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THE HONOURABLE BILL BARISOFF, SPEAKER

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

FIFTH SESSION, 38TH PARLIAMENT

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THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2009

Tabling Documents

The House met at 10:03 a.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Prayers.

Introductions by Members

Hon. I. Chong: I'm extremely pleased this morning to introduce a number of very special guests. The first individual I'd like to acknowledge is the hon. Jim Kenyon. He is from the Yukon. He is the Minister of Economic Development. He is also the minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation, the Yukon Development Corporation and the Yukon Energy Corporation. He is here today to take part in a special event later this morning.

Along with him, there are a number of other individuals I'd like to introduce. They are from the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia — president Margaret Li, as well as George Prince, who is a member of the registration committee.

From the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, executive director Dorothy Barkley. From the British Columbia Institute of Agrologists, executive director and registrar Don Rugg. From the Association of B.C. Land Surveyors, secretary-registrar Chuck Salmon and board member Mike Taylor.

From the Certified Management Accountants Society of British Columbia, vice chair of the CMA Canada national board of directors, Bob Strachan. Bob is also the manager of accounting services, corporate services.

From the Consumer Protection Authority of British Columbia, we have the vice-president of operations, Tayt Winnitoy. We have the licensing manager as well — Tim Monaghan. From the College of Opticians, the chair of the board, Kent Ashby. From the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of British Columbia, manager of technology careers, Jason Jung.

I would ask the House to please help me welcome all these very distinguished individuals.

[1005]

Hon. L. Reid: We are today joined in the gallery by a remarkable woman, Dr. Jocelyn Cook, currently with Health Canada and part of a team of individuals, 24 of the country's finest researchers and scientists. They are part of a scientists as leaders program. It runs for two years. There are 24 of them across Canada's public service, and they will, indeed, be those who lead the public service in Canada as they go forward. I would like this House to join me in making her incredibly welcome.

Hon. W. Oppal: I present for tabling the report of the Davies commission of inquiry into the death of Frank Paul.

I'd like to thank the commissioner, the hon. William Davies, for his work on this very important matter. I also want to express my sincere condolences to the family of Frank Paul. I recognize that this report will not alleviate the family's grief over the loss of Frank Paul. However, my hope is that by shedding light on the circumstances surrounding his death in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, it will inform us as we move forward.

I also wish to thank the aboriginal leadership, who were instrumental in the working of the commission and the preparation of the report. Specifically, I make reference to Chief Shawn Atleo, Ed John, Stuart Phillip, Lynda Price and Judith Sayers, some of the aboriginal leaders with whom I met at the beginning and during the course of the inquiry.

Introduction and First Reading of Bills

LABOUR MOBILITY ACT

Hon. M. Coell presented a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled Labour Mobility Act.

Hon. M. Coell: I move that Bill 9 be introduced and read a first time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. M. Coell: I'm very pleased to introduce Bill 9, the Labour Mobility Act. This bill fulfils British Columbia's commitment in support of a new national agreement on labour mobility scheduled for implementation on April 1, 2009. This bill removes barriers to employment for British Columbians and enables the movement of skilled workers.

For many years British Columbia has been a destination of choice, able to attract the skilled trades our economy demanded. B.C. businesses currently benefit from the labour mobility provided within many trades through the interprovincial Red Seal certification. This bill will enable other employers and other sectors of our economy to realize the same benefits — the ability to find the people they need with the skills that they want.

Bill 9 represents a new spirit of interprovincial collaboration and commitment to the residents of every jurisdiction. This legislation comes at a vital time, when British Columbia faces a global economic downturn. This bill will enable British Columbians and all Canadians to use their skills and experience to the best of their advantage as we weather this economic storm.

This will also be important as we prepare our province and our economic recovery when it occurs. We have the agreement, the commitment and the determination of leaders across our country to enable full labour mobility right now.

This legislation we are moving removes long-standing, archaic and unproductive barriers. For British Columbia, labour mobility will be a key element in the ongoing success of our economy.

[1010]

To remain a strong and vibrant province, we need the ability to attract people with skills, education and experience that will be needed in the years to come.

Hon. Speaker, I move the bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading of the House after today.

Bill 9, Labour Mobility 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.

Orders of the Day

Hon. B. Penner: I call continued debate on Budget 2009.

Budget Debate

(continued)

R. Lee: I would like to yield my position in the budget debate to the member for Kamloops. I look forward to listening to his inspiring speech. [Applause.]

C. Richmond: Thank you very much. It's a good thing I get the applause ahead of my speech instead of behind.

It truly is a pleasure and a privilege for me to take my place in this budget debate, probably for the last time.

An Hon. Member: Probably?

C. Richmond: Well, you always say "probably" because you never know.

I've listened to many budget speeches over the years, and made several myself, none of them memorable.

Before I get into this budget, though, I would like to just take a couple of moments to address the people of Kamloops. I want to thank them for having the confidence to send me here to represent them five times. It has been a wonderful opportunity and an experience I've enjoyed. I've enjoyed working for and with all of the people in the constituency, including city council, school board, the TNRD and many, many individuals. We've always had a good working relationship.

We've been through some good times and some not so good times. But I've always tried to do what's best for the most people. We want to leave a legacy for our

children — a legacy they can be proud of, not a legacy of debt. When I look at some of the projects that we've been able to accomplish together, it makes me feel proud.

In the recent past alone we have seen significant changes in our community: the multi-million dollar upgrades to Royal Inland Hospital to make it a truly regional hospital; the water treatment plant, which gives Kamloops the finest drinking water anywhere; and... [Applause.]

I'm going to wait until the applause dies down.

...the recent announcement of our wastewater plant at the other end of the pipe. There are many more — several items. We have built many seniors homes. But the crown jewel of our working together is Thompson Rivers University. It has become the focal point of the community, with some 21,000 students, including the open learning and 1,200 international students from over 50 countries; and the announcement in the throne speech of a law school for TRU. I suppose it's both good and bad news: a great new law school, but more lawyers. [Laughter.] I couldn't resist.

[K. Whittred in the chair.]

Still, the most gratifying part of an MLA's work is local, helping constituents with their personal and business problems. I've enjoyed working with and for the people of Kamloops for these many years, and I thank them for the opportunity.

This budget is the right budget for these times. It is what is needed and what the taxpayers of the province want. It's a responsible budget, a sensible budget.

We have seen more than \$6 billion of government revenues disappear in the last few months. The budget calls for a modest deficit of \$495 million for the first year and \$240 million in the second year.

Some economists were telling us that the deficit should be between \$4 billion and \$5 billion, but I think that would be irresponsible. It would mean placing a huge burden of debt on future generations, something we just don't want to do.

I can only imagine what the deficit would be if the NDP, heaven forbid, were government. The opposition critic talked about B.C. returning to their style of government. What a horrible thought.

The taxpayers of this province remember their style of government, and that's why you're going to stay over there for a long, long time.

If the NDP were to be elected government, I have no doubt that the deficit would be close to \$5 billion.

[1015]

We didn't cause this economic crisis. It was thrust upon us by outside forces. But we, like every other province and country, have to respond to it, and I believe that we have responded responsibly.

It might be useful to take a quick look at how we got into this worldwide meltdown, Madam Speaker.

There was an excellent documentary on television the other night, which I enjoyed because it explained just how we got here, how and why it happened in language and depictions that we could understand. It explained how severe and how deep the problem is and how fast it came upon us. It might be worthwhile to just take a minute to look at it.

It explained, in plain language, exactly what happened and how and why and how the so-called experts, with a couple of exceptions, didn't see it coming. Huge financial institutions on the verge of bankruptcy. Institutions that nobody ever thought could go under. It was the result of lending that started over a decade earlier, and is so complicated, it is hard for most of us to follow. Even partway into it, when Bear Stearns was on the brink of collapse, many of the experts didn't believe that it was very serious. Then Lehman Brothers went under, and with that came the realization that we were in serious trouble.

It quickly became global and was obvious that no one was going to escape it. Some jurisdictions are in a better position than others to respond. Canada and, in particular, British Columbia are much better positioned to weather this storm. Because of our financial management over the past few years, we are in a much better position than most and are therefore able to protect our social programs and run a small deficit for a couple of years until we are through this rough patch.

The member from Esquimalt — I remember saying the other day — said our budget is a "No, we can't" budget. I think that is just utter nonsense. What this budget really says is, yes, we can, and we can do it without going billions of dollars into debt.

It would be so easy in times like this to grab the credit card and go nuts as has happened in some other jurisdictions — to use this meltdown as an excuse to run up massive debt that would take years to repay. We don't want to put our children and grandchildren in debt to pay for our spending. We just have to go back one government, back to the '90s, to see what irresponsible spending can do. The government of the day spent \$20 billion that they didn't have, and what do we have to show for it? Well, in 2001 after running up \$20 billion more in debt, the unemployment rate in my constituency of Kamloops was 14.1 percent.

I heard another member, the member for Vancouver-Hastings, say that B.C. should return to a government that has vision and a plan for our province. I don't know which government he had in mind. It certainly wasn't the government of the '90s. We don't need another vision like that one.

Several members of the opposition keep repeating that government never does anything for the rural ridings of this province, and I would just like to take a moment to set the record straight. Here are just some of the facts: seven new universities have been created since 2001, all of them outside of Vancouver; \$1.9 billion in

financial support to local governments, in addition to the base funding they already receive; \$342 million in infrastructure funds, which are matched by federal and local governments; small community grants of \$48 million; \$71 million in Towns for Tomorrow funding; \$285 million for all the development funds; and \$129 million from the community development trust.

I also hear opposition members saying: "You don't respect workers." Well, here's a skill-testing question for them. Which shows more respect for workers: forcing them to go to Alberta for work or creating over 400,000 jobs?

They continually harp on the minimum wage, but they ignore the fact that raising it to \$10, which is what they want, would put some 50,000 mostly young people out of work.

[1020]

When I was in the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, we put hundreds of people back into the workforce, after training, at an average wage of over \$12 an hour. The average wage of all workers in British Columbia is over \$20 an hour.

We are moving infrastructure programs forward as fast as we can, working with the federal and municipal governments. We are accelerating projects that have been planned for years, but we need them now so that we can keep people working during this economic downturn.

I do want to touch just for a moment on the Olympics and the Paralympic Games. There is no doubt that the 2010 Olympic Games will be a great benefit to our province. It will generate some \$10 billion in economic activity and will put us on television sets around the world, three billion of them alone for the opening ceremonies.

But let us not forget the Paralympic Games. We have many great athletes who will be competing in them, and they are training right now just as hard as the athletes in the regular Olympics. They're training to win medals for Canada. Several of us had the privilege of having lunch with them the other day. We met three of these Paralympic athletes, and they are really pumped. They are eager to compete and bring home the gold for Canada.

All three of them have won medals for us in previous games. I don't want us, during all of the publicity and the excitement of the Olympics, which will be great, to forget the Paralympics, which follow a couple of weeks later. They are equally important, and we really must support our Paralympic athletes.

Once again, I urge anyone who is in a position to hire people to consider hiring a disabled person. There are 300,000 of them qualified, many with university degrees and diplomas, and they're eager to work. You will be surprised at what a great employee they can be.

I will finish my remarks with just a few more items from the budget, items designed to make life easier and better for people.

Income tax. British Columbians now pay the lowest provincial income tax in the country — for anyone

making less than \$116,000 per year, and that's most of us. Some 250,000 low-income earners now pay no provincial tax at all.

Property tax deferment for those over 55. Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters has been doubled. The rental assistance program is now available for families making less than \$35,000 per year. Many hundreds of families have taken advantage of that fact, and it has improved their lives and the lives of their families immeasurably.

Spending on social programs has been increased. Health care by 2011 will have a budget of \$17½ billion — quite a jump from when we took over, when it was about \$8 billion.

Post secondary — an additional \$228 million over three years. K-to-12 per-pupil funding has increased to \$8,242, the highest in the history of the province, even with decreasing enrolments.

Madam Speaker, \$110 million in new funding for income assistance, \$73 million in additional funding for programs and service for adults with developmental disabilities and their families. Some \$1.4 billion in infrastructure projects in partnership with the federal and municipal governments. Increased tax credits for industry — \$10.6 billion for capital projects, a total of over \$300 million in local projects over three years.

A northern and rural homeowner benefit of \$200 per year. An extension of another year of the B.C. mining flow-through tax credits. And \$110 million over three years for the energy sector. For the benefit of the member for Vancouver-Burrard, \$15 million in one-time grants to support the arts and culture.

I am totally in favour of this budget. It is the right budget for this time and will serve British Columbians well without putting future generations into debt.

There are many more things I would like to say. I would like to tell a few stories about some of my time in this House, but I don't want to see a lot of them published, because then I'd probably have to leave the province.

[1025]

I have had a great time here over a lot of years, about 19 in total. It's been wonderful getting to know everybody who has been in this House. I've really enjoyed it. I've learned a lot, and I thank everyone for that. If there's one thing I am going to miss, it's going to be the people on both sides of the House. We've had some great times, and we have a lot of fun throwing literal spears at each other. I think the thrust and parry of debate is what a lot of us enjoy in here, as long as we keep it at the right level, and I think we usually do.

I thank you for the time, Madam Speaker, and I thank the people of Kamloops for their support over the years. I won't be in this House much longer. I shall still be working for our great city, and I shall not forget anyone who I have met here. Thank you ever so much for this opportunity.

C. Evans: I'm pleased to rise to speak on the budget for the year 2009. In truth, though, that's really only a context, sort of a procedural rationale, to allow me to speak on the eve of leaving this place in the spring of this year.

I want to start by saying it has been a great honour to serve. I want to thank the New Democrats of Nelson-Creston for being brave enough to nominate me 23 years ago. I know it was then a great leap of faith on their part to think they might make me into a credible MLA, and I'd like to thank the citizens of Nelson-Creston for sending me here on three occasions over two decades.

I want to thank all the wonderful people who taught me to do this work, starting with Anne Fraser-Moll, who had the tough job of trying to make me look credible; then Lone Jones, Christine Hunt, Jane Hertig, Ken MacLaren, Pradik Moda and on and on; and most recently, Lucy Mears. To list all the good people I was lucky enough to share this work with would take over an hour.

Lastly, I'd like to say that for every moment of the time I did this job, I did it as partner with my co-worker and friend, Sandy Korman. It is a truism of this job that somebody gets the credit, somebody's name is in the newspapers and on all those lawn signs every time there's an election, but that person is rarely responsible for whatever it is that they are credited with having achieved. In my case, none of what I might have achieved was done by me; it was all done by the great collective us.

I also want to thank my neighbours at home, who looked after me for the last 20 years when I was mostly unable to look after myself, and my family, who put up with this particular career choice and all that it has meant for all of us.

I want to thank the people who make this building and this job happen here at the Legislature — the folks who feed us, those who sustain the building and the men and women who manage to provide security and yet a welcoming ambiance at the same time. Almost nobody in the world gets to work every day in such a beautiful place as those of us who work here. Thank you to all of you who make it possible.

[1030]

I made my first speech in this room on March 25, 1992. In that speech I tried to explain some of the *raison d'être* for my seeking office and some of the things I hoped to achieve here. I reread that speech recently to try and figure out what had worked and what hadn't.

My rationale for running, as described in that presentation, pretty much came down to an argument for local control and against the idea of centralized decision-making. I thought then and, as a matter of fact, I still think that we run this province pretty much on a colonial model and that my time here ought to concentrate on trying to find ways to devolve power away from the Legislature or to share power with the people who live in the regions.

There was a bit of a list of objectives in that speech too. In the 1980s life was pretty tough in the Kootenays, and

we had some serious issues to resolve. The Columbia River Treaty topped that list of issues. The elders who sent me here asked for some form of recompense to deal with their sense of plunder that the treaty had visited on our people and our land. Plunder of the region was really the theme of that speech.

I suggested that we might resolve our land use disputes with a comprehensive land use plan; replace the Kootenay School of the Arts, which had been closed by previous government; stop the slow death of the orchard industry and try to learn to feed ourselves again; save the railroads and keep our highways from becoming subsidized industrial corridors; and try to bring an end to the parochial abuse of both our people and our land that the mountains had hidden for so long.

Some of that has actually come to pass. We rebuilt the Kootenay School of the Arts. We funded women's centres. We doubled the parks system. We invented a partnership with the Crown to share the resource wealth of the great Columbia River, called the Columbia Basin Trust.

Then we took that partnership model, applied it to forest stewardship and created community forests in Revelstoke, Harrop, Creston, Kaslo and most recently Slocan and Nakusp — all of it in an attempt to invent a decentralized decision-making and marketing and wealth-generating model to replace the colonial style of management from here.

Selling the idea of decentralization and local control has not always been easy, regardless of who governed. I remember once when we governed and some of us were trying to convince the cabinet of the day to accept the idea that later became the Columbia Basin Trust and the Columbia Power Corporation.

I was in an argument with the minister of the Crown who did not, at the time, support the concept, and I asked the minister why she stood in the way. She answered: "Because, Corky, we differ on our understanding of the nature of this job, you and I. I think" — said the minister — "we were sent here to govern, and you think, on the other hand, that we were sent here to devolve governance." That minister's analysis was right on. That is what I thought, and 14 years later, leaving, that is what I still think.

In those days the notion of local control was just an experimental construct. It was untried and distrusted by both the capitalist right and the socialist left. Capitalists didn't like it because it flew in the face of their idea of efficiency. They said: "Obviously, it is more efficient to manage everything from one office and one staff and one minister than to try to replicate management around the province."

Socialists didn't like it because the idea of the Crown, to them, was the way to ensure that all resources were always used to benefit the greatest good for the greatest number. They argued: "Who are some local people somewhere to say what happens to the wealth of the people?"

Now, though, the idea of local control and management of resources can no longer be said to constitute an experiment or a risk. Here's the part I'm most proud of. Now we can say that it works.

It works not just from the standpoint of making healthy and sustainable decisions about land and water. It works from an economic and wealth generation point of view too. This is what the present government — the people who designed the present budget that ostensibly, at least, we are here to debate — have yet to learn.

[1035]

Let me give you some examples. The government desires to create new electrical power for the province. That's a good idea, and it has pretty much always been a good idea. So who is it that has produced the most green, utterly defensible and controversy-free electric power in the province over the last ten years?

Well, it's the Columbia Power Corporation. That partnership between the Crown and local people that is Columbia Power has built the Keenleyside power plant on time and on budget, rebuilt the Brilliant dam and power project on time and on budget, and are about to start the Waneta project — and in every case produced union jobs, community stability, wealth and green electricity without flooding a single acre of land.

In forestry, too, it has been proven to work. Something like 21,000 people have been laid off in logging and sawmilling in British Columbia in the last two years, and mills keep closing that may never reopen again.

We in the Kootenays, of course, are having our troubles too, but in my constituency when I came here, we started out 15 years ago with seven sawmills. After reductions to the allowable cut in the interest of sustainability, after doubling the parks system from 6 percent to 13 percent of the land base and after making five community forests in the area, we still have today seven sawmills running in Nelson-Creston.

Why is that? I submit that it is, at least in part, because we have not fallen victim to the absolutely deregulated "Let 'em go do anything they want" crazy analysis behind the consolidation agenda of the present government. We have maintained a large degree of local ownership and free enterprise competition for logs, and we do not have monopoly control by anybody over our land base.

My thoughts on how we organize an economy and the risks of allowing monopoly capital in any region are not new. In 1948, the year I was born, Tommy Douglas said: "Political freedom by itself can mean being free to go hungry and without a job." He said: "It can mean being free to produce commodities below the cost of production. Until we add economic freedom to the political freedom we already have, we will never be entirely free as men and women."

He said: "Whenever the principal assets of our country are in the hands of monopolies and cartels, we believe that they should be owned by the people themselves. We

believe that when any economic activity controls the life of a people, it should be owned by the people."

I think that what Tommy Douglas was talking about is a philosophy that we call social democracy, which was first explained to me by my friend and mentor, log truck driver Bob Cunningham.

Bob explained to me that capitalism was simply the very best way ever invented to make sure that people could find work and feed themselves and eat and trade goods back and forth and better themselves, and that he, a socialist — a democratic socialist — was just fine with that. The trouble, he said, was that capitalism is also a disease which, like cancer, can get out of control and multiply exponentially within the host and kill the very body that it lives within — in our case, the body politic, our society.

Social democracy, according to Bob, was the medicine that was required to make capitalism work without allowing it to get out of control. While I'm pretty happy with some of the things we have managed to achieve at home, boy, have we ever allowed the cancer to get out of control here in British Columbia.

[1040]

There are special words that we need to describe this kind of capitalism gone crazy that we see today, special words that some of us never even heard before. I was talking to a rancher the other day, and he used the word "oligopoly" to describe the meat-processing industry and the centralization of control that has happened in that industry during the time of the present government. Oligopoly is not a word any of us heard growing up. I first learned that word in correspondence from the manager of a logging company, talking about the consolidation and centralization of control that has happened in his industry, too, in this century, the time of the present government.

The Liberal mindset in British Columbia has pretty well destroyed the old idea of free enterprise in B.C. It replaced free enterprise with monopolies and oligopolies and corporate strangleholds on wealth and land and communities in just about every sector you can name.

We have over the course of the last few years centralized the distribution of food to the point that producers cannot even get the product into the grocery store in the very town in which they live.

We created a corporate computer system that encourages transnational mining companies to buy up the mineral rights that used to go to British Columbia prospectors — who did real, physical work — and to buy those rights without even leaving their office in New York or Bonn or Tokyo.

We have destroyed the independent fishing industry, where men and women for decades thought of themselves as the last real economic adventurers, and replaced their right to fish with corporate armchair fishermen who never go on the water and rent out their licences like land barons of old used to use sharecroppers to farm their land.

I cannot think of a single land-based industry that the Liberals have not managed to turn into some kind of fiefdom. I grant you that this has been an accomplishment without the overt bloodshed that we saw when the same thing happened in Scotland with the clearances, but the outcome is the same and the out-migration is the same, and it will result in the same kind of control. The oligopolies will be the new London rich, running the land on which the people used to farm, fish, run sheep and log.

[S. Hammell in the chair.]

How in the world did we get into this mess? How did we take this province that we built and ran for a hundred years and turn it into somebody's fiefdom? Why did our present government think it would be a really good idea to wipe out good, old, independent, competitive free enterprise-type businesses and replace them with monopolies?

Well, you can name the beginning of this kind of thinking anywhere you want. You could just say it started with Maggie Thatcher or the University of Chicago. I like to trace it back to 1989 and the dismantling of the Soviet empire and the fall of the Berlin Wall. When the Berlin Wall came down, instead of celebrating the end of the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat, the whole world seemed to come to the wrong-headed conclusion that the market had defeated the centrally planned economy, and now the market was god and could do no wrong.

The new temples of this religion would be built in the name of the new god, and they would be called think tanks. Governments were then considered an impediment to the sanctity of the market, and the top ten economies of the world that used to be countries became private corporations.

Here in British Columbia the free enterprise party, called Social Credit, would die, and the globalist party, the Liberals, would get itself born. Direction would come down to that government like stone tablets from the temple called the Fraser Institute. The people's work in this building and in this room would become a sideshow.

[1045]

I don't think this Legislature is a sideshow. I know I'm a bit of an anachronism in this regard. I know it's been popular in Canada for the last 25 years or so for politicians, even, to denigrate politics and public service and legislatures and legal and regulatory measures intended to limit excess, and even to denigrate the public service.

All of us in this room, on both sides, have been living through a time when we learned to call the employees of the Crown by the pejorative term "bureaucrats" in order to dehumanize them and strip their work of the honour and dignity and pride that used to accompany managing this land and human well-being. It reminds me of when the American people learned to call the Vietnamese people gooks in order to justify making war in their country.

In short, it has become hip to belittle the idea of the Crown and the function of this place to generate discourse or to resolve issues. One minister that we all know has even been known to suggest that politicians have better things to do than to serve the people in public, on the record and in this room. I despise this trend, and I would like to see it end now.

I think that government has to exist. I think that government has to raise taxes to do the people's work and use those taxes to buy civilization. I think parliament has to exist and even meet and use the public record as a way to express alternative ideas about what that civilization should look like and how it should function.

I think there has to be a free press and not a monopoly press. The people who own that press actually have to employ people to report what happens here and to tell the story to whomever wishes to know.

None of this would happen if it wasn't for this place and if it wasn't for two sides — or maybe three or six, which I happen to think might be better yet — working here. This present government has for years operated on the view that government is a wasteful indulgence and that capitalism can manage anything better than the people can do it for themselves.

Where I live, the Crown used to plow the snow. Remember that? Now a company does it for profit. We used to run our own ferries here in British Columbia. We owned and sailed more ships than the Canadian navy. Now a company we don't understand runs them, and companies we don't know build them in Germany. Governments here for decades managed forests and built roads, and they created electricity. Now all or most of that is done by corporations.

This whole idea that governance is better done by corporations than by the state reminds me of the concept of the invisible hand popularized by Adam Smith centuries ago. Only in its modern iteration, the intellectual construct of Adam Smith has taken on a kind of mythological power — some would say the status of a god — in that the hand is assumed to exist and yet cannot be seen and therefore cannot be questioned.

I would agree that in the relatively esoteric world of finance or in the utterly practical world of land-based business like logging and farming, mining or fishing, private interests are the appropriate interests to manage and to profit from the enterprise. That's why Bob Cunningham said that capitalism is the best way to make jobs and money.

British Columbia, however, is neither invisible, nor is it an enterprise. Adam Smith used the excellent metaphor of the pin factory to prove his thesis. British Columbia is not a pin factory or some kind of human creation. It is a land mass bigger than Oregon and Washington and California put together, and it belongs to the people.

It belongs more to its citizens in the utterly practical sense of land-ownership than any Canadian province or American state. It is our patrimony, passed on to us by the previous generations of good people working in this room who chose, unlike almost every other jurisdiction in the world, not to capitalize their society by selling the land or the water or the ore or the coal or the trees or the fish. In the simplest sense, it's the people's farm, and it takes real, practical, visible human hands to manage and sustain, not the invisible and mythical ones provided by some marketplace in the sky.

I submit that we who work here are the caretakers of the most publicly owned land mass of any democracy anywhere on earth. That makes the people in this room more capable of public good and more capable of failure than our counterparts almost anywhere.

So where are we in the world in history? The speculators out there and the greed specialists have pretty well killed the golden goose, eh? And the transnationals are lined up at the gate to suckle at the public breast. Wow. That worked really well, didn't it?

The great experiment in replacing government with deregulated and unfettered capitalism has failed all over the world. And here, in this budget, the people are running out of bread, but on the eve of the Olympics we are being reminded to look forward to the circus.

The failures of the Fraser Institute faith are legion, but I'm sorry to say they are not alone in failure. I, too, on this side have failed to achieve a good many of the objectives that I set forward for myself in this place, and it would be unfair of me to suggest that only Liberals are capable of failure.

I've been pretty hard on this administration in this, my last speech in this place, but it would be stupidity if those of us on this side made the mistake of imagining that we, in our turn, have not been capable of failure. Way back in that first speech 17 years ago I said I wanted to put ranger stations back into Lardeau and Kaslo and New Denver so the communities could know the forest workers and the forest workers could manage the land that they lived inside of. I failed in that endeavour, and we, too, became enamoured of centralized government and moving the workers to some cities.

As Minister of Highways I personally laid off 400 surveyors that used to work for the people to measure their progress, and that was wrong. As Minister of Agriculture I supervised the closure of offices in farming communities and further alienated government from the people, and that was wrong.

I failed as Minister of Highways to turn the ministry of blacktop into a real Ministry of Transportation, with concern for railroads and water transportation and the issues of public policy that matter still to my constituents. I failed, too, to sustain the wild fishery and personally held the fishery portfolio while the federal Liberals privatized our cherished common property resource.

I failed, except on one occasion, to have the people's equity listed in the budget documents alongside the people's debt. I failed, in spite of asking for years, to convince any government on either side to end the idiocy of using gross domestic product as the measurement of our well-being. And in what I think must have been my greatest personal failure, I have not managed ever to make food and farming a part of the political or electoral discourse in British Columbia. Under all governments, we remain last in Canada in support for food production.

[1055]

What those failures — and actually so many others — suggest, of course, is that some of the stuff we do here works and some of it doesn't. We are, on both sides, after all, just people. We work in a really pretty place and do work that to me is almost sacred, but we remain just people in really nice clothes.

And nothing is over, hon. Speaker. The stuff that we haven't done yet, or haven't done well, is just the work that falls to the next generation of leadership. There will be an election in a couple of months. A whole new group of MLAs, I hope, will work here, joined, I hope, by a younger generation. I have just a little bit of advice for that new group of MLAs.

(1) When you get here, love the building and respect the people who work here, regardless of their station or their beliefs. You came here to argue your ideas and for your constituents, not to assume that you are more right or more important than anybody else.

(2) Refuse flat out to make decisions about land you haven't seen or communities you haven't visited. Go there, and then decide.

(3) Sorry, fellas. Refuse to say words that are not your own. You are not an actor; an election is not a screen test. You wouldn't let anybody else put you in a box, so don't do it to yourself.

(4) Respect the other side.

Interjections.

C. Evans: I lost my head. [Laughter.]

Respect the other side. This place doesn't work when there is only one point of view. We found that out from 2001 to 2005. If the other team didn't exist, we would have to split in half and send a faction over there just to have somebody to bounce our ideas off.

(5) Find another way to measure the success or failure of the governments that work here in future than gross domestic product. That measurement belongs to an era that needs to be finished now for the sake of the earth.

(6) Listen up. What you cannot fix, leave alone. If you sell it or give it away, you foreclose the options of future generations.

I said all this because I think my generation's idea — our very idea of leadership — needs to end right now. We thought, pretty much since World War II, that we could define our success and our failure by measurements of

growth. We built a system to make ourselves comfortable by threatening the planet of our grandchildren. When new people come to work here, blame us old folks if you need a scapegoat. Ignore us if you can. Pretend that we just didn't know any better.

You new people working here, on the other hand — those who work here after May 12.... They can't help but know. The whole world knows now.

[1100]

That generation will be the leadership elected into the moment of economic and environmental collapse. They will be the first generation of leadership elected with a mandate to change everything, because no party in these times would be so foolish as to try to run for office suggesting that they will maintain the disaster of the present status quo.

Here's the good news about change. I think it's happening already. Intellectually, you can read the demands for change in the pages of *The Economist* magazine and even in the speeches of the world's super-elite in Davos, Switzerland, asking for re-regulation to save capitalism by limiting its capacity for excess.

Personally, I feel it happening inside myself. I was driving through Oliver a few weeks ago with a 45-gallon drum of fertilizer in the back of my truck, and I turned on the radio to hear the inauguration of the new President of the United States. Aretha Franklin started singing, and I found that I couldn't drive. I couldn't drive because I couldn't see the road through my tears. When Aretha finished singing, I got back on to the road, and I made it as far as Osoyoos. Then the new President of the United States began to speak.

I hid my face and my pickup truck in an alley behind the laundromat, and I sobbed for 17 minutes. Now, I'm 61 years old, and I'm a guy, and for a little while longer I'm an MLA. And we old MLA guys don't hide in parking lots and sob in our pickup trucks. I kept thinking: "Why is this happening to me?"

The answer I came up with was simply this. We made it. We, my generation, the generation who watched the Berlin Wall come down and celebrated and then watched the whole world lose its collective mind and despaired, had maybe made it to the end of that terrible, shortsighted, speculator-driven, utterly selfish and self-serving pendulum swing.

Maybe now Bob Cunningham's medicine might have a chance to save my grandchildren Madeline and Dawson and Sydney's planet and invoke the economic freedom that Tommy Douglas so desired. Maybe that meant I could go home now.

I beg you, those of you who remain and those of you who watch and those of you who care: don't let this moment pass us by.

Deputy Speaker: Members, we'll take a two-minute recess.

The House recessed from 11:04 a.m. to 11:07 a.m.

[S. Hammell in the chair.]

J. Les: I beg leave to make an introduction.

Leave granted.

Introductions by Members

J. Les: We're joined in the gallery today by students from Yarrow Community School in my riding of Chilliwack-Sumas. There was a group up there earlier. There's a second group up there now. They've arrived in Victoria today to tour the legislative buildings and to listen to some of the debate this morning.

The several members who have spoken this morning, of course, are giving us their swan song today, so it's rather a memorable occasion. On behalf of all members, I would like to welcome the students from Yarrow and ask the members of the House to please help me welcome them.

Debate Continued

K. Whittred: Thirteen years ago I rose in this House as a newly elected member to deliver my maiden speech. I began my remarks by thanking the citizens of North Vancouver-Lonsdale for their confidence and commented on the awesome responsibility I had accepted, and I pledged to honour that responsibility.

I also made it a personal challenge in that address to retain and build on the respect that the people in North Van-Lonsdale had shown me. So today I stand to reflect and to take stock.

My community of North Vancouver-Lonsdale is situated along the waterfront with two bridges, the Lions Gate and the Second Narrows, as its boundaries. It is one of the smallest ridings in the province geographically. It incorporates, for the most part, the city of North Vancouver, a portion of the district of North Vancouver and, for some totally inexplicable reason, about one block of West Vancouver. Also within the riding are two first nations, the Mission and Capilano bands of the Squamish Nation.

I must say it's been my pleasure over the last 13 years to work with the mayors and councillors of those municipalities and with the chiefs of the Squamish Nation on many issues of mutual concern.

I've often said that North Van-Lonsdale is a microcosm of the economy of the province. Within walking distance of my home and, in fact, from my living room window, I can see lumber, coal, potash, wood chips, sulphur and grain, all being loaded to be shipped around the globe.

Lonsdale Quay is the gateway for tourists to the myriad of North Shore attractions, two of which, I believe, are the leading attractions of the province, visited by thousands of tourists each year.

Cates Tugs, one of the oldest tugboat operations in the port, is a regular feature at the waterfront. North Shore Studios is home to a successful film industry and is one of the major employers on the shore. North Vancouver-Lonsdale is the heart of economic activity on the North Shore. The Marine Drive and Lonsdale corridors display a range of small businesses and industries that include everything from manufacturing to high tech. It is home to the Lions Gate Hospital and nearly all of the community, professional and cultural activities that serve the larger community of North Vancouver.

It is a closely knit and historic community. Its history is reflected in its street names: Mahon, Fell, Jones, Haywood. Lower Lonsdale, also becoming known as Yaletown North, is rapidly becoming one of the Lower Mainland's major attractions and also a very much sought-after place to call home.

The cohesiveness of the community is reflected in its many institutions: the North Shore Winter Club, Mahon Days, Carson Graham Eagles, Sutherland Sabers, Clam Chowder Cook-off, Flicka Gym Club, the North Vancouver Youth Band. It is home to the Centennial Theatre centre and Presentation House arts centre and enjoys some of the finest community recreation facilities.

The citizens of North Vancouver represent a full range of the mosaic that is Canada. In recent years our culture has been enriched by many new Canadians, particularly from Iran. In fact, this coming week we celebrate NoRooz, the Persian new year, with big events at Mahon Park and Ambleside. Nowhere is this more evident than on Lonsdale Avenue, which has become as cosmopolitan a street as you will find anywhere in the Lower Mainland.

Earlier, I suggested that North Vancouver-Lonsdale is a microcosm of the province. It's like a window of the province. With that in mind, I want to beg the question: is this community better off today than it was when I took this office 13 years ago? Is there any evidence to that? How has this community been served by successive budgets of this government?

To respond to that question, I would like to shine the spotlight on just a few of the endeavours in my own community, each one being a metaphor for the whole, and each one addressing the question of how the big ideas of this government over time have manifested themselves on the ground in my community.

The first of these big ideas that I'd like to shine the spotlight on is the whole area of health care and providing sustainable health care, looking at reforming health care, introducing better chronic care, introducing better first-line care, primary care. For this I want to just have a look for a moment at Lions Gate Hospital, which is, of course, always the focus of care in this area.

Over the last two or three years it seems like two or three times a year I've been invited to Lions Gate for the opening of one or another of a new ward. We have seen

a new ultrasound department opened. We have seen a number of expansions of various suites. For example, a minimally invasive surgical suite has been introduced. There has been a new chemotherapy out-patient clinic. There has been massive renovation and expansion of the ER, and of course, I'm looking forward to the actual official opening of the new emergency department at Lions Gate, which has been going on for some time, at a cost of \$24 million. It is doubling the existing emergency department and doubling the number of treatment spaces.

If we look at that one aspect of what this government has tried to achieve over the last number of years, I think that we would say that, certainly, Lions Gate Hospital is better now and more able to serve the community than it was a number of years ago.

[1115]

In addition to the things that have already been done, I was in attendance at a falls clinic, and this was a new program that had been introduced to prevent seniors from falling. It's one small program that we have in the province that shows us that we're making progress in terms of preventive care and in terms of trying to make sure that our seniors are cared for and kept at home.

We're also in the process of working toward a stand-alone hospice, and we are in the process of raising money for that. I want to give great credit to the Lions Gate Foundation, one of the many community organizations that work very hard in this area. This is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2009.

Another one of the big ideas, of course, is the area of education. I want to tell you the story about Sutherland School. Several years ago I was invited to Sutherland, and this is the school where my children actually attended. There had been an incident there where the ceiling had fallen down.

So I went and had a look at what was going on and was being shown around the school. I was shown a room where the rain came through the wall. I really found that very hard to believe. I thought: "My goodness." I've been in schools all my life and have never seen a situation where the building was in such disrepair that the rain — when it rained and the wind blew in a certain direction — came right through the wall.

In any case, I thought: "This isn't good enough." We went after the ministry, and the result is a brand-new school at Sutherland, a state-of-the-art school. It is well equipped in terms of technology. I would like to emphasize once again that this is a real partnership between the province and the city.

There is an artificial turf field. There is a running track. It represents a whole new window for the people that work there. I personally have been involved in moving into a brand-new school with all the new equipment and so on, and believe me, it gives a whole new focus and life to the folks that go there. I also want to pay tribute to the PAC, the parent organization that I worked very closely with during that endeavour.

Another area that's been a major thrust of this government over the last number of years has been in the area of early childhood education. To that end, I want to tell you about Westview School. Westview School is also a brand-new school, and there's a little wrinkle on that one because it was purposely built to house one of the very first StrongStart centres in the province.

It is, again, a partnership between the school board and North Shore Neighbourhood House. The StrongStart program, as many members in the House know, is one where young children, preschool children, are able to attend and to receive activities that make them ready to learn when they go to school in kindergarten and has proven to be extremely popular. I was very pleased that we've been able to do that at Westview, and more recently, StrongStart has also been opened at Norgate.

I was there just very recently. We had a cake. I have to say that the Ministry of Education needs a little advice about writing their notes, because they seem to forget that the audience that these notes are prepared for are three years old. The children, in fact, were only interested in the cake, not in anything that I or anyone else had to say.

On the economic side, one of the areas that I have worked with very, very closely over the years is what has now become known as the North Shore trade area. Anyone that is familiar with Burrard Inlet knows that it is the port. It is our gateway. It is the gateway to Metropolitan Vancouver. Along the north side are many, many port facilities, most of these of the break-bulk nature. In other words, the container ports are on the Vancouver side; we have the break-bulk ports on our side.

[1120]

In recent times there has been great need for expansion. One of the areas that we're still working on — and I certainly hope that this will happen over the next few years — is an expansion of infrastructure. Both rail expansion, which will enable the facilities on the port to expand even more...

Anyone that is familiar with the port activities knows that the vast majority of goods that we ship from B.C. to other parts of Canada are actually shipped from the North Shore trade area. Similarly, products from western Canada are very often shipped via the North Shore trade area. So it is a vital link to our economy and one which we have worked very, very diligently with. When I say "we," I don't mean just myself. Certainly, my colleagues have worked with me on that particular file.

Any of you who have been to North Vancouver at all recently and have gone, perhaps, to the Lonsdale Quay, know that there's been a total metamorphosis, if you like, of that lower Lonsdale area in the last number of years. Key on that list of things that we wish to happen, and well underway, is the national maritime centre for the Pacific and the north. This will be a centre that will celebrate Canada's maritime history, focusing on the Pacific and the north.

It's an area that the province has invested heavily in. We're now waiting for, hopefully, news from the federal

government that this will be taken forward. It will be partly developed out of the heritage buildings that used to be the old Burrard Dry Dock, and if you go to the Lonsdale area now, you will see the skeletons of those buildings sitting there. In a few years, of course, those will be redeveloped and become part of this very, very prestigious centre.

An area I really want to tell you about, though, is in the whole area of what we in this government have called the new relationship. I want to tell you a story. Several years ago the mayor asked me.... She said: "What kind of relationship do you have with our first nations?" And I said, "Well really," you know, at that particular time, "I don't have much relationship at all, other than meeting occasionally at a luncheon and sharing an event."

Today that is all changed. A couple of weeks ago I was at an event which was the opening of part of what we in North Vancouver are calling our spirit trail. This is a trail that goes across the Squamish Nation. I've lived in that community for 40-odd years, and this is the first time, really, that the general public has had complete access to that part of the waterfront.

I want to say how very proud I am that this endeavour — this initiative, the whole new relationship with aboriginal peoples — was initiated by the government that I have been part of. We are now seeing the real evidence of this. I was at another event not too long ago on the Squamish Nation where we were invited, and this was to a signing to agree on the protocol for the cost-sharing of this particular trail. These are the kinds of things which simply wouldn't have happened a number of years ago.

Similarly, I spoke a few minutes ago about the StrongStart program, particularly at Norgate. I was there the other day. Norgate is a community school that serves a large first nations population, and they had renamed the library the Simon Baker Library. Again, you wouldn't have seen that a few years ago, where a library in a public school would be named after one of the hereditary chiefs of the Squamish Nation. I thought: "This is something that we can really take to heart, that we can be proud of." It's something that our government has worked very hard on.

I've tried to focus on just a few of the things — I could go on at great length — that have, I think, shown that many of the large ideas and the investments that this government has made over time have, in fact, translated into real change at the community level.

[1125]

I want also to mention just one or two other things. One is the Spirit Square. Many of you have Spirit Squares in your communities. In my community, that Spirit Square has been built on Lonsdale and 14th Street and has become, in a few months, a major gathering spot. It is a spot where there is public art, the city has built a new library, the city hall is there, and it has become a major gathering spot for folks in the community.

Then, of course, there is the spirit trail that I have made mention of. The spirit trail is a wonderful concept that

has been a partnership between the four North Shore ridings, and it has involved the cooperation of the four North Shore MLAs as well as the municipalities.

Eventually it will be a trail that will go all the way from Deep Cove to Horseshoe Bay. When that happens, you will be able to come to North Vancouver, and you will be able to start at one end or the other and walk, hike, bike, scoot — whatever you wish to do — along that trail. We are looking at that, in North Vancouver, as a legacy of the Olympics for us.

What about the future? Well, there are still some jobs that need to be completed, and we're looking at how these can be achieved in the future. Even with the current economic climate, we can always look to the future. One is the film centre at Capilano University. Capilano, as you may know, offers a film program that I believe is widely respected, and they need to expand. They need a building of their own, and we are working on that. One of the priorities for the health region is a mental health and addictions centre, and I have mentioned the hospice. So those are some of the things that we have to look forward to.

When you announce that you're going to retire, people ask you all sorts of questions. So I'm just going to review a little bit some of the stuff that I've been asked in recent weeks.

One of the things people ask you is: "What have you learned in this job?" Well, I think one of the things I've learned is that you need a skin that's as thick as a lizard. If you didn't have that before you came here, you will develop it as you are here for a few years.

I think I've also learned that you accomplish way more with honey than with vinegar. I would like to think that that's part of the reason that sometimes people look at me and say: "Well, you know, she gets things done." I think it pays to try to be sweet rather than tart.

I think the other thing I've learned is that no matter what the task you've been given, building relationships in this business.... Whether it's with colleagues, whether it's with the opposition, whether it's with staff — no matter what the situation — building relationships is the most important aspect of getting the task accomplished.

Another question that people ask me from time to time is: "What was your most memorable moment?" And you know, the first time that was asked of me, I had to think about it. Then I was kind of lying awake at night, and I thought: "Good heavens, that's not a tough question." The most memorable moment was, of course, the 77-to-2 victory of my party in the 2001 election. I might even speculate that it might have been the most memorable moment to folks on the other side as well.

Another question that gets asked is: "What are you going to do?" Well, if I could quote a friend I have, he says: "If I was going to do something, I wouldn't be retiring." So the answer to that is that I haven't really decided what I'm going to do yet. I'm sure I'll do something. Maybe I'll finish the quilt I started in about 1980. But then again, maybe I won't.

[1130]

For right now I have an overpowering need to live my life without a schedule. I want to walk the dog, I want to have lunch with my husband, and I want to be able to go on a holiday without getting leave.

I have been extraordinarily fortunate over the past 13 years in terms of the assignments that I've been given within caucus and the Legislature. I've served in opposition. I've served as caucus Chair, Chair of the Health Committee, member of a whole variety of legislative committees, critic of what would now be the Ministry of Housing and Social Development.

I've served in cabinet. I've chaired several committees, including the Caucus Committee on Social Development; the legislative Committee on Children and Youth; and most recently, of course, as Deputy Speaker — a position which, I must say, I've come to quite enjoy.

I've been a significant part of at least two major initiatives that offer me great personal reward. One was the reform of seniors care by offering a spectrum of services and the introduction of assisted living, and the other one was the ending of mandatory retirement. As I said, my role in each of these has provided me with tremendous personal reward.

One of my fondest moments was a note I received from a woman who had complained bitterly about her care home being replaced by something new. I received a note from her subsequently saying that if she'd have known how nice her new place was going to be, she would never have complained, and she went on to say that she never dreamed she would live in a place as nice as this.

On mandatory retirement, I would never have dreamed that so many people cared so much about being able to continue to work. I can't tell you how many e-mails and notes I received. It was truly an idea whose time had come.

Like the others before me, I have some thank-yous I want to make. I want to thank Mr. Rattenbury for this magnificent building. There are not very many people in their lifetime that ever get to come to work on a daily basis in a building like this.

I recall one of the speeches I gave very early in my career. I think it was a late night sitting. We were ragging the puck, and I wondered: "What am I going to talk about?" I went and kind of wandered around the building and crafted some remarks about the stained-glass windows and the cupids and the gold leaf. It is truly just a marvellous place to come to work.

I want to say thank you to the public service. In all my various roles, whether it has been simply as an MLA, as a cabinet minister or as a committee chair, I have nothing but the highest regard for the people I have worked with in the public service. They have been professional and helpful at all times.

I want to thank the staff in the Clerk's office. Particularly in my most recent job, I've had the opportunity to work closely with the Clerks, and they, again, give me good advice and certainly are helpful at all times.

That is also true of committee work. When you work on committees, and particularly when you chair a legislative committee, the work that the Clerk's staff does is invaluable. So I say thank you to them.

I of course want to say thanks to the caucus staff. I won't even try to name all of those folks — the people that serve us in research, in our offices — that look after us on a daily basis.

I want to thank my colleagues. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with the folks in this House. That is absolutely the thing, I think, that I will treasure the most, the friendships I have made here on both sides of the House, in not only this Legislature, but the ones that have gone before.

I want to, of course, thank my family. Every family puts up with a lot when they send a family member off to Victoria. Also, of course, the organizations in North Vancouver I have worked with over the past number of years — the councils, the school boards, the community organizations, the business organizations, the chamber of commerce and so on. We've had a very, very fruitful working relationship.

[1135]

There is one person I want to give a personal thank-you to, and that is to my constituency assistant, Krista Bunskoek. Krista has been with me since 2001, and she is a treasure. I am proud that she is my face in the community in North Vancouver when I am not there. Thank you, Krista.

Finally, of course, I want to thank the citizens of North Vancouver–Lonsdale for having the confidence to elect me in 1996 and to re-elect me twice more, in 2001 and 2005. It has been my honour to serve you for 13 years. Thank you, thank you to the citizens of North Van. You have given me the experience of my life. [Applause.]

R. Lee: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to continue the debate on Budget 2009. Before I go on, I would like to thank my family for their support. Thanks to my wife Anne and three kids — Jarek, Darek and Leanne — for their understanding of my passion for serving the community and also for helping to build this beautiful province, the best place on earth.

Budget 2009 is designed to stimulate growth, provide opportunities and confidence and expand critical resources. We recognize that people need access to support and the basic tools to continue confidently into the future. Budget 2009 provides stability for families and communities across B.C., including my home riding of Burnaby North.

For many British Columbians, the first worry they have is whether or not their jobs are secure. Budget 2009 outlines a dedication to immediate investments in our province to protect and create jobs. Through investments in post-secondary education, health care and transportation, jobs will be created now and developed for the future.

For new immigrants in Canada, there is over \$16 million to support education and job training in B.C. In

Burnaby this includes funding to programs like the South Burnaby Neighbourhood House. This organization, among others, provides skilled training and education for new Canadians, helping their transition not only into the community but also into the labour force. This program works to qualify new workers, but it also helps remove barriers many new Canadians face when entering the workforce.

But job creation doesn't come without additional community infrastructures. It comes through integrated infrastructure and education projects. In Burnaby we are seeing both with the introduction of nursing programs at BCIT and additional investments in local infrastructure.

Since 2001 there has been \$31 billion in capital projects across B.C. Despite these hard economic times, this investment will not stop. We will continue to fund these projects that we need, benefiting every area of the province, including my riding of Burnaby North.

[1140]

The developments from Budget 2009 that are investing in our future include close to \$14 billion in infrastructure projects, yielding 88,000 new jobs in this province. As the Minister of Finance said, this immediate investment is creating jobs now where they are needed.

We will see \$2 billion in federal and provincial investments in accelerating growth; \$10 billion of capital investment creating schools, hospitals and more across B.C.; \$1.4 billion in local infrastructure will be provided, and we will work with local governments to develop new strategies in housing, roads, bridges, hospitals and others.

Budget 2009 will also commit \$2.3 billion for major transportation capital infrastructure improvements, including those to the Pitt River Bridge and the South Fraser perimeter road.

Increasing accessibility throughout the province is critical but long needed in the rural areas. Through investment like this, the province is committing to moving people and goods throughout the Lower Mainland, from their homes to their jobs and back.

In health care, as has been said before in the House, funding has increased every year since 2001. We will continue to invest in health care services.

Budget 2009 commits more than \$4.8 billion over the next three years to increase the funding. This includes \$945 million more to the Ministry of Health Services and the health authorities, \$562 million to community needs, \$358 million more to patient care, \$15 million more for research and \$13 million more for travel assistance. Together, this investment creates the best...

Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, Member.

H. Bains: I seek leave to make an introduction.

Leave granted.

Introductions by Members

H. Bains: In the House visiting us from T.E. Scott Elementary School are 29 grades 5 and 6 students. They are accompanied by their teachers Allyson McIntyre and Kevin Larkin, and many of the parents are with them. Please help me welcome them to this beautiful House and make their journey a very enjoyable one. Thank you very much.

Deputy Speaker: Member, thank you for yielding the floor again.

Debate Continued

R. Lee: In health care we are investing a lot. Together, this investment creates the best health care network possible while recognizing the increasing demands with an aging population and the need to diversify our services.

In addition, this health care commitment highlights the importance of research and development and expansion to services across the province. This will directly affect us in Burnaby where, as I previously mentioned, we have benefited in the past from increases in health care spending. We are home to the Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addictions as well as the Burnaby Hospital and other health care facilities in our area.

Health care investments ensure that people have access to the care they need in their neighbourhoods and are supported in their efforts to improve their health.

Budget 2009 also, as we can see, has a lot of infrastructure. We will see new schools, hospitals and housing development, providing for the community while creating jobs and stimulating the economy.

In Burnaby we are seeing this investment through highway expansion, school and hospital development and housing projects. I know that this will provide my community and our province the stimulus needed to get through these difficult economic times as we invest in our future.

[1145]

I'd like to say a few words about Asia-Pacific. In addition to this investment in our local community, we are also working to bring in investments from overseas. British Columbia now has five market representatives in Japan, Korea and China, and the Indian office will be opened soon. The Asia-Pacific trade networks serve to maximize the economic benefits by working closely with government partners as well as the private sector to promote exports and investment potential.

Just last week, I had the opportunity to participate in the opening of the Asia-Pacific Business Centre at Robson Square, which will help to facilitate delegations coming in and going out as well as local businesses for information about Asia-Pacific countries and opportunities and market information. That is useful help to the local businesses.

To fully realize our Asia-Pacific advantage, we are developing our transportation networks to move people and goods more effectively.

I would like to go on with education. As part of the province's commitment to developing and protecting education, we have committed \$1.3 billion to replace, renovate and expand K-to-12 schools.

I can see many school students are here today in the gallery.

This will go towards creating new schools like Burnaby Central and the new one on Burnaby Mountain that I previously mentioned as well as towards assisting schools like Brantford Elementary, which received funding last year for a much-needed expansion.

In addition to new and expanding schools, there are plans for seismic upgrades, such as at Capitol Hill Elementary, Douglas Road Elementary and Gilmore Community Elementary, which are in my riding and which were planned last year. These investments demonstrate our dedication to ensuring that students have not only the materials they need, but the environment they need to learn and to grow.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Even though enrolment is dropping, the investment is growing. Burnaby will continue to benefit from provincial education support. The support includes increasing funding to more than \$8,000 per student. This is the highest ever in B.C.'s history, further committing to education and our future.

However, primary, elementary and secondary are not the only levels receiving provincial funding. Budget 2009 has outlined increases in post-secondary education and training funding — \$244 million over three years in new operating funding.

This includes \$165 million to institutions and \$16 million to support immigrant workers. This \$16 million will go towards Skills Connect programs, which provide immigrant workers the support they need to qualify for the workforce while also helping overcome the barriers that they may face when entering the workforce.

This will help programs like Burnaby's IMMpower BC, which serves new immigrants, helping them enhance their skills and integrating them into the B.C. workforce.

[1150]

Across the province we are seeing increased investments in our education programming. In Burnaby we are home to BCIT and SFU, among others, who will all benefit from this year's budget. Programs such as the bachelor of science in nursing, medical, technological and pharmacy programs are seeing an increase in funding by \$40 million over the next three years. Together, this investment adds to the existing structures for education and helps prepare our future in Burnaby and across the province.

On social programming. Investing in our communities includes development of affordable housing initiatives, important in our effort to end the cycle of homelessness in B.C. The province is investing an additional \$34 million in outreach and interim assistance. This comes along with the continued commitment to purchase units, such as what I

mentioned before at Confederation Park, and to use these units to offer affordable housing for low-income families.

Addressing poverty and homelessness is more than providing care, however. The government has committed an additional \$110 million over the next three years to meet the growing income assistance needs of our vulnerable British Columbians.

On children and family development, Budget 2009 commits \$110 million more to support the vulnerable children and families. This includes \$47 million over three years to respond to the rising costs and increasing needs to provide support for children in care and also for family support services and preventive measures. It also includes \$25 million over three years for a child care subsidy program designed to assist low- and middle-income families with the costs of child care.

Further to these commitments is an additional \$38 million over three years to support children with special needs. As any parent knows, providing support for your children can be challenging in the best of times. When your child has additional needs, having community support is critical. This investment provides parents with invaluable support.

This is not just about providing for children. This is also about ensuring that those who need additional care have hope in their lives. Budget 2009 commits \$73 million over three years for assistance to adults with developmental disabilities, including community living services, residential placements and life skills training.

In Burnaby we know how effective programs like this can be. We have seen it with the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion, where adults with developmental challenges can live and integrate into the community.

Part of the investments in this province will include \$81 million in regional development, \$213 million for local government support and \$58 million for safety. I would like to say a few words about public safety. Budget 2009...

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Member, and noting the hour.

R. Lee: Noting the hour, I reserve my position in the debate queue.

Mr. Speaker: Member, your time has run out.

R. Lee moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. B. Penner moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

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

The House adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

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