in the House today to talk about the importance of traditional Chinese medicine.

Last May I arranged a meeting between the delegation with representatives from the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of B.C., the B.C. Qualified Acupuncturists and Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners Association and the government caucus to discuss the importance of recognizing traditional Chinese medicine.

I would like to continue engaging discussion on the support given to traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture as alternative treatments. Knowledge will bring an understanding of the importance of making alternative therapy treatments available to the public and help us move forward with respecting and supporting this as an excellent treatment option.

I am working hard to raise awareness for the importance of understanding traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture. I feel it is important to integrate traditional Chinese medicine with other choices British Columbians have for health services.

I was happy to see that the delegation made an impressive presentation to the government caucus, held a good discussion with Ministry of Health staff and received a very warm welcome from everyone.

I'm pleased with the progress we have made with the recent announcement of acupuncture being covered under the Medical Services Plan for those with premium assistance. It was announced on October 9, 2007, that acupuncture treatments will be included for the first time in Canada as a supplementary benefit.

The inclusion of acupuncture is an excellent example of the province's commitment to ensure that all British Columbians have access to a wide range of health care treatment options.]

[Translation provided by R. Lee.]

#### HAIDA GWAII VOLUNTEERS

**G. Coons:** Hon. Speaker, I sure hope I don't repeat what the hon. member just said.

It's a pleasure to stand in the House today to recognize the hard-working heroes of Haida Gwaii. Twice this past August volunteers worked together to protect and preserve the integrity of this jewel of the North Pacific.

The first instance involved a fire in the Rose Spit ecological reserve less than a kilometre from the Naikoon Provincial Park. After the Northwest Fire Centre in Smithers decided that they would let the fire burn, a group of volunteers, including members from the Council of the Haida Nation and the RCMP, worked together to form a firebreak and a bucket brigade. After about five hours of hard work they managed to contain the fire and end the threat that it posed to the provincial park. The people of Haida Gwaii took it upon themselves to take action and protect this pristine area.

The second instance of heroism on the part of the residents of Haida Gwaii involves a young whale which came ashore on North Beach. It started at six in the morning when Michael König and Gavin Hooten spotted the humpback beached in about three feet of water when the tide was going out. The two quickly mobilized people from the surrounding areas, and hundreds of volunteers mobilized to keep the young whale wet and calm until the tide came back in. Donnie Edenshaw of Old Massett actually sang Haida songs to comfort the whale through the long ordeal and to help it find the strength to swim back out to sea. It took 11 hours of constant vigilance on the part of many people to save the life of the young humpback.

These events, both of them within the space of a month, demonstrate the values that small communities have to impart to people in the rest of the province. Self-reliance, courage, determination and teamwork are values that define rural communities. I think these people that preserve Naikoon Provincial Park and those that took the time from their busy lives to rescue a whale demonstrate the sort of stewardship and environmental leadership that we all need to emulate.

#### FRENCH IMMERSION

**I. Black:** *En français. Quand ma femme et moi avons discutés, il y a cinq ans, la possibilité d'inscrire nos enfants dans un programme d'immersion française, ça fut une conversation étonnamment intéressante.*

*Nous avons partagés nos inquiétudes en tant que parents anglophones d'être capable de fournir à la maison, l'appui linguistique maintenant pour deux enfants qui parlent pendant toute la journée à leurs amis et professeurs en une autre langue.*

*Nous avons pesé le risque de ralentir leur développement en anglais, en particulier la lecture et le vocabulaire. Aussi, nous nous sommes demandés si nos garçons seraient capables de rattraper si nous décidions que leur succès n'étaient pas suffisants dans l'environnement bilingue.*

*Une soirée de renseignements pour les parents, tenue par la zone scolaire 43 nous a aidé à apaiser ces craintes. Alors, il y a quatre ans, notre fils aîné fut inscrit à l'école bilingue de notre quartier.*

[1445]

*Nous ne cessons d'être étonnés par leur métrisations de la langue française et par la structure bilingue de leur école, qui inclus les assemblées et les spectacles. Nous sommes très impressionnés par les merveilleux professeurs qui continuent d'être patient avec maman et papa.*

*J'applaudis le succès de nos programmes d'immersion française, leurs professeurs et les milliers des parents qui, à chaque jour, font les efforts additionnels nécessaire pour élever nos enfants bilingues.*

Five years ago, when my wife and I discussed the possibility of enrolling our children in French immersion program, it was a surprisingly interesting conversation.

We shared the anxiety, as Anglophone parents, of being capable of providing the linguistic support at home for two children who now spend all day speaking to their friends and teachers in a different language.

We weighed the risk of slowing their development in English, in particular their reading and vocabulary. As well, we asked ourselves if the kids would be capable of catching up if we were to decide that their progress was not sufficient in the bilingual environment.

An informational night for parents put on by school district 43 went some way to ease these concerns. And so four years ago our eldest son enrolled at the bilingual school in our district.

We never cease to be amazed at their growing fluency and the bilingual structure of the school that includes assemblies and school productions. We are very impressed by their terrific teachers, who continue to be patient with mom and dad.

I applaud the success of our French immersion programs, their teachers and the thousands of parents who every day make the extra effort necessary to raise our children bilingual.]

[French text and translation provided by I. Black.]

#### Oral Questions

##### STAFFING AT SENIORS FACILITIES

**C. James:** Yesterday very disturbing evidence came to light about shocking violence and abuse at a Salmon Arm seniors care home. Families of the victims say that there is simply not enough staff in place to provide proper and safe care for seniors.

My question is to the Minister of Health. These are very serious concerns that require immediate attention.

What steps is the minister taking right now to ensure that seniors remain safe in B.C.'s care homes?

**Hon. G. Abbott:** I know the Bastion care centre very well, and I know the special care unit of Bastion as well. My father was a resident there for 18 months prior to his death. He had excellent care in that facility.

I know that we're very concerned about the recent incidents at the facility. I can advise that one male patient there has been moved to a more secure facility as a result of those incidents. This is most unfortunate, obviously, but one of the symptoms of advancing dementia and Alzheimer's is that occasionally we see violent tendencies emerging in those patients. That is the case here, but I do hope that all the appropriate steps have been taken to deal with this.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition has a supplemental.

**C. James:** There's one piece that the minister left out that helps address these very serious concerns and serious issues, and that's staffing levels. The victims' families say that there is only one nurse and one care aide for 24 residents on the locked ward for patients with dementia at Bastion Place. There simply isn't enough staff to properly care for the residents.

This isn't an issue simply at Bastion Place. This is an issue that I hear concerns raised on all across this province. Now the Interior Health Authority won't speak, won't say anything. We heard the minister again saying that everything is fine for seniors care in British Columbia.

Well, we know that there is a crisis right now, so my question again is to the minister. Just how widespread is the violence against care home residents, and what is he doing today, now, to actually protect residents?

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members. Members.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** Again, I know Bastion Place very well. I know the staff there very well. The people in that facility work very hard to provide the very best of care to the people that are served at Bastion Place.

For the member to suggest that somehow, in this publicly owned, publicly operated facility, people are not receiving appropriate care is, I think, entirely unfortunate. It is entirely unfair to the people who work so hard both in administration and at staff levels to provide the best of care to the people who are resident there.

I have reviewed the staffing levels with Interior Health. Interior Health believes strongly that the staffing levels are appropriate to the acuity levels of the patients that they serve. As conditions or circumstances may dictate, those staffing levels can be increased.

[1450]

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of the Opposition has a further supplemental.

**C. James:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that staff who work in long-term care homes and with seniors across this province know who's standing up for them, and it's this side of the House. I hear concerns raised from staff every single day. They do an extraordinary job under very difficult circumstances, and they're not getting the leadership they deserve from this government.

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members. Members.

**C. James:** This government refuses to acknowledge that there is a problem with seniors care that they created. This is a government that cut care to seniors. This is a government that won't take action to improve care for seniors. This government won't advocate on behalf of seniors. Just as...

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members. Members. Members on both sides.

Continue.

**C. James:** Just as children and youth need an independent representative, so do seniors. That way, families and residents won't have to actually rely on a minister and a government who won't stand up on their behalf. The stories of abuse and neglect keep piling up, and we see this government doing nothing.

So again, my question to the minister: will he commit today to establish an independent adviser for our seniors so that this government...

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.

**C. James:** ...will be forced to listen to the issues that seniors and their families are facing across British Columbia?

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members. I want to remind members on both sides of the House: listen to the question; listen to the answer.

Minister.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** I am very proud of what our government has done for vulnerable seniors. I am very proud that we have added now 3,500 residential care and assisted-living units in this province. I am proud that we have remediated another 6,000 units, including at the James Bay Care Centre in Victoria.

The opposition has been shamelessly attempting to besmirch the excellent care that seniors across this province receive each and every day. She should talk to

the member for Cariboo South, who is deeply embarrassed by his attacks on Williams Lake Seniors Village. I understand he wants to get up and say something, and he should do that.

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.

**D. Routley:** Perhaps a simple question about an individual case will cut through the bluster of the Health Minister.

Like many families in this province, Karen Haarala cares for her 89-year-old mother, who has emphysema. Like all caregivers, she needed a break. To get two weeks respite time, Karen placed her mom in the Lodge on 4th, a private care facility in Ladysmith.

Now, Karen's mom needs emphysema medications, but with only one LPN in the evenings for 37 residents, there was not adequate time to properly administer her medications — medications she needs to breathe.

[1455]

To the Minister of Health: does the minister agree that getting prescribed medications to patients properly and on time is an important part of health care, and does he think this is an appropriate level of staffing for seniors in our care?

**Hon. G. Abbott:** I am, first of all, obliged to point out to the member that we do have a nursing shortage in this province. We have been working very hard....

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Just take your seat.

Members.

Continue, Minister.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** We have been working very hard to remedy that situation. But the fact of the matter is this — and I know the members opposite don't like to hear it: in 1993, 839 nurses graduated in this province. By the year 2001 that had been reduced to 574 nurses in this province — a shameful and deplorable part of that former government's record. Since 2001 we have increased the number of nursing spaces in this province by 83 per cent — 3,381 new nursing spaces for British Columbia since 2001.

**Mr. Speaker:** The member has a supplemental.

**D. Routley:** Karen's mom was able to walk into this facility on her own. Within a few days she was in diapers, couldn't walk and was covered with bedsores. That was the result of being in that care home for a few weeks. And the clothes that were packed for her were

never used. She's been there for close to five weeks now, and Karen's looking into the cost of hiring an ambulance to rescue her mom from the care she's provided. This is....

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.

Take your seat.

Members, listen to the question; listen to the answer.

Continue, Member.

**D. Routley:** This is an impossible situation. Health care staff are stretched to the limit by this government's underfunding. Does the minister believe that more needs to be done to protect our seniors?

**Hon. G. Abbott:** What I am hearing from this member are shameful, deplorable charges that I think are inappropriate. What he has just accused that facility of and what he has just accused those caregivers of is a shameful neglect. If he has charges to make of that character, he should make them outside this chamber. We will investigate, and we will see.

But let me say this. If this member's charges are spurious, will he do the right thing and resign in shame from his position?

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members. Members on both sides of the House.

[1500]

**R. Chouhan:** If somebody needs to resign, it's this minister sitting there doing nothing.

On October 11 the opposition revealed that several seniors with complex care needs were being forced to move out of New Vista Care Home in Burnaby because this uncaring government refused to provide the resources for adequate staffing. Since then, the government and the health authorities have failed to take any action to protect these vulnerable seniors. Now it is confirmed that six families have learned their parents are getting an eviction notice.

My question is to the Minister of Health. Will you intervene immediately and stop this forced eviction of six vulnerable seniors?

**Hon. G. Abbott:** It's interesting that this member should raise this issue today, given that it has been in the news media in Burnaby now for several weeks. I guess that thematically it worked into the line of question period questions today.

The New Vista Care centre in Burnaby has been in discussion for some time with Fraser Health. In fact, they have been in discussions with them since back in June with respect to the per-diem rates. It is the view of Fraser Health, based on a careful assessment of the acuity rates of the residents at New Vista, that the

per-diem rate that is being provided to them is entirely appropriate.

**Mr. Speaker:** The member has a supplemental.

**R. Chouhan:** This so-called discussion has done nothing for the sick seniors at New Vista Care Home. This is a human story. We are not talking about just numbers. We are talking about real people.

One of these people is Corinne MacDonald. She is 82 years old. She has complete dementia. She's unable to recognize her own family, but she does recognize the caring staff at New Vista who meet her needs every day. She is forced to move by a government that refuses to provide adequate staffing levels.

My question is to the minister again. How can you justify forcing this vulnerable woman to move?

**Hon. G. Abbott:** I think it is, again, most unfortunate when we see vulnerable citizens in this province being used for political purposes as they are here.

First, the facts.

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Take your seat.

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.  
Continue, Minister.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** The facts are this. The per-diem rate for New Vista has increased by 28 percent since 2003. Fraser Health has provided almost \$1 million to New Vista for capital equipment and renovations.

They have also offered, on a one-time basis, an efficiency expert to review their operations and make recommendations. They've also offered an occupational health consultant to work with the facility to address their very high WCB and long-term disability costs due to staff injuries.

I understand that New Vista hasn't yet accepted any of these offers from Fraser Health.

**A. Dix:** Well, we know that....

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.  
Continue, Member.

**A. Dix:** We know that the minister gets indignant when his failures are brought before this House. But where was the minister's indignation when the Premier passed Bill 29 in this House and had the largest layoff of health care workers in the history of this country? Where was the minister's indignation?

Where was the minister's indignation in 2005 when the Beacon Hill Villa report came before him, kept from

the public? Where was the minister's indignation then? Where was the minister's indignation in 2006 when the same company was awarded a huge contract — Casa Loma up in the north Island? Where was the minister's indignation then?

Where was the minister's indignation when seniors across British Columbia raised issues of concern about their care?

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.

**A. Dix:** Those are the issues that should draw the minister's indignation. The only thing that seems to upset the minister is when he's publicly criticized.

My question to the minister is simple. Why not give seniors an independent representative? Why not give them a place to go?

[1505]

Why does he continue to allow his government to hide behind the confidentiality awarded seniors? Why doesn't he agree with the opposition on the constructive proposal to establish a representative for seniors?

**Hon. G. Abbott:** The Premier had a Council on Aging and Seniors Issues. I hope the opposition's not disparaging that council now. Dr. Patricia Baird was the chair of that council. That council met for, I think, well over a year. They did extensive consultations across this province. They delivered a very thoughtful report, which I thought the opposition embraced as well as the government. One of the things that does not appear in that report is a suggestion that there should be an office for seniors.

What we believe on this side of the House is that actions speak louder than words. That's why we have added billions of dollars in new investments for seniors across this province. That's why, when we took office, there were over 600 separated seniors in this province. Today there are less than 70, because of our investments in campus of care.

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.  
The member has a supplemental.

**A. Dix:** You bet action speaks louder than words. When every care aide was laid off at Nanaimo Seniors Village and at a half-dozen other care homes in May and June and July, actions spoke louder than words.

The Minister of Health, the minister whose responsibility it is to protect seniors and seniors care — what did he do? He did nothing. He supported the very care home operators that did it. He supported them. Fifteen hundred care aides laid off in a few months. How does that help seniors care?

The reason I think they're afraid of an independent officer for seniors is that they would stand up and say: "That's wrong because it's wrong." Will the minister not consider that proposal? And when will he insist that

every report on every care home is made public so that the citizens of British Columbia can make judgments about the level of senior care in care homes? Why should seniors learn about the state of care homes in British Columbia from FOIs obtained by the opposition?

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** You know, often we hear a lot of rhetoric in this House. I'm sure at times it is confusing to the folks back home. But the folks back home actually have a pretty good grip on what goes on in this chamber, and they have a pretty good grip on what goes on in this province. That's why I was so interested in looking at this November 14 edition of the *Cariboo Advisor*, which has a full-page ad. It says: "So what is...?"

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members. Members.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** It says: "So what is the MLA for Cariboo South really up to?" And it says: "The MLA could..."

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Minister, just take your seat.

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members.  
Minister, continue.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** The member says: "Who sponsored the ad?" Well, it's the staff and management of the Williams Lake Seniors Village. It includes a picture of all of the staff.

[1510]

Here's what they say: "The MLA could easily have discovered these facts for himself by calling either the licensing authority or Miss Glover. He chose instead to once again unfairly attack the integrity of the staff at Williams Lake Seniors Village. As you can imagine, the staff are understandably angry about the way the MLA and the NDP are maligning their work in an effort to attack the government."

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Members. Members, you know what's embarrassing? It's the way we're acting. That's embarrassing.

#### KPMG REPORT ON ACTIONS OF PAUL TAYLOR

**L. Krog:** Over a month ago the government released only a summary reporting letter from KPMG

into the activities of Mr. Paul Taylor and the B.C. Automobile Dealers Association.

In this House on May 29, the Premier promised that the full review, the terms of reference, the documentation, the process undertaken, the steps taken and the full report will be made available on completion of the review.

The summary reporting letter does not meet the Premier's promised standard. It is quite simply a whitewash, and so my question is very simple. Will the Minister of Finance live up to the government's promise to this House and direct forthwith the release of the full KPMG report as promised?

**Hon. C. Taylor:** As has been said in this House, when the proper FOI process has been completed, information will be released.

**Mr. Speaker:** The member has a supplemental.

**L. Krog:** It's very clear that that process appears to be more of a delaying tactic than a process.

The opposition has received a further relevant e-mail dated January 27, 2003, from Mr. Kieran to Mr. Bornman, part of which reads: "Just got a call from Paul Taylor's wife. She is his message bearer. He suggests we get Omnitrac together with Larry Blain, the new CEO of Partnerships B.C., the P3 agency that Paul engineered. Larry is on holiday at the moment. Paul says all partnerships with government including BCR will be funded by Partnerships. We'll put this together next week."

This clearly shows that the real issue is the relationship between Mr. Taylor and Pilothouse, which KPMG was not instructed to investigate. This e-mail shows that Mr. Taylor was providing Pilothouse with a range of information dealing with the most sensitive and confidential government matters.

Will the Minister of Finance do the right thing and launch today a full inquiry with real powers to investigate the activities of Mr. Taylor?

**Hon. C. Taylor:** When the information came forward to the Premier's office, an investigation was launched with KPMG, a reputable firm. They found in their results that, in fact, there was no wrongdoing by Mr. Taylor.

If any new information is available, I would suggest that the opposition make it available to the Premier's office.

#### HIGHWAY OF TEARS

**G. Coons:** Last month the highway of tears investigation was expanded to 18 murders, even though the number is closer to 50 missing and murdered young aboriginal women. At the time, the Solicitor General said he thought "the current activities were appropriate," and he had no request from Carrier-Sekani for additional funding.

Carrier-Sekani officials were shocked when told that the Solicitor General knew of no additional

requests for funds. They are constantly lobbying for more provincial money, and they aren't getting it.

The Solicitor General also stated that he "takes the community's concerns extremely seriously and that resources have never been an issue."

If that is true, will he stand up to the plate, will he put his money where his mouth is, and will he commit funding for all 33 recommendations?

[1515]

**Hon. J. Les:** My staff are in constant communication with the Carrier-Sekani and others who are working on issues related to the Highway 16 tragedies. Those discussions are active, and they're ongoing. We are entertaining funding considerations that will enable the important work that's going on to go forward.

**Mr. Speaker:** The member has a supplemental.

**G. Coons:** It's been 20 months since the symposium in Prince George. The Solicitor General was there. He committed to the recommendations. A proposal is currently sitting in front of the Solicitor General for funding for two coordinators, an event coordinator to help implement the recommendations. In response to the Solicitor General, Mary Teegee from the Carrier-Sekani stated that the Solicitor General "publicly stated his dedication and resolve in contributing resources to the highway of tears initiative. It is very unfortunate that there is no provincial funding dedicated to the highway of tears initiative."

Again, will the Solicitor General put the money where his mouth is and commit to that and quit with the rhetoric and ensure that young aboriginal women in the north stop being murdered and disappearing along the highway of tears?

**Hon. J. Les:** Again, these are very serious issues that have transpired along Highway 16. There are serious investigations going on to get to the bottom of what happened in all of those tragedies.

When we had the symposium last year in Prince George, a number of recommendations flowed from that. We committed government to working with the people along Highway 16 to implement those recommendations. We are doing that actively.

We have made funding available. There is over \$5 million available on an annual basis for victim funding in that region of the province. We made \$150,000 available directly to assist with the implementation of the recommendations that were made, and we continue to discuss further programming that could be beneficial to the people of the region.

[End of question period.]

### Orders of the Day

**Hon. M. de Jong:** I call second reading of Bill 44, Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act.

### Second Reading of Bills

#### GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION TARGETS ACT

**Hon. B. Penner:** I move that the bill now be read a second time.

I am pleased to speak to this bill which was introduced yesterday, which sets out in legislation the fundamental expression of this government's commitment to addressing the reality of global warming and the impending crisis of climate change.

Our fundamental commitment is to reverse the growth of greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia and ultimately reduce those emissions in absolute terms to a fraction of the amounts that are currently being released into the atmosphere.

[K. Whittred in the chair.]

The proposed Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act is the first step in establishing a legislative framework for British Columbia to ensure that decisive action takes place as needed to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. It is our government's position that decisive action, including new laws, is necessary to respond effectively and quickly to climate change.

The evidence that the climate is changing is becoming increasingly clear, thanks to the efforts of and debate within the international scientific and political communities and, most notably, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That evidence indicates that rapid warming of the atmosphere is occurring on a global scale.

[1520]

As noted in this government's Speech from the Throne in February of this year, the rate of atmospheric warming over the last 50 years has been found to be faster than at any time in the past 1,000 years. This rapid change has implications that are already being felt and seen in various ways at the local level around the world. In the Pacific Northwest of North America we are seeing our climate change at a rate greater than the global average and the beginnings of ecosystem changes.

In British Columbia, animals and plants in our forests are already reacting to this change. We have seen the explosive spread of the mountain pine beetle, with 78 percent of our pine forests now infested, partly as a result of the disappearance of the extreme cold winter temperatures in the north and the interior which used to be the norm only a few decades ago.

Projections for British Columbia's climatic zones in the next 100 years and the vegetation changes this implies show we can expect major changes in the mixture of forest species, grasslands and desert areas. These changes in ecology will occur throughout the province, on the coast as well as in the interior. Another issue for the coast is that a measurable rise in sea levels is also beginning to occur, with grave implications for low-lying and densely populated coastal areas here in British Columbia and around the world.

Seasonal patterns of precipitation are also changing. In some parts of the world there have been prolonged droughts, while in others, such as here in British Columbia, there's been increased precipitation and, as we saw this year, record snowpacks, which cause significant flooding in some areas and which have the potential to cause much higher, devastating floods in the Fraser Valley, where I live.

If I reflect back on just the last 20 months or so, I can remember when the Vancouver news media were talking about the need for Noah's ark because there were a record number of consecutive days of rainfall recorded. We went from that very wet early spring to one of the driest summers on record. Last fall there were actually record low-level stream flows in British Columbia, to the point where returning fish stocks were threatened due to their inability to access their spawning grounds.

That drought was quickly broken by a series of very powerful Pacific storms that struck the lower mainland and southern Vancouver Island and other parts of the province, resulting in the damage that we have all seen and heard about at Stanley Park but also in other provincial parks around the province. In short order, record snowfall accumulations started to occur in certain mountain ranges.

So we saw really firsthand in British Columbia the effects of climate change that had been predicted: extreme variations of weather in a very short period of time, literally going from record rainfall days in the southern part of British Columbia to record low stream flows and all the way back again where we had extreme storms and mountain snowpacks. About a year ago at this time I was standing on the banks of the Chilliwack River as it was flooding due to a record rainfall event in a 24-hour period in that watershed.

As our climate warms over the next several decades, we can expect less snowpack as more precipitation falls as rain. This will mean the opposite problem: less snow-melt water sustaining our rivers and streams during the summer months, with negative impacts on fisheries and for communities that depend on those runoffs for water supplies.

In some parts of the world we've also seen heat waves occurring with increasing duration and intensity. Extreme precipitation events and periods of increasingly strong hurricanes and typhoons have also been observed. Now, although individual extreme weather events are not proof themselves of climate change, scientists warn that, over the long term, the trend will be an increase in the number and severity of such extreme events.

British Columbia is highly sensitive to climate change, and the observed and projected rate of warming is higher than the global average. What that means, unfortunately, is that we are facing the prospect of dramatic impacts affecting many of our natural resources and the economic activity that is based on those resources.

But if we have the foresight to recognize the shifts that are underway and the way in which we are all interconnected in the face of climate change, then we also have an opportunity in this province. That opportunity is to make a difference. We have the means to

take bold action, to face this challenge and, in doing so, to become leaders in a global fight to alter our present course.

By taking on a leadership role, we can build partnerships — such as with the western climate initiative, the Pacific coast collaborative and others — that will inspire and help guide the actions of other nations as well as societies and organizations elsewhere.

The environmental, economic and social costs associated with climate change are anticipated to be very high for societies around the world. Unnaturally rapid climate change to some extent now appears inevitable, and we'll have to adapt to those changes.

[1525]

One example of that locally, again, was the threat we had this past spring of flooding. The province of British Columbia put forward \$33 million, and we were pleased when the federal government chose to match our contribution. But we know that we have other diking and flood-protection works that will be necessary in the years ahead, and that's why the province has recently committed \$100 million over the next ten years to work on further mitigation.

We're also asking the federal government to join us in this endeavour as well, because if they can match our \$100 million, we'll have \$200 million, and then we can work with local communities to see what they can contribute to maximize our resources and improve our chances of withstanding further extreme weather events in future runoff periods.

Meaningful action, however, begins with setting of goals. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act will put into law the goal of reducing British Columbia's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 percent below the 2007 level by 2020. This follows through on the commitment made in the Speech from the Throne earlier this year, in February.

A target for 2050 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 percent compared to the level of emissions in 2007 is also set out in this bill. It is important to set the 2050 target to respond effectively to the long-term nature of the climate change problem.

Climate change did not become a challenge overnight; nor can it be solved overnight. Other jurisdictions around the world have also recognized this, and a number of them have committed to long-term targets. For example, I understand that the parliament in the United Kingdom is debating a law now where the U.K. target is 60 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

There is a growing consensus that limiting the increase in average global temperatures to 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels will be necessary to avoid the most dangerous impacts of climate change, impacts that will exceed society's capacity to adapt.

[H. Bloy in the chair.]

Limiting the risk of exceeding the 2-degree threshold will require stabilizing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at levels below 500 parts per million of carbon dioxide equivalent. In turn, this

means that global greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by between 50 and 90 percent by 2050.

The 80-percent reduction target for 2050 that this government is setting for British Columbia is consistent with recommendations from the scientific community as well as with the targets set by other jurisdictions that are leaders in climate change action.

The legislation also requires that interim targets for 2012 and 2016 be set by the end of 2008 in order to provide tangible goals in the short term to help focus our efforts in government and across society.

The climate action team was established yesterday by the government. I just have to tell you how delighted I am at the calibre of people who have stepped up to the plate and are volunteering their services, not just on behalf of the government of British Columbia but on behalf of all people that live here and in fact, I would say, on behalf of people beyond our borders.

The climate action team will determine the most aggressive targets possible for 2012 and 2016. These interim goals will be realistic and economically viable but also challenging. It's going to challenge all of us — government, industry and individual citizens — to begin doing everything that must be done to achieve sustainable levels of greenhouse gas emissions and to do our part here in British Columbia to stabilize the rate of global warming for the long term.

As noted at first reading, this government plans to bring forward additional legislation in the next session to authorize regulatory mechanisms that will be implemented with respect to various sectors of activity in the province in order to achieve these targets. The means by which reductions will be attained will be a combination of market-based mechanisms and legally enforceable limits on emissions.

We will introduce legislation in the spring to put in place a cap-and-trade system for all large emitters of greenhouse gas emissions in the province. That system will set firm caps on the quantity of emissions that specified industry sectors and individual operations may release, while providing for participation in emissions trading to take advantage of market forces that promote innovation, competitiveness and, ultimately, efficiency and sustainability.

We are also intending to introduce legislation next spring to follow California's lead in adopting tailpipe emission standards for new vehicles. These standards, which will be phased in from 2009 to 2016, will require car manufacturers' annual vehicle fleets to become more and more efficient and clean.

Now, our Premier met with his colleagues from across the country at a first ministers meeting back in August and challenged other provinces to follow our lead and to support us in the establishment of California tailpipe emissions standards, because as a market on our own, we're pretty small. We're four million people. But if you start to combine forces with other like-minded jurisdictions, I believe we can influence the market.

That was behind our thinking when the Premier and I travelled to California in March to meet with Governor Schwarzenegger. He was very receptive, and

since then our governments have been working very closely together and cooperatively in sharing information both directly as well as through the western climate initiative.

[1530]

In response to the Premier's challenge at the first ministers meeting back in August, nine out of ten provincial Premiers have agreed that their provinces will support California tailpipe emissions standards.

I'm very pleased at that response. That shows that leadership can work, but it also shows that other provinces are willing to work together to try and drive the kind of changes that we need to see, frankly, if we're going to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There will also be legislation in the spring to provide authority for the regulation of landfill gases. This government will work closely with local governments and private industry to establish a regulatory regime requiring the capture of gases emitted by landfills.

One component of landfill gas is methane, which tonne for tonne has a much greater global warming effect than the most common greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide. That's the one you hear most about, but in fact every tonne of methane is about as damaging as 21 tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. I'm pleased that today in British Columbia we are starting to capture methane gas from landfills, as a direct result of this province's energy plan introduced in 2002.

At the GVRD landfill in Delta, at the Hartland Landfill north of Victoria and very soon in the landfill in the regional district of Nanaimo, methane gas which previously would just be escaping straight into the atmosphere, adding to climate change problems, is being captured and combusted, which reduces its harmful effect. The combustion process is allowing electricity to be generated and fed into B.C. Hydro's grid.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that that represents a couple of things. It's the power of inviting the private sector to play a partnership role in meeting our energy challenges and in solving environmental problems. It also demonstrates what the opportunities are. We can have a win-win situation, if we approach this thoughtfully and strategically.

In this case, we have an opportunity. We have the advantages of now creating energy and revenue streams that we need and of decreasing the impact from that methane gas that previously just escaped directly into the atmosphere.

Bill 44 sets requirements for the provincial government to reduce emissions and to become carbon-neutral. Starting in 2010, the provincial government and designated public sector organizations will be required to achieve carbon-neutral status, taking all operations into account.

Even before that, requirements for carbon-neutrality will kick in, starting in 2008 with respect to greenhouse gas emissions produced by core government business travel. Travel emissions for the last three months of 2007 will also be included.

Our government recognizes that we should lead by example to help ensure success in achieving the greenhouse gas reduction targets for the province as a

whole. The carbon-neutral provincial government requirement will apply to this Legislative Assembly and to provincial government ministries and agencies, schools, colleges, universities, health authorities, Crown corporations and other public sector organizations identified by regulation.

A major feature of this bill is its public reporting requirements. The provincial government and other public sector organizations that will be subject to the new act will be required to make public annual carbon-neutral action reports, beginning with the report for the 2008 calendar year.

In addition, the Minister of Environment will be required to publish a report every two years, beginning with the report on the 2008 calendar year, concerning progress being made by the province as a whole towards achieving British Columbia's emission reduction targets, the actions taken to achieve that progress and plans for continued advancement towards achieving the targets.

Action on climate change is central to our government's great goal of leading the world in sustainable environmental management, and it has been an important performance objective in the province's last two strategic plans. British Columbia's recently adopted energy plan is the cleanest, greenest energy plan in North America.

Just to put that in context, today, as a result of our new energy plan released in the spring by my colleague the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, B.C. Hydro has a requirement to find 90 percent of their new additional energy sources from clean sources of electricity. When we took office, that requirement was only 10 percent. I would submit to the House that that represents significant progress.

We are determined, as well, to become self-sufficient again in electricity because, frankly, I'm not very comfortable at simply relying on imports from coal-fired plants in either Alberta or outside of our borders in the United States to help us keep our lights on — if we're really serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

[1535]

Our side of the House believes it's imperative for us to become electricity self-sufficient in British Columbia. We do disagree with members on the other side of the House, including their Energy critic, who yesterday on CFX Radio said that that goal of ours to become electricity self-sufficient is "ludicrous."

Our side of the House begs to differ. Due to the vision of previous governments and Premiers in this province, I think British Columbians became accustomed to us actually being self-sufficient in electricity and being net exporters. They had the vision and the foresight to make difficult decisions to build the infrastructure that has now benefited this province for decades.

During the 1990s very little new additional capacity was built in British Columbia. As a result, we have now been a net importer of electricity for quite a number of years. I think about five or six years.

We are committed to developing new clean energy resources in British Columbia. All together, with the capacity additions at Bridge River; at the Revelstoke dam that's now been approved by myself and the

Minister of Energy; a new turbine at Seven Mile dam, which I had a chance to visit; additions to the W.A.C. Bennett dam on the Peace River; additions including the Brilliant expansion project, which is a government-owned corporation in the Kootenays; and the recently approved expansion to the Waneta dam that the Minister of Energy and I approved last week, there will be enough additional electricity generated from B.C. Hydro and Columbia Power Corporation generating assets to keep the lights on in 227,000 homes in British Columbia.

That is clean, renewable electricity that will help us meet our objectives of weaning ourselves off the coal-fired imported electricity that British Columbians had to rely on over recent years. As well, it keeps the dollars at home, and we can do it without contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. That's a win-win situation, and it represents the kind of vision that our government is pursuing.

Building on those initiatives, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act will initiate the next phase in meeting the challenge of climate change. It will involve taking firm regulatory measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions coming from all major sources in the province.

Meeting the targets and requirements set out in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act will be hard work, but there's no place better suited to meeting this challenge than here in British Columbia, building on the successes that people and the government of this province have achieved in recent years in building our diverse and strong economy.

There is no better time to begin than right now, and while it will be hard work, this government is confident that firm action on climate change will also mean new investments and jobs. Our goal is ultimately greater prosperity for British Columbia. Climate action must be seen and pursued as an economic opportunity as well as an environmental imperative.

We are taking decisive and necessary action to confront global warming but in a way that will increase our quality of life, help to protect our environment and seize on economic opportunities as the world transitions to a low-carbon economy.

In British Columbia there are close to 1,300 companies active in the sustainable technology industry across the province, employing about 18,000 people. This number is expected to grow.

We have built our industry by investing in world-class research institutions. British Columbia is home to 15 research centres of excellence and other clean-technology research institutes. Backed by a research and innovation infrastructure, our companies provide sustainable technology solutions and practices in both domestic and export markets.

These opportunities have not gone unnoticed by the investment community. Venture capitalists have invested \$3.9 billion into green and clean technology ventures in North America last year — almost doubling their investment from 2005, helping to drive this industry to become one of the fastest-growing sectors

in the North American venture capital market. B.C. can and will be a leader in geothermal technologies, energy-efficient buildings, solar thermal systems, cellulose ethanol technologies and gas-to-liquid technologies that would capture gas otherwise flared in gas and oil fields.

We are already leading the world in fuel cell technology. The government that can best attract entrepreneurs and investors, and harness the creativity, ingenuity and power of the private sector will have the best chance to create self-perpetuating, sustainable technology clusters that drive dynamic economic growth while also improving the environment.

British Columbia is making history by being the first Canadian province to put into law aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets. These targets will spur the new thinking and actions that will be needed to address the challenge of climate change. Just as our province's economy has evolved and diversified over the past century beyond simply being an exporter of natural resources, a move towards a low-carbon economy is the next step in our economic evolution.

[1540]

It is historic and inevitable, and it will be a next chapter in B.C.'s history. Generations from now, people will look back and ask: "What started the change for the better? What made our communities what they are today?" I believe that the passage of laws such as Bill 44 will be marked as the turning point in addressing global warming and protecting the environment for future generations.

With that, I move that the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole to be considered at the next sitting of the House after today.

**Deputy Speaker:** We'll have to pass second reading.

**S. Simpson:** Hon. Speaker, I would note at the start that I am the designated speaker for this piece of legislation.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to stand in my place and speak to Bill 44, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act. This act is put in place, and it establishes greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2020 and 2050 in relation to greenhouse gas emissions for British Columbia generally.

Starting with 2008, it requires the provincial government and all other public sector organizations to pursue actions to minimize their greenhouse gas emissions, and then goes on to speak about a number of things related to that.

We're happy that this legislation has come forward. You'll remember, I'm sure, that back in February the throne speech brought the issue of climate change to this House from this government for the first time. We at that time, when the government announced in the throne speech the reduction for 2020 — that it should be entrenched in law.... This piece of legislation does that, and we're pleased that the government has chosen to take our advice and entrench this in law.

We know that climate change is a compelling issue, and we know it's a global issue that affects all of us and

affects people around the world. There has been much commentary around the issue of climate change for the last couple of years. I think it's a concern that has touched the public in British Columbia and elsewhere in the world to the extent that it has become arguably the single most compelling issue globally right now. It certainly is a significant and major issue for British Columbians and for all Canadians.

It's an issue that we know well in British Columbia. We know it probably best of all in our province because of the pine beetle. Most British Columbians know and understand that historically the pine beetle — which has devastated our pine forests in the most horrific of ways for those forests, the habitat and those communities that rely on those forests — has pretty much always been there, but because of our weather and our climate, we could rely on the beetle to be dealt with by cold weather.

In the better part of the last decade, of course, that has not been the case. What we in fact have now is a circumstance where the beetle has ravaged our forests and is now moving across borders and heading to other jurisdictions.

We also know that we've seen flooding. We know communities across the province that have suffered from flooding. We know our friends in Richmond and Delta have raised those concerns — and in other communities throughout the province where flooding has been a serious issue. While we can't say that any one incident of flooding is related to climate change, the increasing nature of flooding is certainly indicative of what our expectations are about the impacts of climate change. We certainly will expect to see more of it, and we'll certainly expect to see more of it in our communities in British Columbia which are at lower elevations.

[1545]

We also know — and this is certainly a very concerning issue for all British Columbians — the impacts of climate change, potentially, on agriculture and on food security issues in our province.

It's a bit ironic, but there are those in the global community who suggest that in some ways Canada and Russia will be — at least for a short period of time, through climate change — beneficiaries of climate change to the extent that more moderate climates may increase our growing areas for agriculture. But I don't think we wish the extent of that on anybody, because what we know, of course, is that it is changing.

It will change what happens in the Okanagan, on Vancouver Island and in other communities as certain crops become less able to be grown — or more so. It does make changes, and I know from our discussions with the agriculture community that they have significant concerns about that.

Also, it raises issues around health care. The impacts of climate change, potentially, on the health of our citizens is a growing concern.

Another example, of course, would be in the area of water. I've had the opportunities to talk with people at Water Highway B.C. and the hydrologists in British Columbia, who have expressed serious concerns about

how prepared we are to deal with that issue and their concerns about insufficient and inadequate support for hydrometric water monitoring by both the provincial and the federal government.

They aren't providing the levels of support that they, as the experts in the field, believe are necessary in order to better understand the impacts on our water and to understand how, in fact, we deal with those impacts. We know, of course, that as water and water flows are affected by climate change, it affects our local communities. It affects our drinking water. It affects water available to our resource industries that are essential and critical users of water.

When we talk about climate change, of course, it is a global issue. We know that it's accelerating. It's interesting that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and many other credible thinkers on the issue of climate change have been accelerating their concerns. Issues that they were raising not that long ago, telling us a year or two years ago.... Issues that they said would be coming in the next century, they're now telling us will come in the next decade.

That acceleration is becoming very rapid and very concerning. We're hearing more and more of that from experts, from people in communities who are starting to see and feel those impacts. That urgency is growing, and we need to respond to that urgency here in British Columbia as we do throughout the world.

Last weekend our party, as you may know, had our annual convention in Vancouver. At that convention we had a keynote speaker, Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon. Dr. Homer-Dixon is an expert in this field and quite well respected. Dr. Homer-Dixon holds the George Ignatieff chair of peace and conflict studies at the Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto.

He is the author of a number of well-recognized books. Included in some of his books are *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*, which won the Caldwell Prize of the American Political Science Association; *The Ingenuity Gap*, which was the 2001 Governor General's non-fiction award winner here in Canada; and his most recent book, *The Up Side of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity and the Renewal Of Civilization*, which was the 2006 National Business Book Award winner here in our country.

One of the things that Dr. Homer-Dixon does.... Part of his studies and his research looks at the issue of climate change. It is one of the key issues he looks at. He looks at climate change and its environmental, social and economic impacts, and that's a really important focus for Dr. Homer-Dixon.

[1550]

When he spoke to our convention, he spoke about that. He really stressed to our members the growing urgency of our challenge to deal with this question of climate change. His focus and inspiration were a little scary at times — what he had to say. But I think it did energize our members, certainly, and was even more compelling for the 700 or so people in that room who were very much focused on this issue. They left that room even more compelled to deal with this challenge.

What I'd like to do is just quote. Dr. Homer-Dixon is a regular contributor to the opinion pages in the *New York Times* as well as the *Globe and Mail*. He wrote recently, on October 4 of this year in the *New York Times*, an opinion piece that he contributed called "A Swiftly Melting Planet." In that, he was speaking about the arctic ice fields and the impacts that we're seeing on those fields.

Just to pull out of his quote, he said: "This past summer sent scientists scrambling to redo their estimates. Week by week the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colorado, reported the trend: from 2.23 million square miles of ice remaining on August 8 to 1.6 million square miles on September 16 — an astonishing drop from the previous low of 2.05 million square miles reached in 2005."

What Dr. Homer-Dixon was saying here is that in that very short two-year period, half a million square miles, roughly, of the ice fields disappeared — something that was being projected to maybe happen by 2040. It's happening now. The melting of the arctic ice fields has huge implications across the world in terms of raising sea levels.

He went on to talk about the impacts on our oceans. We need to understand that the oceans are a critical factor in meeting our challenge of climate change. He went on to say in the same opinion piece:

"There are other destabilizing factors in the carbon cycle that involve the oceans. Each year the oceans absorb about half the carbon dioxide that humans emit into the atmosphere. But as oceans warm, they will absorb less carbon dioxide, partly because the gas dissolves less readily in warmer water and partly because warming will reduce the mixing between deep and surface waters that provides nutrients to plankton that absorb carbon dioxide. And when oceans take up less carbon dioxide, warming worsens."

The challenge that we face here is incredibly compelling. He talked about global warming melting large areas of permafrost in Alaska, Canada and Siberia. As it melts, the organic matter in the permafrost starts to rot, releasing carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere, again accelerating our challenge.

What Professor Homer-Dixon is talking about is this rapid acceleration that the scientists across the world who have been engaged in this did not foresee. Interestingly, if you read the last report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, they clearly talk about that. They have recognized this acceleration, and I'm sure that Dr. Weaver and the others on the panel will be bringing that expertise to bear in terms of the work of the panel that has been established.

The final comment from Dr. Homer-Dixon that I think is important was in his close to this piece, where he said:

"We need a far more aggressive global response to climate change. In the 1960s mothers learned that the milk they were feeding their children was laced with radioactive material from atmospheric tests of nuclear weapons and that this contamination could increase the risk of childhood leukemia. Soon women organized themselves in the tens of thousands to demand that nuclear powers ban atmospheric testing. Their campaign largely succeeded.

"In response to the new dangers of climate change, we need a similar mobilization — of mothers, of students and of everyone with a stake in the future — now."

We need to engage in that call to action now. That's what Dr. Homer-Dixon is telling us, and he's certainly right. He's certainly right that that's what we need to do.

[1555]

Now, what's this government doing? When we look at the plan, which has primarily been the Premier's plan.... We know that at the beginning — last year, sometime around last Christmas or so — the Premier was on his holidays and came back. The rumours started to fly that the Premier had made the decision, had had a bit of an epiphany on the question of climate change, and that we would be hearing about climate change in the throne speech. And of course, we did. We did hear about it in the throne speech.

What we also know is that as that came forward, there was a serious lack of any evidence that anybody other than the Premier had been engaged in that epiphany and that revelation. Interestingly, as the Minister of Finance at the time said when she was asked whether there would be resources applied in the budget.... Her comments initially were, I believe, that there would be no additional dollars in the budget related to climate change.

Then, as we know, there was \$4 million put in the budget — \$4 million out of a \$37 billion budget or so. But \$4 million was put in, and those are the funds that are presumably paying for the climate action secretariat that currently works with the cabinet committee on these matters.

The other thing that was interesting is that as we looked into the service plans of all the ministries that are provided for last year, with the exception of the service plan from the Ministry of Environment, I think we'd be hard pressed to have found a single time where there was a significant discussion on the question of climate change in any of those service plans. That's a concern, hon. Speaker, because it suggests a real disconnect between the government at that time and where the climate change initiative was to go.

We raised this issue, and certainly for the last ten months the issue has been raised a number of times about what substance there was behind the revelation of climate change in the throne speech.

Also, I've heard these comments raised, and we've heard these comments raised by journalists and by others — issues they've raised about the disconnect between the cabinet and the Premier's office on this issue of climate change. We know this is an issue that requires everybody's attention, requires us all to be involved, yet there are serious issues around what the ownership in cabinet is of this issue.

I suppose we're going to see more of it. I think we can reasonably suspect that none of the members of cabinet are going to want to aggravate their boss very much, so they're likely to all want to talk about climate change in some way, shape or form. I suspect that when we see the service plans next year, it will be remarkable the number that say climate change somewhere within those service plans — significantly more than the last time we looked at them, I'm sure.

Having said that, I want to deal with an issue that I think is a significant concern here. It reflects on the lack of a relationship between the climate change initiatives that we have heard from the government and the practices of the government around other policy areas.

The government, on one hand, has talked largely about two climate change initiatives. They've talked about a cap-and-trade system, and they've talked about California tailpipe emissions standards. We'll talk about those two initiatives a little bit later on, but that's been largely the thrust of the initiatives outlined by the government to date.

On the other side, there is a whole series of very significant government initiatives that are totally disconnected from the question of climate change and that arguably go miles to exacerbate and make the situation in British Columbia significantly worse. I'd like to talk about a couple of those for a moment, because I think that is a challenge in meeting the emissions standards as laid out in Bill 44.

[1600]

We have a transportation issue. We've seen that the Minister of Transportation has advanced very aggressively — enthusiastically, obviously — his concern. He has enthusiastically supported the Gateway project and a number of similar kinds of initiatives, largely, we would guess, allowing for the cost overruns that will inevitably happen — probably about \$6 billion of investment in roads and bridges.

Now, you can argue whether the roads and bridges are important, but what we do know is that it will increase the amount of vehicles on the road. Every example anywhere we have seen in North America has resulted in increases in vehicles on the road when you've had those kinds of expansions. There just is not an example where that hasn't occurred. That's one issue.

But the most significant challenge here is that the investments have all been there. There have been almost no investments to date of any significance — certainly nothing significant in terms of transit when you relate it to the investments that have been made in roads and bridges. The extent so far.... We hear that there will be more, and I hope there are. I hope the northeast line gets built, and I hope there are other commitments.

But when we've heard from people about.... The mayor of Surrey has told us about the need for 500 buses in Surrey. We've heard calls in Vancouver for the Broadway line. We've certainly heard calls in the Tri-Cities to build the northeast line, a SkyTrain line. We know there's a need for further expansion of rapid transit south of the Fraser.

We know all of those things are meant to get people out of their cars, among other things, and we know getting people out of their cars is a critical part of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As we put fewer cars on the road, have more emission-free or -reduced methods of transportation, that will go a long way to meeting the challenges that we face around greenhouse gas emissions.

But we haven't seen any investment. We have seen \$6 billion, essentially on roads and bridges. To date, the

only commitment we've seen in the last while that relates to this is a commitment to put 20 buses on the new Port Mann Bridge sometime in six years. That's the significant commitment. There's not been another commitment. Now, I would hope that we will see more significant commitments around transportation. But to date we've not seen them, and that's a concern. That's the disconnect between these policies.

We've also another area where we have significant emissions. Probably 25 or 28 percent of our emissions in British Columbia come out of energy — the oil and gas sector in large part. The Environment Minister spoke and talked about the green energy plan. The reality of the green energy plan is that much of it is green by cover of the report and not much else. We've seen one of the most aggressive and rapid expansions of oil and gas proposed in this report that we've ever seen.

It's interesting that between this year and 2010 there will be over a billion dollars of public subsidy given to the oil and gas sector. That's what's proposed. This year alone was \$265 million. There will be over a billion dollars given. At the same time, for alternate energy initiatives and development, at this point we've seen that about \$25 million has been provided there to look at innovative proposals. It's not necessarily to provide, as it is for oil and gas, for infrastructure and supports in that, but it is to provide for some initiatives. So we have \$25 million for what we might call green energy and a billion dollars for what we would call old, conventional fossil fuel energy. That's a disconnect.

That's a disconnect between the climate change initiatives that Bill 44 talks about, the reductions that Bill 44 looks for us to accomplish and the reality of government policy. Of course, it doesn't quite end there.

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources is one of the strong advocates of going offshore. We know that at a time when we should be looking at conservation, when we should be looking more closely at other initiatives, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, along with his federal counterparts who share his view, are looking at ways to advance offshore oil and gas — not exactly in sync with the Premier's plans for climate change and emission reductions.

[1605]

I guess that brings me to the question, as we discuss the whole question of energy.... It's interesting. The Minister of Environment, in his opening comments, talked about electricity and the need to deal with electricity. I would agree that electricity is important, and we're very fortunate in this province to have had, actually, the foresight of W.A.C. Bennett, who built our dam system. He built B.C. Hydro.

Absolutely, W.A.C. Bennett deserves the credit for building B.C. Hydro — he knew it should be a Crown corporation — for building our dam system and for knowing it should all be public. W.A.C. Bennett led the charge to keep energy public in British Columbia, something this government is in the process of dismantling.

What we have here is this government going down that road. The minister talked about these things. Now,

we know this government has looked at the question of power. The Minister of Environment in his opening comments talked about energy. That's an important topic when you talk about climate change. He talked about the need for energy self-sufficiency.

Well, the government here is clearly a big proponent of privatizing power. They've been actively supporting that power with agreements that make no economic sense at all, but they're doing it. They're paying \$88. They're getting B.C. Hydro to sign power purchase agreements that will pay companies \$88, when you could buy on the spot market for \$56, and we're getting \$5 or \$10 back out of that in terms of fees. Pretty bizarre situation. Doesn't make much sense, but the government has chosen to do that.

But, hon. Speaker, here's the problem. That privatization of power obviously also creates significant environmental impacts, because there are no controls on those projects. There are no cumulative impact studies. It's a problem.

I want to get to the point that I think is particularly concerning as it relates to climate change. It relates to energy self-sufficiency that the Minister of Environment spoke about in his opening comments and about how energy self-sufficiency is important for us if we want to be able to accomplish the climate change initiatives that are in Bill 44.

Those power purchase agreements that I spoke about, which have been signed by B.C. Hydro with those companies, are 30-year agreements — some of them a little longer, some a little shorter. What those agreements say, at the end of the day, is that those companies are then free to sell that energy on the market at the expiration of those agreements.

We know that California is waiting to buy that power. So what we'll see is energy sufficiency by 2016, which is talked about in the energy plan. I think we will see it by 2016. My concern is that by 2030, we will have lost it again when we lose the competitive advantage of energy when those power projects are then selling their power to California and we don't have much to say about it.

Our other option — other than that, of course — will be to allow California to set our power prices and to decide what we'll pay for power, because we'll have to match or beat those prices in California to make those deals work.

So we have a situation where we're going to lose on this. We're selling out our rivers, our natural resources, and it's a very concerning thing. It has a significant impact on the greenhouse gas reductions that the Premier talks about in Bill 44.

The last comment that I want to make about the challenges that I see is the disconnect between the climate change initiatives of the government as reflected in Bill 44 and the challenges with current policy initiatives for the government. This relates to an agreement that the government has signed with Alberta. It's the trade, investment and labour mobility agreement. That's an agreement that affects a whole array of areas of public policy and affects the relationship and the

movement of goods and services between Alberta and British Columbia.

Now, when that agreement was signed.... Unfortunately, we've not had the opportunity to discuss that agreement here in the Legislature, because the government's chosen not to bring it to the Legislature for us to discuss, but it has been looked at.

I had the opportunity to look at a legal opinion that was provided, particularly around the questions of TILMA and the environment. It was provided by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, or what's now called Ecojustice, which is a non-profit team of lawyers who do work mostly in the environmental community but who look at these kinds of issues from a legal perspective.

The question I have as it affects Bill 44 and the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act is whether, in fact, the implications of TILMA create a situation where the government may not be able to accomplish its objectives because it doesn't have the authority to do that.

[1610]

There is a whole series of issues — measures that are adopted, particularly around renewable and alternate energy — that are clearly exempted from TILMA. There's no question that a significant number of environmental issues are exempted from TILMA and will be free from TILMA. That's a good thing.

However, there are other issues under part V of TILMA exemptions that aren't so clear. We have situations around the management and conservation of forests, fish and wildlife. We know that global warming has significant impacts on our forests, our fish and our wildlife. We know that that happens. We just have to look at the pine beetle. We have to look at our habitat. We have to look at our rivers and streams, and we'll know that's the case.

The challenge we may face with TILMA is seeing a panel that was established under the terms of TILMA likely holding this exemption as a measure aimed primarily at forests, fish and wildlife. Are those panels going to take a very narrow view of what constitute forests, fish and wildlife and instead look at greenhouse gas emissions as being primarily around climate change and not necessarily fitting there? That's a concern.

In terms of the management and disposal of hazardous and waste materials — some might argue that greenhouse gases certainly are a waste material — the management and disposal of those materials is likely to be interpreted as meaning the collection, handling, recycling, storage and transportation of such materials, as opposed to avoiding their generation in the first place. The question is: will TILMA in fact look at that?

It's interesting that the government, in a document they produced called "For the Record" on the B.C.-Alberta trade, investment and labour mobility agreement and the environment — which was put out by the Ministry of Economic Development in February of this year — talks to some of this. In that release the ministry responded to questions about how TILMA will apply to the province's climate change action plan.

It emphasizes the importance of the justification process under article 6 and briefly notes that there are

provisions regarding conservation measures. Although it lists some of those part V exemptions, like the renewable and alternate energy, there is no mention of the other part V exemptions that I mentioned around fish and wildlife or around hazardous and waste materials. It doesn't say anything about those, suggesting by its nature that it was going to be silent on that because it wasn't sure that it would not apply there.

In summary, I think what can be said is that while the basic TILMA prohibitions don't apply to the promotion of renewable and alternate energy, what is important is that they may apply to a whole bunch of other areas. Those areas around greenhouse gas emissions may affect our ability under Bill 44 to deal with those reductions and the array of options that, presumably, the government is going to bring forward to us in the coming year.

Those things under TILMA that are not part of part V will likely breach the prohibitions altogether. I'd like to give you just a couple of examples of that, because I do think this issue with TILMA is a very significant one.

"Measures requiring improved energy efficiency and reduced wastage during consumption will impose costs on manufacturers to redesign their products and on building owners or operators to buy new products and will therefore likely be found to restrict or impair investment.

"Other measures aimed at reducing energy consumption — such as incentives to use public transit and disincentives to use cars, or the promotion of locally-produced goods — will likely be found to impair investments, such as in car manufacturers and non-locally produced goods.

"Measures requiring carbon capture and storage" — and we know that the government has spoken a lot about that in relation to coal and sequestration — "will impose additional costs and will therefore likely be found to restrict or impair investment."

The way that this will be responded to, because I think there's a fair question here, is that there is an argument made — and I think this may be a legitimate argument — that these issues could all fall under the parameter of protection of the environment and that there might in fact be a case to be won at TILMA under article 6 that this is protection of the environment.

[1615]

The challenge is this. It's not hard to imagine difficulties — this is part of the challenge with TILMA — in defending such measures under the "not more restrictive than necessary" test. This is the test that complicates things for us. Let me just give you two examples.

Measures aimed at improving energy efficiency, reducing waste and otherwise reducing energy consumption. Complainants might argue that it would be less trade-and-investment-restrictive to implement measures to change our energy sources to renewable, alternate or nuclear, rather than trying to decrease the amount of energy we use. That argument could be made.

The second, to give you an idea about the carbon capture and storage, which I spoke about previously — measures requiring carbon capture and storage. Complainants who will be associated with a relatively small number of significant point-source users of GHG emissions, such as those in the oil sands, might argue

the use of nuclear power or the public promotion of energy-efficiency improvements would be less restrictive.

These will all be settled when these debates come up, and they certainly will at some point. These will all be settled by a panel somewhere. But what they do is raise significant issues and significant challenges around whether TILMA will allow the kinds of initiatives that are being anticipated to occur through Bill 44.

The problem we have there is that, as we know, as TILMA moves forward, the lawyers for the government, legal counsel for the government, will be telling ministries and ministers and others about the things they can't do related to legal and binding agreements that have been put in place. I think that's part of our challenge that we face with TILMA.

What are we looking at in terms of the government and in terms of what we're seeing here? What we're looking at from the government is this. We had a throne speech, which had significant endorsements. It was a revelation for many people when the Premier did 180-degree turn and came out on the issue of climate change. People supported that. I think it was an exciting time for people, and I understand that.

The caveat that was put on it at that time — and it was not spoken loudly at that time — was: "Well, let's wait for the substance, because we need some substance." We're now ten months later, and we're still waiting for most of that substance. That's been the comment. Those were the references we saw in the media yesterday about much of Bill 44. "We'll be waiting to see what the substance is."

We saw again, as I mentioned, that there was no connection to the last budget in terms of climate change. There's a lot of anticipation about what will happen this February coming up with the next budget — the green budget, as we understand it. We'll all be looking with anticipation as to what occurs there.

We've had roughly ten months since the throne speech was announced. The government is still scrambling, without a plan that they've been able to put out to the people of British Columbia — the people who will be impacted by this plan, the people who ultimately need to take ownership of this plan, the people who need to endorse this plan. They don't know what's going on.

The reason for that is that we have a cabinet committee on climate change, which is maybe the most secretive committee that we've seen in a long, long time, and we have a climate change secretariat that is equally secretive. That's remarkable.

I know that the opposition doesn't get very much cooperation from the government, but I find it interesting that I as the Environment critic sent a letter in August to the government asking simply to get a briefing on the activities of the climate change secretariat and to get some idea of who they were and what they were doing. I sent that letter in August, and I'm sure I will get a response to that letter someday soon, but it hasn't happened yet. But I'm sure I will get a response — maybe next August, when apparently the government's going to report out.

What have we had though? We've heard from the Minister of Environment and we've heard from other sources that this climate change secretariat and the cabinet committee have held some 170-odd meetings or briefings — 170 of them. If those were only 15 minutes long, that's 45 or 50 hours of briefings. I can't imagine that all of these ministers were sitting rapt for 50 hours to be briefed, but maybe it happened.

[1620]

They had 170 meetings and briefings. What do we know about those meetings? Let me quote the Minister of Environment. The Minister of Environment, on November 20 in Public Eye Online.... We all know Public Eye Online. It's a blog or a website that reports on what we do here. When the minister....

These are in quotation marks. I did ask Mr. Holman, the author of Public Eye Online, whether these were in fact quotes. Mr. Holman assured me that what the Minister of Environment said is: "We don't publicly discuss who we're meeting with and who we're not meeting with. But we've been very busy, and we'll continue to meet."

Then he went on to say, when he was asked.... This particular question was: "How come you don't talk to people in the labour movement?" He went on to say: "Like I said, we don't publicly discuss who comes to meet with us, because we want them to have an ability to feel confident that they can say whatever they want when they get behind closed doors."

That's a quote from the Minister of Environment. I understand that getting behind closed doors is what this government does best. That's what we're talking about, and that's one of the biggest concerns with this initiative. It is all going on behind closed doors.

The vast majority of the four-million-odd people in British Columbia are not part of this discussion. They don't know what's going on. As bits and pieces of it dribble out, they get increasingly concerned about what is going on.

It's not a concern so much that they don't want action. Those four million people want action. But they want to be part of that, and why on earth the government chooses to exclude the population of British Columbia on the climate change initiative is beyond me.

This lack of engagement of the public is a huge issue — and the lack of information or direction around what the costs are. Now, we do know that we're going to have a little more information soon. I guess we'll find out something about it, because we've seen that there were two RFPs filed under B.C. Bid by the government, by the climate change secretariat.

One was by December 15. They wanted to have a bunch of polling done to see how people felt about climate change and about what could or couldn't be done. They want to get some information on what British Columbians think — and that's a good thing — but they might actually want to talk to British Columbians about some of these issues and not just poll them. That might be a good thing to do.

The second thing that was done by the climate change secretariat as part of the initiative was to ask — and I believe that this contract has been let — for an

analysis to be done, again available by December 15, of impacts on the economy, on energy uses, etc., around some of the possible initiatives around climate change.

The fact that targets are being set, the fact that the government is moving forward in the manner that it is without having a sense of what the implications of those targets are, is a bit concerning. And the fact that they're going to start to figure it out by December 15, when these people report with this analysis, is a bit concerning.

What do we have in Bill 44? Let's talk a little bit about the details of Bill 44 itself. First thing we need to know is that Bill 44 is seven pages long, so it's not the most thorough document that you'd ever see. It is a seven-page-long document.

What we know about Bill 44, though, is that there is absolutely nothing in this bill that gives any indication of how we get to these targets. Not one word in this bill tells us anything about how we get to the targets that are listed in here. There is no information of a substantive nature about how to accomplish these broad reductions.

I think that partly brings us to a concern, and it raises an issue. A couple of weeks ago the Pembina Institute released a report called *Mind the Gap*. This is a report that they did looking at climate change in British Columbia. What they did is looked at what the challenges are to meet the Premier's objectives that are in Bill 44. They found that we probably need to get rid of about 36 million tonnes of emissions in order to accomplish that.

What they also found is that something less than five million tonnes will be gotten rid of through the government's commitments. Now, we're all hopeful that there will be more commitments and that they'll maybe do a little better, but that's what we know.

[1625]

As you might appreciate, the government... I know I heard the Premier, and I certainly heard the Minister of Environment, respond to and be dismissive of the Pembina report, and I wouldn't expect anything different. But I would note that when I asked the Minister of Environment in question period here a couple of days ago whether...

Since he was concerned that this report wasn't accurately reflecting the work of the government, maybe he'd like to release the information and the data that, in fact, refuted what was being said by the Pembina Institute. Maybe something substantive — not the throne speech but something substantive that addressed where those emissions would be gotten rid of from.

Well, neither the Premier nor the minister has provided any evidence to support those things. So we have to go look and see what else we can find about what might get us to the reductions in Bill 44. I didn't get to see this PowerPoint. Again, it's because the only sources we seem to have, since the government won't share information with anybody but its friends, are...

We did get some information about a PowerPoint presentation done by Graham Whitmarsh, who is the head of the climate action secretariat and is the new climate guru for the government. He has made some presentations about what the government expects to achieve in terms of reductions.

First of all, they talk about seven million to ten million tonnes of reductions from the oil and gas sector. With the massive expansion of the oil and gas sector, it's hard to see whether that's going to occur. We've seen no commitments here of a substantive nature to see where that occurs.

It goes on to say that most of that may be accomplished by trading carbon credits on the new carbon market British Columbia has joined. Of course, the challenge around credit trading and doing those kinds of things is that at some point you have to wonder whether you're actually reducing emissions or playing fast and loose with those credits.

Until we know what that cap-and-trade market looks like, we won't know. With these cap-and-trade markets, the devil is always in the details, and until we see them, we won't know. Somewhere they're claiming between seven million and ten million tonnes but without much evidence to support that.

Mr. Whitmarsh also said that six million to nine million tonnes will be reduced through efficiencies in transportation. We know that things like \$6 billion of roads and bridges are not exactly creating the efficient transportation system we need. Instead, this seems to rely mostly on the California tailpipe emission standards. Not a bad plan, the California tailpipe emission standards.

I was looking at the California tailpipe emission standards. The thing that I noticed when I read reports out of the California Air Resources Board, the people in the United States who do that work for the California government... They provided a staff report in 2004, I believe, looking at the issue of tailpipe emission standards and what their projections were for California. They said an interesting thing. They said that they felt pretty confident that they would get the reductions in emissions that they were expecting by 2016 or so.

But they went on to say in the report — and this is the most concerning thing — that by 2030 they expected those emissions to grow back to the levels they were at in 2004 and that they would be right in the same place they were when they wrote the report. The reason for that was because of increased numbers of vehicles on the road.

There's no question. If you didn't put the tailpipe emission standards in, it skyrockets, so it's a good thing to put them in. But to suggest that it's going to get us where we need to go for Bill 44 just doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make any sense. It certainly makes less sense if you don't have a strategy in place to try to reduce car use.

We heard the Premier talk at the UBCM, I believe it was, about wanting to double the number of people who use transit — from 12 percent to 25 percent. A good idea. However, we have seen absolutely nothing that suggests what discourages car use and provides opportunities and incentives to use transportation alternatives.

[1630]

With the building of billions of dollars of roads and highways and nothing in transit... Maybe we'll see something in February — who knows? — but there's

nothing today. I don't see the six million to nine million tonnes coming out of the current practices.

Seven million to nine million tonnes from electricity savings — that's a pretty good number. The challenge with that number, though, is that we also know — and this is one of the most complicated things about British Columbia — that only about 5 percent of our emissions come from electricity, because we do use hydroelectric power. It's been very successful. It's very green. Consequently, we don't have a big issue around our electricity emissions in British Columbia, as compared to other jurisdictions that use coal and other products to produce their electricity.

We're not going to solve our problem by dealing with hydroelectric power. We're going to solve it through transportation, oil and gas, and land use strategies. What we have here is them suggesting that we're going to get these kind of reductions, yet nowhere does it make sense how that works when we don't exactly have a big problem there as compared to other areas.

Then it goes on to talk about some smaller areas where you get a couple of million tonnes out of waste management — very good thing; hopefully it works — and couple of million out of fast-tracking the construction of green buildings. Good things.

The problem here, though, is that nowhere has there been any evidence provided that the Pembina report is not accurate in what it asserts — nothing at all. Essentially what this bill does is produce two targets.

The Premier's initial target is 33 percent below current levels or what would be 10 percent below 1990 levels — same thing. We've known this number for ten months now. We called for this target to be legislated. We're glad it was, but the Premier put this target out in the throne speech. Nothing has changed. It's the same number.

There is a second number. The second number is 80 percent below 2007 levels by 2050. What we know, of course, is that most of the global standard is 1990, not 2007. So really what we're talking about here is a 57-percent reduction in greenhouse gases by the year 2050.

We've heard the Premier and the minister talk about the most aggressive and significant standards in the world and certainly in North America, so let's take a look at that. We have most of the significant jurisdictions with very much more aggressive numbers.

This side of the House thinks we should be talking 80-percent reduction by 1990 standards, not 2007 standards. We can achieve those. Those are achievable.

What do other jurisdictions say? The Premier and the government say 57-percent reductions by 2050. Interestingly, France says 75 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Germany says 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The U.K. says a minimum of 60 percent below 1990. The European Union, 25 countries, mostly saying 80 percent below 1990.

California — and we know the Premier always likes to talk about the Governor of California — 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. New Mexico and Oregon, two of the states in the western climate initiative along with British Columbia, also have more significant standards.

Those aren't the only people laying that out. I think about the panel that's been put in place by the Premier, the blue-ribbon panel that we talked about. Let's be clear here. The Suzuki Foundation and its founder David Suzuki have been absolutely clear in calling for 80-percent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2050. That's what those folks are saying.

[S. Hammell in the chair.]

Interestingly, I was looking around to see what other people might have said, and I came across this quote. It said, "If you're going to talk about 2 degrees centigrade" — this was in regard to keeping increases up to only 2 degrees centigrade — "you've got to be talking about 90-percent emission cuts." That was Andrew Weaver who said that. Andrew Weaver is a very eminent scientist, sits on the panel and brings lots of credibility to the Premier's panel. Andrew Weaver is calling for 90-percent reductions, not 80 percent.

We can do better, and the government should do better. We will move amendments, when the time comes, to try to make this a better piece of legislation in regard to that.

[1635]

The other commitments in the bill are to set interim targets for 2012 and 2016. This one is a bit ironic. The Premier goes on holidays in December 2006, reads a couple of good books and comes back with a 33-percent reduction by 2020. It's going to take a panel of 22 experts another year to come up with interim measures for 2012 and 2016 — a little bit ironic.

Maybe we could do that a little faster and get on to finding the solutions. I'm sure that panel could work a little more quickly if they were asked by the Premier. Maybe we could get that done by the time the Minister of Finance brings in her budget. Maybe the budget could have some correlation with those interim targets.

I suspect that the Minister of Finance must be spending a lot of time paying attention to how she's going to fund programs to meet those interim targets. I'm sure she must be doing that, so she'll want to know what they are. Maybe she can get some advice from that panel about what those interim targets are.

Instead, the work of this panel — not binding, by any means — is going to report out in July of next year, and then by the end of the year the government is going to tell us what they think about that report.

Now, there are those who might cynically suggest that, being as the government is going to report out in December of 2008, this might have more to do with an election in May of 2009 than it has to do with dealing with climate change. Those who are cynical might suggest that. But I'm not going to suggest that.

What about this panel? This is a group of eminent individuals. There are a lot of very bright, very committed people who are on this committee that was announced by the Premier. But the makeup of the committee certainly lacks in a couple of key areas — two areas in particular, where I saw serious insufficiency in

that panel. The first one was around no representation from the labour movement.

The labour movement represents hundreds of thousands of workers directly in this province and certainly speaks for millions more. The fact that the government, in 22 spots on there, didn't see fit to have the voice of labour there is a real inadequacy, and I think it's unfortunate. I guess it has more to do with an ideological resistance to having that voice at the table than it has to do with any common sense.

The second.... This is an oversight that, frankly, surprised me a little bit. I was less surprised about the labour one, but this one actually surprised me a little bit. There's nobody on that panel, on that committee, who represents large urban areas — no mayors, no councillors, nobody from Metro Vancouver or whatever.

There's nobody who represents those large urban areas — Vancouver, Surrey, the Tri-Cities — where population growth, land use management issues, transportation issues and sprawl issues are critical. They are the issues that, as much or more than anything else, will drive issues around climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. We have nobody sitting at that table, speaking there.

We have the mayor of 100 Mile House, which is fine, but there is no representation from other local government there and nobody from a large urban centre. That's a mistake. That's a big mistake.

The other problem that I see with this panel, of course, is that nothing it does is binding. There is no obligation for it to meet in public or for its meetings to be public. We know that its report will go to the cabinet committee and that the cabinet committee will do with it as they choose. There has been some indication that there may be release of some information, but it's vague at best.

The other challenge with this bill is that we don't know where we're starting from. There is a serious lack of information here as to what the starting place is in terms of standards. We don't have those numbers yet. The bill suggests that at some point the minister will give us those numbers, but we don't have them yet. We have no way of knowing how these reductions will occur, in what manner or shape they will occur. We don't know the impact that having these reductions will have on our communities and on people who need to make the reductions. This is disappointing.

[1640]

The other thing is that there are no consequences in the legislation for not meeting the targets, and the government has an inability, as I said, to tell us where they're starting. Progress reports will be written by the minister. It would be our view that it might be good if there was an independent body that wrote those progress reports — a third party, an independent party.

Interestingly, of course, those reports will come out in even-numbered years. Election this year is an odd-numbered year. Interesting.

We've talked a little about California tailpipe, and I pointed out the concern with California tailpipe. There also are issues around cap-and-trade, and we'll need to

deal with those. It'll be interesting, as the government does its work with the western climate initiative states and provinces, how we come to answer questions related to allocation versus auction and to offsets and how offsets are dealt with — who gets exempted from this and who doesn't. We'll look very closely at that as that information comes forward.

The other thing in Bill 44 is information about public sector emissions, and that's good. It's an important symbol, if nothing else — to reduce and to become carbon-neutral. We support that, and that's a good thing.

But we need to understand that the government produces about 200,000 tonnes of our emissions annually. It's not significant in the big picture of things — about 1 percent of our total emissions. So while it's an important symbol, and we support that, it is not a significant number in terms of actually reducing emissions.

What I want to do is just briefly talk a little about a bit of an option. I mentioned earlier that the NDP had its convention last week. We heard from Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon, and I spoke a little bit about that. We adopted a paper called Sustainable B.C. This was a paper that I was very pleased we had Prof. Homer-Dixon review, and he was quite supportive of it, as a sense of how we move forward.

I just want to touch on this a little bit, because I do believe that this is the kind of direction we should be heading in. It is a direction that is significantly different than what Bill 44 offers us, but it is a direction that we should be considering.

It talks about the principles of sustainability that we need to secure our present and future generations and about the benefits we need for a healthy environment and a decent, just and sustaining society. It talks about environmental stewardship and the need — through public, corporate and personal actions — to ensure that we restore and maintain a healthy ecosystem, reduce our human impacts on the planet's life-and-support systems, and preserve the diversity and biodiversity of our planet.

It talks about a diversified economy that operates within the environmental caring capacity of our society — of our world, of our globe — and that serves the needs and aspirations of people in local communities, contributing in a very genuine way to socioeconomic progress for the whole province, not just for some in the province.

It talks about equity and sharing the wealth of the province fairly among all British Columbians. It talks about individual and community well-being that results from all of the above and that is built on mutual respect, cooperation, and economic, social and political democracy.

There are key principles entailed in Sustainable B.C., and I think they're essential for any look at a real approach to sustainability that will accomplish our objectives. The principles include ecosystem protection, where we look at the life-support system for all of the species including humanity and the environment, and we make sure we protect them from pollution and degradation.

Principles about resource conservation — a real reduce, reuse and recycle program, where we, among other things, dramatically decrease our use of non-renewable resources.

About biodiversity and the protection of the diversity of our plant and animal species.

About resilience and building a society that's diversified enough and is resilient enough that we will survive the challenges we may face.

About protection for the commons, our shared public trust like water, air, fish and wildlife, our parks and our protected areas.

About our culture and our intellectual assets — protecting those things.

[1645]

About protecting health care, education and public utilities and understanding that they are part of the commons. They belong to us all, and we all have the right to share in them, and we all have the right to own them.

About food security and ensuring that we have a secure and safe supply of food and that we're protecting the agricultural lands and the farming economy we need to make sure we have that ongoing food security.

About social equity where the resources and the benefits that we derive from this environment and from our social and economic activities are shared fairly by everybody.

About full-cost economics where the short- and long-term environmental, social and economic impacts are all taken into account when we in fact look at our economy and look at what constitutes success.

About the precautionary principle where, when decisions are made and we're not sure, we make the choice to err on the side of caution.

About adaptive management where we use practices and technologies to make sure that we're always learning, we stay innovative and we work at being innovative.

About democracy and due process where we all have access to information, we have meaningful opportunities to participate and we're treated fairly by our judicial system.

About just transition where everybody takes a share in our responsibility for moving us forward, and no one bears an unfair share.

These are all things that we need to look forward to. Particularly, when we look at these as they affect climate change and what is in Bill 44, we need to ensure that B.C.'s policies and practices meet or exceed national and international commitments to greenhouse gases. That means 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

We need to commit public investment and encourage the private investment in real energy efficiency and conservation. We need to look at carbon taxes and tax-shifting models that reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, to rethink how we apply our tax system to begin to be more sustainable, and to develop adaptation mechanisms to ensure that we meet the struggles of the future.

As we move through those initiatives in Sustainable B.C. — there is lots more in the document, and I would encourage people to look at it — we will see, I think, significant improvements in where we stand if we head

in that direction. What the document Sustainable B.C. mostly talks about is taking a much more holistic approach to how we deal with climate change.

We know that the challenge to British Columbia is real. Unfortunately, the government action, to date, has been tepid. The lack of openness, consultation, inclusiveness and transparency by the government on this issue is of very great concern for British Columbians. The government needs to open up the process. Now is the time to bring all British Columbians into a discussion on climate change.

While we will support this legislation when it comes to a vote, we will do it bringing forward amendments in committee to strengthen this bill; to improve its accountability and transparency; and to ensure, hopefully, that all British Columbians who want to will have the opportunity to engage in this debate, take ownership of this issue and find solutions. I look forward to having those discussions when we get to committee stage.

**J. McIntyre:** I'm very proud, actually, to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 44 on second reading. It sets decisive action on a global issue. It enshrines into law the Premier's and our government's commitment to be a leader on climate change. It establishes targets that were announced in the February throne speech, which were so well received by climate change experts, including renowned Dr. Andrew Weaver at University of Victoria.

In my remarks today, I want to actually go back to the throne speech. I just want to read a few excerpts, because the Premier indicated that we would be taking these steps. Today with this bill, we're delivering. Let me just remind viewers and members of the House.

This is an excerpt from the throne speech in February '07 that said:

"The government...will act deliberately.

"British Columbia's greenhouse gas emissions are now estimated to be 35 percent higher than...in 1990. The rate of atmospheric warming over the last 50 years is faster than at any time in the past 1,000 years.

[1650]

"The science is clear. It leaves no room for procrastination. Global warming is real. We will act to stem its growth and minimize the impacts already unleashed. The more timid our response is, the harsher the consequences will be. If we fail to act aggressively and shoulder our responsibility, we know that our children can expect shrinking glaciers and snowpacks, drying lakes and streams and changes in the ocean's chemistry."

We do know this. What each of us does matters. What everyone does matters. I think that's very poignant, and it points and sets the tone for all that this government is doing.

The Premier promised action. He promised action following up on the election platform. In the throne speech we also see where he sets out that:

"The government will firmly establish British Columbia's standards for action on climate change. It will aim to reduce B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 percent below current levels by 2020. This will place B.C.'s greenhouse gas emissions at 10 percent under 1990 levels by 2020. It is an aggressive target. It will set a new standard.

"To achieve that goal, we will need to be focused and relentless in its pursuit. Interim targets will be set for 2012 and 2016. Leaders from business, community groups and citizens themselves are calling for a new environmental playing field that is fair and balanced but that recognizes we all need to change. We all need to be part of the solution."

This is a document that has vision. This bill delivers. It starts to deliver. It's the first step in action in enshrining this into law.

The Premier also promised a climate action team. Just yesterday he introduced his impressive 22-member team, a blue-ribbon team, including distinguished members from this province who have been part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Among other things, this team will make recommendations on B.C.'s interim targets for 2012 and 2016, which by this very bill will set out by regulation that these targets have to be met by 2008. Members of the team, supported by advisers like Mark Jaccard from SFU, will help close the gap that we've identified. We've identified that 60 to 80 percent that's necessary to meet these targets, but this team will help us to get to that 100-percent target. As I said, this is just the first step.

Let me talk about the bill for a moment. Part 1 establishes these targets for reducing greenhouse gases for 2020 and for 2050 as well. It wisely sets out that we must by law publish the targets for 2012 and 2016 to keep us all focused on that 2020 goal. It also ensures that the government will make public reports on the GHG emissions and the progress that we're making towards achieving the targets. This keeps government accountable.

Part 2 of the bill establishes targets for the public sector to be carbon-neutral for the 2010 calendar year. That's a very important step. Not only that, prior to 2010, and illustrating our desire to lead by example, the provincial government, by this legislation, must be carbon-neutral for the 2008-2009 calendar year. We're not waiting. We're starting now. This carbon-neutral provincial government requirement will apply to the Legislative Assembly, to provincial government ministries, to agencies and also to what we call the SUCH sector — schools, colleges, universities, health authorities and Crown corporations.

This legislation will ensure that the provincial government will be required to make public annual carbon-neutral action reports, beginning with a report for the 2008 calendar year — again, accountability.

Action on climate change is central to this government's great goal of leading the world in sustainable environmental management, and it's been an important performance objective in the province's last two strategic plans. This is not an overnight epiphany, as the NDP claims. It's just that the Premier and the executive council are actually getting kudos from all corners for their plan, and it seems to set the NDP back a little on their heels.

I must make a few comments. I've just spent the last hour or so in the House this afternoon listening to the NDP critic, who claims he will be supporting the bill but who certainly took some time to criticize government and government policy. He made a point about the disconnect between this climate change legislation

and government policy. I would like to clarify that to members of the House and to viewers at home.

There is no disconnect. This environmental bill and our new energy plan are working in lockstep to ensure a greener future for all British Columbians. Goals like our electricity self-sufficiency by 2016, so that we're not a net importer any longer....

[1655]

But the critic for Environment for the NDP, from the other side of the House, reveals the continuing NDP ideological opposition to what are greenhouse gas-neutral, green power projects that this government is promoting — sources like small hydro or run of the river, wind, thermal, biomass. Their record in government shows no wind projects in this province.

I really believe that the NDP would rather not have green power in this province than actually have to admit that the private sector has a positive role as a partner in helping us meet these aggressive climate change targets. There's no other conclusion to come to. They actually would rather not have green power than admit there are other ways to achieve those goals.

As I asked the member for Esquimalt-Metchosin in an earlier debate on a similar subject, I'd like to know what schools, hospitals and other capital projects the NDP would forgo if they diverted the billions of dollars being spent on power plants into those public projects. I pose the same question. I still haven't got an answer.

Again, as the environmental critic continues to fearmonger, I heard him this afternoon say — I heard him again, actually, because it seems to be a mantra — that B.C. is selling our rivers.

You know, I have to ask him directly, and he can answer me in the House or outside of the House. But does he not understand the difference between a lease and a sale? I mean, I don't know if in his history he's ever rented an apartment. But when you rent an apartment, do you think that after you pay your rent for a number of months, you actually own the apartment? Do you think that paying rent...?

Interjections.

**An Hon. Member:** Shh.

**J. McIntyre:** Thank you. I could hardly hear myself think.

I just want to know if the member understands the difference between a sale and a lease. A very simple example, but when you rent an apartment, you pay rent for the year or two that you live there. Does he think that you actually own the apartment after you've finished renting?

Guess what. These independent power producers rent the Crown land. It's rent. It's a lease; it's not a sale. I would really like to take this opportunity to make sure that the public and members of the House and members of the other side of the House, or the opposition, understand there is a difference.

I know that in my riding, I have a number of independent power projects which first nations are

involved in as partners. They're partners with business, industry, government, first nations. They work, and they help us achieve these green power goals.

I'd like to switch gears here for a moment, because it's very important. I'd also like to read into the record, because as I said, we introduced this legislation yesterday through the Minister of Environment.... The Premier also announced the climate action team, and I just want to put into the record a little bit of the media reports of today.

Let me tell you that in Jonathan Fowlie's article in *The Vancouver Sun*, he writes: "Reaction to both the climate action team and the legislation was largely positive, with some in the environmental community lauding Campbell for his work." That's a quote, so I read the name.

"We certainly want to applaud this government for setting ambitious, indeed aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets and for leading by example," Tom Hackney, vice-president of the B.C. Sustainable Energy Association said in his statement. "This is a historic pronouncement, and it should be recognized as such."

Also, there were some quotes from Lisa Matthauss of Sierra Club B.C.'s chapter. "Having the government set targets, both for 2020 and 2050, puts in motion a whole bunch of requirements in terms of getting tools and incentives and regulations in place," Matthauss said. "Once we've got that ball rolling, I think we will not only meet, but we will exceed the targets that governments have set out there. And we're going to have to exceed them if we are going to meet the challenge of climate change," she said. Matthauss was also positive about the Premier's climate action team."

Then just one more quote. This was a very important one, because once again it's a quote from climate change expert Andrew Weaver at our own University of Victoria. This was an article in the *Times Colonist* by Jeff Rud, and he starts off saying, "That team," referring to the Premier's new 22-member climate action team, "has a distinct Victoria flavour, including noted climate change expert Andrew Weaver of the University of Victoria school of earth and ocean sciences."

He says: "This is like a dream come true," said Weaver, one of nine team members who are part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a joint winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize." It goes on to say: "Here in B.C. we're taking leadership on this climate portfolio — not only in Canada, but also internationally."

[1700]

I am very, very proud to be part of this government, to serve in this province at this time when we have a leader and we have a government that's taking such a lead on these issues like climate change and also on our reconciliation with first nations. We all were probably trying to fight back the tears and the emotion that was in this House earlier this afternoon as we introduced yet another treaty. I just want to reiterate that I am so proud to be serving when we are dealing with these so important issues and taking a proper lead, and I wanted my voice on the record.

I serve as one of the government reps to a non-partisan, non-profit organization called PNWER, which is Pacific North West Economic Region. We just had the

leadership summit in my constituency, up in Whistler, last week. We had a whole day on climate change, which I had the privilege to moderate and co-chair. We had expert speakers and members from all eight jurisdictions in the Pacific Northwest. It includes the four northwest U.S. states and Alaska, B.C., Alberta and Yukon — a very, very powerful group that actually represents the tenth-biggest economy in the world.

It was such a pleasure to see British Columbia — our Ministry of Environment, the representatives of the climate change secretariat and other people in the Ministry of Environment, along with others and other speakers — take such a role and such a leading role. I was just so very proud. That's why I really wanted to rise in the House today, to be able to speak to this bill and lend my voice to what is really historic and precedent-setting legislation, which of course, after my comments, you'll know I will be supporting.

**N. Macdonald:** I take an opportunity to speak to Bill 44, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act. This is essentially a statement of intent, and as such, it really lacks any detail or any substance. The important part of dealing with this issue is going to come with the detail. Since it is simply a statement of intent, it's pretty difficult to vote against it.

I think what you would find is that, of course, people are deeply concerned about climate change and want something to be done in an energetic way. To ground this issue in reality, though, is to point out many things that this bill does not do. It is not untypical for a government to oversell initiatives. Certainly, this government has a history and a pattern of overselling initiatives that they take. This is such an important issue that you would hope the grass-roots interest in the project will push them along, and certainly, there is an obligation for the opposition to push the government in the proper direction on this issue.

I would remind the House that it is not the first time that governments in Canada have talked about climate change and made pretty large claims about what they're going to do about it. You just go back to 2002. You had the federal government at the time talking about the Kyoto accord and Canada's commitment to meet those goals.

There was a tremendous amount of things said at that time. But the reality of trying to make substantive change is incredibly complex and will require a tremendous amount of public will, and the reality is that the Kyoto accord in 2002 went nowhere. For all of the rhetoric that was attached to it and for all of the promises that were made, nothing came of it.

The reason for that, I would say, is that as soon as you try to do something, you are going to run into some very, very difficult decisions that need to be made. Every person that sits here, I think, recognizes that those are going to be hard. Regardless of who is in power, you are going to immediately come into decisions that are going to be unpopular, difficult, complicated.

[1705]

The danger I see with this bill, and the danger that we need to be aware of — even though as a statement

it's something that I think every member is going to support — is that if we think in passing this that we've actually accomplished anything, of course we haven't. In 2002 all the speeches about Kyoto and all the things that the federal government was going to do.... They did nothing. It has gotten far worse since those speeches, those debates. Nothing substantive happened.

The danger with this is that we could find ourselves in years to come with exactly the same thing happening here. It will be pointed out again and again, and it was pointed out. I think everyone in the public recognizes that the targets that are set are pretty arbitrary. They were set in a period that.... I would doubt if anyone in this House will be here in 2020. We won't be here. Nobody will be held accountable. So it's a made-up number, and nobody will be held to account. The more complicated numbers are things that are still trying to be sorted out. I think you've got a date of 2012.

If there is a hopeful part to this, there is the committee, the panel that was set. I think, despite some objections to membership, there is no question that people on that panel.... I think the critic and others have said that there are some very credible, deeply committed people on that panel. That gives some hope that we will see action.

There is also no question that, as you go within each of our communities, there will be people who are deeply concerned about this issue and who are trying, at a grass-roots level, to do something. So that holds out some hope. I know that there are many young people. If they're interested in the political system at all, this is one of the issues that they feel passionately about. That holds out some hope. But, in and of itself, this paper is meaningless unless the detail and the actions that need to follow actually do follow.

In terms of the government's record, we need to go back and remind the government of a few things that they have said they were going to do that they over-sold. You go back into the *New Era* document in 2001. This government came in with the *New Era* document. Yet you go through the list of promises, and over the years they have sort of withered away. The most open, accountable government — I mean, there is a long list. I don't want to spend a lot of time, but in the end, the substance is very different from the promise.

For us in rural areas, the heartlands strategy had a tremendous amount of promise. The substance — not there. The action — not followed through. The five great goals, and on and on. There is a history of making big promises and then, in the end, ending up with very few results. This is something of such importance that we need to make sure — all legislators need to make sure — that it does not follow that pattern and that, in fact, something of substance comes from this initiative.

Now, we have said that the Premier had an epiphany. It's hard not to reach that conclusion — that the change of mind, like with many, many things, is surprising. I've talked about the Kyoto accord. In 2002 the Premier of this province, here in this Legislature, was criticizing the federal government for that action on climate change. So he was against it then. In 2001 when

he took power, he got rid of the Ministry of Environment altogether. He shut down many of the initiatives that were starting to deal with climate change.

Now, more recently, he has styled himself as one who feels passionately about the issue. Whether that's true or not, what we know is that people need the government to truly be committed to making some changes now. That needs to happen. What we always have to remind ourselves is that these are going to be very, very difficult decisions that are going to be complex and that will need to include everyone.

[1710]

What I would say to the government as they go forward is that, to date, because they are confused and find it difficult to find solutions, they have chosen to control what the public sees and to do an awful lot in secrecy, thinking that politically that's a wise thing.

What I would say to the government is that if you are truly intent on finding a solution to this, you are going to have to open it up and involve everyone and put in place an open process that includes everyone so that we can see what is being considered.

Let's look at some of the things that we're going to have to deal with. Monbiot, in his book *Heat*, talks about the impact of air travel. What decisions are we going to make related to greenhouse gases related to air transportation? Do we consider it when we start building more airports? Is it a consideration?

We have built a convention centre that we hope will bring people from around the world. Have we considered that? What is the impact on greenhouse gases with that sort of decision? Do we now not do that?

We have looked at transportation in the lower mainland, and one of the other debates we're having in this House is about the governance structure for making transportation decisions in the lower mainland. The government currently is moving towards a massive infrastructure development of highways. Is that in line with carbon or greenhouse gas reduction? It is very inconsistent.

How do you make that decision politically? Do we have the political strength to actually make some of the decisions that need to be made? That is a big question for both political parties. Do we as individual legislators have the political strength and the political wisdom to make those decisions?

There is no question that it is easy to do a piece of legislation like this, which is just a statement that you'll never be held accountable for. Nobody here will ever be held accountable for anything in this. It's 2020. By that time, the Premier has long since retired. This is long since forgotten.

How do we actually make decisions? How do we deal with subsidies to oil and gas? Is that being thought through? Is it going to be consistent with the goals stated in this legislation?

Much of the growth in my area is not population growth, but there is a lot of building going on. The tourism industry is doing very well in my area. But let's be clear. It's driven by the oil sands development. That is what is driving the second home purchases in my area, and that drives the real estate boom. It's the

development of the oil sands. The oil sands have a tremendous impact on greenhouse gases. How do we approach that? Are you really going to make a decision to slow that down? Which political party in Canada is going to try to slow that down?

What are the decisions we're going to make around offshore oil and gas? What sort of decisions are we going to make about the coalfields, which in my part of the East Kootenays are incredibly important economically? These are great jobs.

What sort of decisions are you going to make about that activity as relates to greenhouse gas? Had you better make sure that you make those decisions considering and involving all people and not have those decisions made in some secret place?

What about public transit? What sort of things do we have in place that involve the public in making decisions about public transit? How do we make sure it's an option that people can take, that it's affordable and that it's accessible?

What is the province's policy going to be on taxation of petroleum? Who is the politician that is going to suggest that there needs to be a pricing structure that may be unpopular?

All of those things need to be thought through. None of them will be easy, but they are all important if you're actually going to do something substantive and if you're actually going to accomplish something.

[1715]

The concern I have with this legislation is that it is an absolutely easy thing to put in front of this Legislature. It accomplishes nothing other than the appearance of doing something. The federal Liberals did it in 2002 with Kyoto. As soon as they came to tough decisions, they pulled back from them.

I think we have to be realistic in knowing that each decision that needs to be made, which will actually have a real impact on this very important issue, is going to be a tough decision to make, and that there needs to be political strength and real commitment to actually get something done.

Now, on the government side they will say that the Premier actually had an epiphany and that that commitment is there. On this side, there's a more cynical view of that. The truth will be told through actions. What needs to happen is we need to have open information. The critic asked for the information that the minister referred to when he was pushing aside the concerns of the Pembina Institute.

Why, if we're serious about this issue, would that information not be out in the public purview? Make the case. Put the information out there. That it is held in secrecy is a deep concern. That so many of the meetings that have taken place, the people who have come to make presentations, would be secret does not serve the interest of actually dealing with this issue seriously.

It serves a political interest, and a political interest that is about the appearance of doing something. That's the concern I have, because I think there are members here on both sides that would have to be deeply, deeply concerned about this issue.

In my area the Columbia Basin Trust did some very good work on the impacts of climate change in the basin, and they modelled the rate of melt with the glaciers. The area that I represent is heavily, heavily glaciated. But in a very short period of time — we're talking about 15 years — the loss of glaciated areas has been huge. You can imagine in even my lifetime, as I head to the 50s, we will see that most of the glaciers in the Columbia basin will be gone. That is an incredible change in the climate of our area.

We have seen, as you travel through the Cariboo and now into my area as well, the impact that has had on forest health. So there is no question that you would just look around, and you would see the impact of climate change. There is no question that it needs to be dealt with energetically if we have any sort of respect for the generations that follow, and we do have that respect.

I know that if all members were to list what's most important to them, it would be the people that raised them — our seniors. I know they would be sincere in saying that, but what would top it are our children and our grandchildren. I know that every single member shares that.

What greater responsibility do we have to our children than to make sure that the world that we pass to them has more opportunities rather than less? What, sadly, is the realization for most of us is that it's probable that we are giving them fewer opportunities. That's something that should be deeply, deeply distressing.

So this bill, Bill 44, is a statement about doing something about climate change. There is nothing substantive. There is no detail about how that is going to be done. As I said before, the hope I have is that there is enough public pressure that it will be inescapable for the government to avoid the tough decisions that are going to have to be made, and that on that panel you have the level of commitment and expertise that is going to push to make things happen.

With that, I will give others an opportunity to speak. I know there are many on both sides that feel strongly about the issue, and as always, I thank the House for the opportunity to speak here.

[1720]

**S. Fraser:** I'm honoured today to rise in this House and speak to Bill 44, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act. I will be supporting the bill, but I find that it is a big disappointment in its lack of substance. I ask the members to bear with me here rather than...

I find the commitments made here to be unsubstantiated. There are no mechanisms put in place here to show how it will be arrived at. In an issue of this magnitude, there's nothing more important in this province, in this country and in this world than protecting the environment for future generations.

We've never seen a time in history where that is at risk like it is now. While we have a piece of legislation here that purports to work on reducing greenhouse gases — indeed, to address global warming — there seems to be a siloed vacuum in government around the issue of climate change, because making vague

commitments for the future to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is a very, very small piece of a puzzle that we must fix immediately.

I had the honour to be at a first nations event last year on Tsleil-Waututh traditional territory, North Vancouver. One of the keynote speakers was David Suzuki. He explained to the crowd that if the earth were a basketball, the biosphere, if you will — the small membrane that actually sustains life, from below the surface of the ocean to the top of the atmosphere — would be less than the thickness of a piece of Saran Wrap.

If you put that into context.... A lot of people believe: "Aw, it's a big world, and we're a relatively small impact." When you look at it in that sense, the planet may be fairly large comparatively. The life-sustaining area of the planet is very, very small and very, very fragile.

I see that members on the other side.... The minister is nodding and understands this, and I'm heartened by that.

Making long-term reductions of greenhouse gases is certainly a step, I guess. But what I meant by the siloed vacuum, the compartmentalization of this government, is that at the same time as these vague commitments are being made through Bill 44, we're seeing a very important piece of the puzzle that is working in the opposite direction.

Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases is essential. It only will be successful if we protect those green spaces on the land, in the ocean — the things that actually consume carbon dioxide and produce oxygen and produce a living biosphere, a livable atmosphere. That is what we're talking about here: the need to address that.

While there are vague commitments for reduction of greenhouse gases through to 2050, when our ability to be accountable will long since have passed, we're seeing destruction of the green stuff at an unprecedented rate in this province. While there are vague commitments to reduction of greenhouse gases, on Vancouver Island alone some 120 hectares of forest land have been removed by this government from tree farm licences — removed from the protections that would ensure a sustainable forest base in this province.

[1725]

Sustainable. I mean that in many senses — sustainable for communities, for industry, for workers, yes — but sustainable for our survival. With the removal of these lands — 120,000 hectares, huge amounts of temperate rain forest.... We all know how important rain forest is on the earth for our climate. Once they are removed and have been removed and given away at public expense — in so many ways at public expense — those lands can be strip-mined of the green stuff for short-term gain and at the peril of our very environment.

We cannot continue liquidation logging and have any hopes of addressing climate change, no matter what emission standards are invoked for the future.

This government doesn't get it: vague commitments to the future for reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, targets that may or may not be met, no real mechanism for getting there. The fact is that if we kill all the green stuff, if we denude all our forests, then it

will all be for naught, even if these hypothetical targets were somehow met, by means yet to be explained.

I note that there have been other members, government members, who have spoken of cooperation with first nations. Well, I have letters here from the Tseshaht First Nation. I've seen court cases from the Hupacasath First Nation. I have letters from the Okanagan Nation Alliance, chastising this government for their attempts to remove land from tree farm licences with no meaningful consultation.

First nations in this province well know the importance of the green stuff. They have lived sustainably in British Columbia for millennia, and in a very short time, we have denuded that — "we" as in post-contact.

[K. Whittred in the chair.]

It's not just the denuding of the forests that makes something of a mockery of any attempts at greenhouse gas reductions for the future. Our waters, our oceans, are hugely important to climate control and the survival of our living atmosphere in this province.

In this House it may seem relatively inconsequential to some, but the opposition has fought to try to prevent the use of dangerous substances like herbicides and pesticides for routine control of weeds along public property. Those deleterious substances make their way through our water systems and kill. They kill the green stuff, if you will, in the ocean. They add to that toxic soup that we must be addressing.

When I say that Bill 44 is working in something of a vacuum, I mean that literally. This government can't come out with another slogan, accelerate the strip mining of our forests by removal and giveaways of forest lands from tree farm licences, and introduce the spraying of deleterious substances, poisons, for routine control of weeds. It is hypocrisy.

[1730]

If the goals laid out — the distant goals, I must say: 2050 for.... Well, the targets were changed, actually — the 2050 target — to 80 percent below 1990 levels, a standard set by most leading national and state governments: California, New Mexico, Oregon, United Kingdom, France, Germany and other EU countries. So we've seen a change here. Not a change for the good, a change for the worse. A weakening of future commitments for greenhouse gas reduction targets.

There's a Nuu-chah-nulth term — Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, 14 nations on the west coast of Vancouver Island. *Hishuk-ish ts'awalk*. All things are connected. Everything is one. That's wisdom: all things are connected.

When you make commitments, weak-kneed though they may be, for some form of reduction of emissions with no mechanism in place to do it; allow the liquidation logging of our forest bases — encourage it, give it away; allow the increase of the use of poisons and deleterious substances to enter the atmosphere and the environment; and make future transportation plans that omit the public participation and encourage, by necessity, an increase of automobile traffic with no

mitigation through public transit, then this Bill 44 ends up having all of the appearances of yet another slogan.

We've had too many slogans instead of substance. I guess any move towards putting emission targets in place has to be supported. So with reluctance I am supporting Bill 44, although that may seem questionable from my comments.

But this had better be more than a slogan, and this government better get it that unless they turn around their actions on forestry with sustainability in mind, any resource extraction that's for short-term gain at the expense of our environment, of our atmosphere, of our future and our children's future.... Unless this government gets it, Bill 44 is as weak-kneed a slogan as you can get.

For our future and our children's future, I hope they'll learn, and I hope they do better. I hope they show substance where there is none with Bill 44.

**R. Sultan:** I am pleased to rise in support of Bill 44, the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act. I must say that I was very intrigued by the brief remarks of the member for Vancouver-Hastings who I presume will vote in support of the bill, although one would question that, judging from the generally negative tenor of his remarks. Surely, one must in these times favour bold measures of this type.

[1735]

I wanted to address some remarks to the economic fallout arising from Bill 44. I do not intend to talk about the direct impact on the economy of these aggressive measures, but rather the indirect consequences of the business opportunities now being opened up by the government's new policies. In the quest to figure out the immediate impact of the policies, I think it's easy to overlook the favourable benefits to the business sector, in particular, that are probably going to arise.

I'm going to use as an example three of my constituents in West Vancouver-Capilano who have already seen the favourable consequences of these measures.

I would begin by referring to Dr. Robert Blair, who is a distinguished engineer; a member of the Order of Canada; a recipient of the maximum honours that the professional engineers of Alberta, Ontario and B.C. could bestow; the former CEO, when I got to know him, of Nova, an Alberta corporation, one of the largest pipeline enterprises in the country; subsequently, the entrepreneur behind the CNG fuel system, an endeavour to convert the automobile fleet of Canada to run on compressed natural gas. They got into the taxi market at least. We'll give them that much credit.

Now he's the executive chair of a company in Burnaby called Photon Control Inc. He moved out here to retire but, as so many Albertans do, decided it would be more fun to keep his hand in, in the business sector. Photon was originally in the surgical and medical instrument business and had many clients in the semiconductor business, but they have with great agility responded to these new opportunities being opened up by Bill 44. I would refer specifically to their invention of a new flue gas measuring device.

The point Bob makes in my office is that it's great to have these targets about the percentage reduction in greenhouse gases that we will achieve, but how on earth will we actually measure whether or not we're achieving their targets? In proposing quite inexpensive new technologies to measure flue gas and, in particular, effluent, he presents charts that show that in key industries it easily adds up to 12 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year being discharged from a relative handful of industries and installations in B.C.

By measuring them, we can see how well we're doing in meeting the targets. Indeed, the sheer act of measuring will give the managers of those industries and installations a great deal of new insight into what works and what doesn't work without really much investment or technical change at all.

He brought along his chief operating officer, a gentleman named Ivan Melnyk. Mr. Melnyk and Mr. Blair took themselves off to Norway about ten days ago, where they presented their findings to an offshore gas and oil production conference. As Bob reported to me, the head of the regulatory structure in Norway got up on the stage after Bob and his associate Ivan presented what they have achieved and strongly urged, if not ordered, the industry to get with it and adopt that new measurement technology.

These devices look rather simple. I was rather shocked when he took it out of his briefcase. I was expecting some great big machine occupying a room or something, but it's a measurement tube using photonic technology, and at \$10,000 a crack, it's quite inexpensive.

The Russians have already placed a big order. With the back of the envelope, he demonstrated that the worldwide market for devices of this sort might be in the range of several hundreds of millions of dollar as other countries in the world adopt the same philosophy as we are doing here in British Columbia.

I'm not here to tout the stock of Photon Control Inc. I emphasize that I have no interest in this enterprise and do not propose to have one.

[1740]

But it's an example of a British Columbia company with great agility leaping to take advantage of an opportunity created right here in B.C. and demonstrating what they can do, not just for British Columbia enterprise but for the world.

The second example of economic opportunity being created by Bill 44 and, in this case, stimulated — although it would be unfair and an exaggeration to say created by Bill 44, which is only, in fact, a bill on the table and hasn't even become law yet, but nevertheless — is a large energy project which has been underway for quite a few years up in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

I refer to an enterprise that I'm sure many of you are familiar with called NaiKun Wind Development Inc. NaiKun is the foster child, you might say, of a constituent of mine named Michael Burns. NaiKun proposes to build between 67 and 110 wind turbine towers on Rose Spit out in the ocean in Hecate Strait in one of the windiest parts of the world, according to the

meteorological data that NaiKun has accessed and modelled.

This project is planned to proceed in stages, but at full development, fully operational, it promises 1,750 megawatts of electricity. Capital cost will be in the range of \$5 billion. Phase 1 would save 1.2 million tonnes a year of greenhouse gases if the replacement source is that less CO<sub>2</sub>-friendly electricity that we import from Alberta and, in the final stages, six million to seven million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year being displaced by clean wind power.

Recently the Premier took Governor Schwarzenegger from California to visit NaiKun. Obviously, the Californians are very interested in wind power, generally, as it may be developed in B.C. with great export potential, should we have any to export. Because wind power is intermittent, it's inevitable that it will be a traded energy commodity, depending on how much we're producing at any particular moment and on the storage opportunities on the hydro side.

But because of British Columbia's extensive hydro-electric generating capacity and the reservoir capacity we have, it is particularly suited to British Columbia, because when the wind blows, we can save up that electricity behind our hydro dams.

So this is another example of a project that was evolving systematically, regardless. But I think that under the impetus of Bill 44 and the desirability of clean electric power and the stimulus — both in policy terms and in pricing, I may say — I think we will now see a burst of speed in the schedule of large wind projects such as NaiKun.

The third example drawn from another entrepreneurial constituent of mine in West Vancouver-Capilano involves plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. The constituent in this case is one Janet Benjamin, professional engineer, who happens to be the president of the Association of Professional Engineers of British Columbia this year. She is the co-inventor, I think it would be fair to say, of the Power Smart program at B.C. Hydro.

She's had a long history of innovative work in energy conservation and new approaches to energy production and distribution. Now she has latched on to plug-in hybrid electric vehicles.

We see from numbers the government has presented that about 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia today are in the transportation sector, and a large fraction of that would be by personal motor vehicles.

[1745]

The plug-in hybrid electric vehicle is a hybrid electric vehicle, which we see in great numbers now on the streets of Victoria, with an extension cord sticking out of the hood to be plugged into an outlet when you take that vehicle home at night.

While plugged in at home, in the garage or wherever, it typically would recharge the battery from the B.C. Hydro system, or it might actually be used as a storage device by the entire Hydro network, which your car has temporarily become part of. Depending on the need for storage capacity of surplus power or

the need to drain power from time to time, your car has become an integral part of B.C. Hydro, believe it or not.

In general, what you're doing is storing up electricity for use the next day from the Hydro grid. It has that standby internal combustion engine, just like the regular hybrid taxis you see around Victoria, but because of the extra capacity of the electric motor and battery system portion, it is used much less, and the overall reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by that vehicle is significant.

While I was sitting here waiting for the end of the brief remarks of the member for Vancouver-Hastings, I managed to find a paper delivered only two weeks ago by Mark Duvall of the Electric Power Research Institute in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The paper was precisely on this question: how much of a greenhouse gas emission reduction would a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle offer the world?

There's a chart in there, if I'm interpreting it correctly, which suggested a conventional car would produce about 450 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> per mile. An advanced plug-in hybrid electric vehicle would produce one-third of that, so it's a two-thirds reduction. That's significant, particularly when such a large proportion of greenhouse gases originate in the vehicle sector. Indeed, if one did a few back-of-the-envelope calculations, a rough estimate could be that 25 percent of the total greenhouse gas reduction target might be achieved in this manner.

Of course, as Bob Blair himself demonstrated — I was involved in a very minor way in his CNG fuel systems enterprise — changing the fleet to a brand-new technology is something that isn't going to happen overnight. There's the huge inertia of an enormously large fleet out there, owned by individuals who are in many cases reluctant to convert to something new, particularly if it's more expensive. These sorts of savings will only be achieved over time. Nevertheless, it is an indication of the potential, and I think it has a reasonably high probability of actually happening.

My point today is that in the absence of Bill 44, these things probably would happen, but on a much slower, more cautious and more tedious track. Bill 44 offers the opportunity to really stimulate these ventures, these innovations and this switchover to new automobile technologies. There is a window of opportunity for perhaps participating in this portion of the vehicle market from a base right here in British Columbia. Certainly, that's Janet Benjamin's rather ambitious goal, and more power to her. I hope she succeeds.

We do know, however, that plug-in hybrid electric vehicles are being promised for the marketplace by Ford, General Motors and Toyota in mass production by 2012. Well, that's only five years away. That's fast.

[1750]

The world is changing, and my constituents are trying to grab a piece of the action as it goes by, and I hope they succeed.

Whether we're talking about the measurement through new photon systems of stack gas and how much CO<sub>2</sub> we're pumping out into the atmosphere, whether we're talking about \$5 billion wind power towers out there in the ocean on Rose Spit at the north

end of Haida Gwaii or whether we're talking about plug-in hybrid vehicles, I think the sort of policy shift which Bill 44 epitomizes sets in motion the thinking, the capitalization, the inventiveness, the engineering and the redesign of a whole bunch of stuff in our economy and in the technical solutions of the energy and transportation industry.

As we consider the merits of Bill 44, let's not overlook the stimulus it is offering to creativity and entrepreneurial change right here in British Columbia. It is giving us an opportunity to again show leadership, not just in how we run our own economy and energy systems at home but by demonstrating how British Columbia-based organizations can become the best in the world in niche areas. It gives B.C. enterprise, B.C. workers and B.C. jobs a great stimulus. As we think through the full dimensions of Bill 44's economic consequences, we should keep these in mind.

### Point of Privilege

**Hon. G. Abbott:** Madam Speaker, as this is my first opportunity, I rise to reserve my right to raise a matter of privilege relating to comments made earlier in the House today by the member for Cowichan-Ladysmith.

### Debate Continued

**G. Robertson:** I am very pleased to stand today in support of Bill 44, which has been a long time coming. It's taken this government well over six years to come to terms with the reality of climate change. We have something to celebrate here with the fact that there is a bill being tabled in this Legislature that does acknowledge climate change, that does legislate targets, but boy, has it taken these guys a long time to figure it out.

Interjections.

**Deputy Speaker:** Take your seat, please, Member. Members. Each member deserves to be heard. Continue, Member.

**G. Robertson:** The members opposite might remember a few years ago the first sitting of the House, back in 2005, when members on the opposition side spoke passionately and eloquently about the necessity for action on climate change.

At that time there was absolutely nothing happening in this government. There were half a dozen staffers in the entire government of British Columbia tasked with anything to do with climate change. This was with full recognition of an onslaught of mountain pine beetle devastating the forests, driven in part by climate change; of salmon populations declining, driven in part by climate change; of impacts on the ground, in the sea and all around us, demonstrating that climate change was real.

[1755]

While we spoke long and hard on that in our first opportunity in this House — those of us new MLAs — we brought back to this House the importance of a

government recognizing what the most critical issue of the day was rather than being focused on partisan politics and feeding their friends. My concerns with this bill are about its urgency and about the fundamental commitment of this government to carry through.

I'll just talk about the questions I have on commitment first. As I have just mentioned, there's a brutal track record over the last six-plus years from this government on climate change. There were climate change programs created through the late '90s, the turn of the century. A Green Economy Secretariat was in place and was making progress.

The government through the '90s had recognized the looming threat and the growing concerns around climate change. There were actions taking place. There were staff and resources tasked with dealing with it. Those were being ramped up.

In 2001, when the government here took office, many of these climate change programs were scuttled immediately. In 2002 this Premier spoke out against the federal government's plan and commitment to meet the Kyoto targets. This was a government that argued vigorously against Kyoto. Kyoto was a fundamental international commitment and recognition that climate change is real and requires significant and meaningful action from all of the governments in the world. This was a government that would have nothing to do with it, that denied it was real, that denied that action was necessary.

When we come to talking about serious commitment to doing what needs to be done.... An entire first term and half of the second term, this Premier and his government had their head in the sand on climate change. So it's reasonable for members on this side to be skeptical about the depth of commitment. That's a reasonable thing. It's reasonable for the people of B.C. to be very skeptical about the commitment.

The sudden epiphany of the Premier obviously has had significant results. The fact that we have a bill here today, though it did take the better part of nine months to go from that epiphany in the throne speech to actually putting something on paper in this House, is a very, very minor start down the path.

This commitment is offset by the day-to-day actions of this government. If we look at what's happening right now, if we look at what cheques are being written in the Ministry of Finance, if we look at what cheques are being written and sanctioned in the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, if we look at the actions taking place right now by this government, we're talking about billions and billions of dollars being invested in the wrong direction, exacerbating climate change. We're talking about over a billion dollars being invested in this term by this government in accelerating the extraction of oil and gas from the province.

Does that have anything to do with climate change?

**D. Cubberley:** No, it's disconnected.

**G. Robertson:** It's not connected. It's an absolute contradiction — a billion dollars of direct investment in accelerating the pace.

Does the pace need to be accelerated? Do we need to burn the oil and gas faster? Do we need to sell it off faster? Is that the reason we're giving deep discounts on oil and gas?

How about offshore oil and gas? Is that a good thing? Should we be going after that aggressively?

How in the world can this government reconcile offshore oil and gas and a billion dollars to accelerate the oil and gas industry with Bill 44? How do they fit? How does that work? It's not in the bill. It isn't explained in the bill. The bill is words.

We've got promises here. Bill 44 gives us some promises. Does it deliver on actions?

**D. Cubberley:** Nada.

**G. Robertson:** Nada. Zero. We don't have actions. The actions we have are going the other direction.

[1800]

The actions are going the other direction in the lower mainland with the vaunted Gateway plan, where we see, again, billions and billions of dollars being invested against the direction on climate change — a total contradiction once again. How can this government reconcile taking significant and serious action against global warming and investing billions of dollars in building more roads and bridges and increasing car traffic? The automobile is the bane of climate stability, and this government says: "Let's spend a few more billions getting those automobiles around faster."

Contradictions — when you spend peanuts on transit, when you spend peanuts on efficient and low-carbon methods of getting people around, when you spend minimal investment in sustainable communities that make it possible for people to decrease their footprint.

If we look at this government's policies, whether it's shipping out to China every grain of coal that can be dug up as fast as possible so it can be burned in coal-fired power plants in China.... Are there any questions coming to the floor about that? Does that fit with the government's climate change plan?

How fast can we go on the extraction of fossil fuel resources and still meet the goals set out here in Bill 44? All through this government, the contradictions are everywhere.

Agriculture and Lands. How about the food miles? Half of our food is coming from far away, from thousands of miles away. How much is this government investing in reducing the food miles for the people of B.C.? How much is this government investing right now?

What's the target to be at 100-percent food self-sufficient? What is the target? Well, we have a target here. We have a pie-in-the-sky target, and it's pie in the sky if the actions don't match the targets that are being set here.

Interjections.

**Deputy Speaker:** Excuse me, Member. Can you sit down for a moment.

I just wish to remind members that if you wish to participate, you must be in your own seats.

**G. Robertson:** Inconsistencies. Lack of commitment. Let's pick another ministry and test it for consistency. How about the Ministry of Forests?

How are we doing in the Forests Ministry? How are we doing on mountain pine beetle? How are we doing on value-added? How are we doing on the resources that are being stripped away from this province with no regard for the impact on climate change? There's no support going to those communities. There's no transition plan being provided by this government to get through the mountain pine beetle epidemic.

Let's look at incentives, the transportation and revenue department. Incentives for hybrid vehicles — peanuts. Again, they are dwarfed by those incentives going to luxury automobiles. Again, this is being raised in the House by the opposition. All the incentives end up going to high-end cars instead of hybrid cars, and that's not driving the pace. The market is driving the pace. This government is dragging behind the market.

Lack of commitment. Is there anywhere more obvious than this government's secrecy around climate change for the last nine months, anything else that stands out for over four million British Columbians? They would like to know where we're headed on this. They'd really, really appreciate being included, being engaged, being involved. They'd love to have a voice in their future, in the future of their kids and grandkids. They deserve that. It's warranted. It's justified.

Have they had the ability to speak up on this? Have they been consulted? No, they haven't. It's a closed door. It's all behind closed doors. You've got to wonder where the commitment lies, where the depth of commitment is, when you're afraid to talk to everyone about it — when you're afraid to talk to the people who elect you, to the people who pay their taxes, to the businesses that drive the economy.

Finally, if we really dig down here in terms of secrecy and the list of commitments that were put forward in the throne speech, the throne speech promises, one after the next.... Nine months later, nothing's happened — zero.

[1805]

We can go down the list of air quality improvement initiatives. Reducing GHG emissions from the oil and gas industry by 2016. Has there been any progress on any of these? The requirement for zero flaring at oil-producing and gas-producing wells and production facilities? Carbon sequestration? Alternative energy? Most people in the world call that renewable energy now.

There's no follow-up on any of this stuff. The hydrogen highway, the Premier's dream of a hydrogen highway — good luck, buddy — is anything happening on that front? How about the B.C. green building code?

Maybe there are things happening, but have any of us heard of it? No. Have the people of B.C. heard of any progress on any of this stuff? No. Maybe it's happening behind the closed doors, and they're going to announce it all.

It would give us a lot more confidence in Bill 44 and in the commitments being made in Bill 44 if we actually saw something happening — conversations,

consultation, some actions, some initiatives. But I guess that stuff's all maybe way down the road. It lends to the skepticism that we feel for the commitment of this government.

If we look within this bill, again on the commitment.... Look at the commitment in this bill regarding regulations — a long list in section 12 of this bill related to regulation. Well, this is a government that abhors regulation. This is a government that has a minister responsible for deregulation. [Applause.]

Okay, we have applause from the government side. How are you going to pull this off without regulation, people? You ain't. It ain't going to happen without regulation. We have a net zero commitment to regulation, so I guess we're going to gut some more regulations to fill in the climate change-related regulations?

**An Hon. Member:** That'll fix the problem.

**G. Robertson:** Haven't seen that happen yet, but perhaps there is a strategy here, despite the fact that there is a long list of regulation in section 12 that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council may make regulations for — again, behind the closed doors.

That long list is where the regulation might take place if this government has a change of heart and decides: "You know what? Maybe regulation does need to happen. Maybe we're not going to make it without regulation. Maybe the fact that 75 percent of the emissions that need to be cut come from business and industry that actually need regulation to make things happen, to help steer their course...."

It's difficult to see the commitment here when regulation doesn't seem to be on the table or it's behind closed doors. You have to wonder, when all this government has ever, ever talked about regarding regulations is not smart regulation, not appropriate and effective regulation. It's deregulation. That's a problem in the commitment department.

I want to talk about my second huge concern, and that is with urgency, Madam Speaker. We've heard the member for Vancouver-Hastings and the Minister of Environment today speaking forcefully about the need for urgency, as it has been exclaimed by thousands of scientists around the world — the most qualified people on the planet to comment on this, based on lifetimes of research.

My concern here is around urgency and the commitment that doesn't seem to match the urgency that is being called for by scientists around the world. It's being echoed in this House. It's being echoed by the Premier, but it's not clear where it fits here. It's not clear, when 2020 and 2050 are what we see here and no action plan at all. It's not clear what urgency is in order here.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

A recent quote last month from Doug Bancroft, the director of the Canadian Ice Service: "If you look at what happened in the last three years" — this is regarding arctic ice — "it closely resembles the absolute

worst-case scenario but about 20, 25 years ahead of schedule."

[1810]

He says this, referring to the models created by international teams of scientists to predict the impact of global warming on the north: "They had forecast the Arctic could be free of summer ice as early as 2050." So we're, at worst case, 20 to 25 years ahead of time.

That might require some urgency when we start hearing that. Urgency doesn't seem to be on this government's agenda. It took nine months to go from the epiphany and the throne speech to put this piece of paper, this thin gruel, together on climate change — nine months to put the commitments to paper.

If we look at the call that the opposition made immediately preceding the throne speech for an immediate cap, which was disregarded by the Premier.... There's a sense of urgency when the call is for an immediate cap. When it takes nine months to come to us with some legislated targets, and legislated targets....

**An Hon. Member:** They could do something in 2020.

**G. Robertson:** "We'll do something down the line — another dozen years. We're not really sure if we're going to enforce it. We're not sure what regulations might apply. It doesn't match any of the actions that we're carrying out right now and that we're planning on carrying out through our service plans for the next couple of years — full guns. But believe us, we're committed, and we think it's urgent." It doesn't really match.

The government may think the climate action team that they have struck.... It's a great thing that we have a group of citizens now focused on supporting this government more directly. At least there's one group of citizens that has access and input, and there are some great people on that team.

Unfortunately, it doesn't look like the recommendations of the climate action team are binding on this government. It doesn't look like anything they say will be acted upon for another year — another year of skating, another year and another \$265 million to pump the oil and gas out faster and pave the Fraser Valley. It doesn't look like urgency is what's happening here.

We have an absolute necessity for dramatic reduction in the near term. Scientists around the world have recognized this. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had the most forceful language yet in their final report — frightening, almost science fiction in terms of its application to the world that we know now. It's hard to believe that we're going to be able to react fast enough.

But at this point, what's driving climate change in this province? We look at what's needed to stop that. We need to invest significant resources to stop climate change. Have we got significant resources here in Bill 44 committed to addressing it? No. Zero.

Have we got regulation? We're going to need some significant regulation to address it. Have we got that in Bill 44 after nine months of closed-door work? We don't have regulation. Do we have enforcement to

make sure that we get the reductions and that everyone lives up to their words? We don't have that either.

Resources, regulation and enforcement are not to be found in Bill 44. So again, where's the urgency? We're not driving the pace here with this. We're skating. Skaters, reverse.

What is required right now is a dramatic investment in climate change, and what we have is a dramatic investment in increasing greenhouse gases in British Columbia — billions of dollars, billions in resources. We have deregulation, and we have no enforcement — years and years of cuts to do the enforcement that would be necessary to achieve anything like these targets.

If we look at another pre-eminent scientist raising concerns — Joseph Canadell, the lead author of the report and executive director of the Global Carbon Project.... This is a report in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: "The longer we wait to do the emission cuts, the harder it will be to stabilize CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere."

[1815]

"The longer we wait." Well, it looks like we're going to wait longer. That's what this bill tells us. We're going to wait longer. Instead of taking action, we have more delays. We have ongoing contradictions.

In this bill here, we have a commitment in terms of initiatives. We do have a commitment to a carbon-neutral government. It's an interesting contrast in where the priorities are — a commitment to make government carbon-neutral.

In 2007, 200,000 tonnes — less than 0.3 percent of the province's greenhouse gas emissions. It's notable for government operations but a very, very minor and tiny component of the province's emissions. You'd think a bill that should have this substance, that has these targets legislated — and bravo for that — should also have some legislated initiatives that address the most significant pieces of greenhouse gas emissions that need immediate action on reduction. They're not there. We're addressing less than 1 percent in this bill.

Why not address some of the big gaps? Why not address the big gaps with business and industry, with oil and gas, with transportation? Why shouldn't this bill include some important initiatives to address the low-hanging fruit? Really make some traction on this, recognizing how urgent it is. Here we are. We're legislating. It's happening. We're going to fire this thing through. We're all for it.

In days, we're taking action here. But is there action that reduces greenhouse gas emissions in this, which we're taking action on in days? We're not. Again, my question is: where is the sense of urgency? That's been a question since I first stepped into this House, and it continues to be a question. As important as it is to set targets, it's even more important to take action.

I'll just get back to the long-term commitment. Beyond the urgency and my profound disappointment that there isn't more urgency in Bill 44 and real action being taken, I just want to finish by talking about the long-term commitment here, the 80-percent goal by 2050. The government's claim that this is somehow

world-leading, that this is somehow the best in North America, is erroneous. They maybe haven't done their homework or maybe have spoken out of turn. This is not world-leading, by any stretch, nor the best in North America.

There are several states in the U.S. that have 2050 targets that are more significant than what's in front of us here. There are many countries in Europe that have targets significantly higher. This government has forgotten that 1990 was the base year, and there is real concern that we're using 2007. We don't know what 2007 means. We'll have to study that for another year.

We're using a number we don't even know as our base line right now. The rest of the world is using a very well-established number from 1990 to base their targets on. We're not basing our target for 2050 on 1990. We're basing it on 2007, so it's still up in the air. But generally speaking, we can estimate that it's about a 55-percent to 60-percent reduction from 1990 levels.

We're not seeing the math being done here. The math is not done. There are numbers here that we will have to rely upon that will be established in the year to follow us. Again, they won't be world-leading, and this side of the House would like to see us be in the world-leading category.

We'd like to see this House commit to respecting the words of the pre-eminent scientists of this world and people on their own climate action team — Andrew Weaver at the University of Victoria — that want to see 80 percent below 1990 levels, that want to see 90 percent below 1990 levels.

Those are based on projections from science that have been done to establish what needs to happen to stabilize the climate. They're not based on numbers being pulled out of the sky on the Premier's holiday to Hawaii last winter. The numbers may sound catchy, but they don't ring true. They don't stand up to the true test of world-leading.

[1820]

In terms of not meeting the emerging science, of not accepting that the science has changed very quickly in recent times, we do need to do more. We need to do a lot more. We need to go farther with this. We need to match world-leading numbers with world-leading actions on climate change, and that's not what this government is focused on doing.

This government deserves recognition for bringing forward Bill 44, for bringing legislated targets to the front of the agenda at last, and I will vote in support of this bill for that reason alone. But I have significant, significant challenges with the lack of urgency, with the lack of true commitment, with the lack of bringing the people of B.C. into the equation.

All the work that's been done to date and all the work that will be done over this next year — the people of B.C. need to have a voice in this. They need to be engaged in this. We need to see robust action on climate change from this government.

It's a difficult thing to look your children in the eye and feel like you're doing everything you can to make

the world a better place for them or for your grandchildren, if those are the little ones you're closest to — you particularly, Mr. Speaker, and some of the ministers opposite. When you look into their eyes, if you really, really think about it, you can see right through to a very different world that they're going to grow up in.

By the time that maybe some of them are sitting in this House, the challenges they will be facing to keep British Columbia a just and sustainable society, which we strive to be.... It will be a very, very difficult thing for our children and grandchildren to do. Let's act in the best interests of those children and grandchildren.

**C. Puchmayr:** Mr. Speaker, noting the hour, I will continue. This is such an important piece of legislation, and I certainly know how the other side wants us to make sure we wring every second of time on this so that we can have a full and complete debate on this most important piece of legislation.

This bill targets greenhouse gas reductions for 2020 and 2050. It also has some components that will make us carbon-neutral in the public sector within the next two years. Now, 2020 and 2050 are a very long ways away. Looking at the modelling of global warming today, it may be too late to have an effective resolve to the issues that are affecting this planet today, that are affecting this planet so greatly.

I will be supporting the bill, and I'll tell you why I'll be supporting the bill. The bill, to me, is merely a skeleton. It is a direction that the government is taking, that they're putting forward on the table. It's something that we, the opposition, will be able to assist this government — putting some real meat on the bones — so that we truly have some legislation that will do what this bill should be intended to do, and that's greenhouse gas reduction.

We are going to work extremely hard towards ensuring that the other side hears us, understands us and supports us in bringing in the amendments that are required to truly make this a workable bill. If the government fails to want to cooperate on this, we're going to be left with this skeleton of a bill.

I should add that this bill is 12 pages. Twelve pages, and we're talking about saving the planet. We're talking about an environmental crisis that is going on in this planet today. We're seeing water shortages. We're seeing land drying up in North America — in the United States and in Canada. We're seeing the absolute devastation and the unimaginable death of people in the African continent because of this unprecedented global warming.

[1825]

We need to get realistic about this, and we need to truly put meat on the bones of this 12-page document. Let's just do a little bit of a correlation here between Bill 44, which is 12 pages, and the last bill, Bill 43, which is taking away the last bit of democracy from the governance of TransLink and handing it over to the business community — to model transportation in a manner

that is going to generate profit for investors and, potentially, for P3 investors.

It's really odd that you have one bill that is taking away any ability to have an environmental lens on transportation, urban sprawl and growth in the Fraser Valley. That's 79 pages of legislation to take this away from the people of British Columbia and then 12 pages to save the planet. They're absolutely inconsistent with each other. It's like when you take two magnets and put them together in reverse. They push apart. That's what this bill does with transit. It merely pushes it apart.

I am very pleased to get up and speak in favour of this skeleton of a bill. If the other side is truly interested in achieving the goals that they say they're interested in achieving, then I really look forward to hearing their comments, and I truly look forward to hearing this new epiphany of the green side over here, the new green team that suddenly has materialized.

If we could look back at some of the history, the Liberal government has made a massive turnaround in climate change. In 2001 they cancelled the climate change programs that were already in place. In 2002 the Premier spoke up against the federal government's plan to meet Kyoto targets. For the first term in office and half of its second term, the government refused to take action on climate change at all.

We look at some of the legislation that's being brought in today. We're looking at the intention or the visions of this bill today. There are certainly some real issues that the public needs to have a really close look at.

I'm going to talk a little bit about some other legislation that may very well prevent us from even putting any meat on the bones of this bill, and that's TILMA. Legal professionals have looked at TILMA, including legal counsel for the Union of B.C. Municipalities and legal counsel in the environmental field. They've looked at TILMA, and just the fact that the legal opinions are stating....

**Mr. Speaker:** Noting the hour, Member.

**C. Puchmayr:** I will, Mr. Speaker. I note the hour. I'm going to finish off, and I will assure you that I will not go past the bewitching hour of 6:30.

The legal professionals are stating that the TILMA bill could very well prevent us from implementing environmental legislation in this province. Some people might say: "Well, you know, it's legal counsel that does environmental law, and they're probably just some tree-hugging lawyers." Nevertheless, some are lawyers that come from the business side or from the municipal side.

If a lawyer states that a bill could be sub judice or could end up before the courts, this in itself means that there could be incredible delays — up to years and years of delays — while courts in different jurisdictions and the Supreme Court and eventually constitutional arguments on whether or not....

Interjection.

**C. Puchmayr:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I do note the hour, and I will respect the orders of the House. Noting the hour, I will reserve the right to speak again, and I will adjourn debate.

C. Puchmayr moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. B. Penner moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

**Mr. Speaker:** This House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

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