



First Session, 39th Parliament

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**DEBATES OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**
(HANSARD)

Thursday, November 26, 2009

Afternoon Sitting

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THE HONOURABLE BILL BARISOFF, SPEAKER

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

FIRST SESSION, 39TH PARLIAMENT

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Honourable Bill Barisoff

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2009

The House met at 1:39 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Routine Business

Introductions by Members

C. James: I have a number of guests in the gallery, too many to name individually. I'd like to ask the House to please welcome a group of artists and supporters of arts who are here to advocate for full funding for arts and culture. Would the House please make them welcome.

R. Cantelon: I'd like the House to welcome two good friends of mine from the constituency, Dale and Elaine Guenther. Dale is a Queen's Counsel from Alberta, but he helped me a lot during the election, going door to door tirelessly. Not only is he a QC, but he's an expert horticulturalist and was able to identify much of the plant life, which was very useful to me as Minister of Agriculture at the time — to know what the plants actually were. I'd like to thank him for that, and I'd like the House to make them both welcome.

[1340]

J. Horgan: Joining us in the gallery today is a giant in the arts community, the general manager of Intrepid Theatre, star of stage and screen. He was actually voted Mr. Congeniality in the *Monday Magazine* cover contest, and he played beside David Carradine in that epic, epic film, *Guaranteed on Delivery* — Wayne from View Royal.

Tributes

GULZAR CHEEMA

D. Hayer: I was just informed that Dr. Gulzar Cheema, a former member of the House, has been presented with an award by OMNI TV in recognition of his volunteer service in providing health awareness to the Punjabi community of British Columbia. Dr. Gulzar Cheema works closely with the Indo-Canadian community to promote healthy lifestyles, and through OMNI TV he presented 110 program segments on various health-related issues relating specifically to the South Asian community.

He also works closely on the radio stations Sher-E-Punjab and Red FM.

I ask the House members to join me in congratulating Dr. Cheema and to recognize all the charitable work he does to make British Columbia the best place to live, work and raise your family in.

Introductions by Members

A. Dix: It's my honour to introduce today two constituents, Ron Eikenberry and Gary Willet. Ron Eikenberry, who is 82, has come to Victoria to present a 1,680-name petition he personally collected in opposition to the HST. I think that demonstrates a degree of civic activism which should be an inspiration to everybody. I ask everyone to wish Ron and Gary a very warm welcome here today.

N. Letnick: I'd like to introduce Prof. Dr. Réal Roy, who is the president of the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique. He and the member for Vancouver-Kingsway and the member for Maple Ridge–Mission, along with the Clerk Assistant, met with us over lunch and discussed the needs and priorities of French-speaking British Columbians around our province — over 300,000. If the House would please help me make him feel welcome.

Tributes

HARI SHARMA

R. Chouhan: On November 15 more than 200 people got together to celebrate Prof. Hari Sharma's 75th birthday. He has taught at SFU since 1969, and he has been active in many community organizations, including Canadian Farmworkers Union and the B.C. Organization to Fight Racism. Professor Sharma was the first Indo-Canadian member of the community who sought recognition for the injustices to the community over the *Komagata Maru* incident.

For about a year, Mr. Speaker, he has been suffering from cancer. I wish him a recovery from his condition and thank him for his contributions to make British Columbia a better place.

Introductions by Members

Hon. S. Thomson: There have been a number of announcements in the House about new additions, and I'd just like to ask the House to help me congratulate my constituency assistant in Kelowna, Susan Turner. She and her husband, Warren, are welcoming a new addition into the community, Jacob Zachary Eugenio Turner. If the House could help me pass on congratulations to her.

Statements

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S LITERARY AWARDS

S. Herbert: I just wanted to let the House know that today B.C. writers received top honours at the Governor-General's Literary Awards at a ceremony in Rideau Hall. Among the winners was Vancouver playwright Kevin Loring,

whose original hometown is Lytton, someone I had the pleasure of working with in the Vancouver arts scene. His play *Where the Blood Mixes* prevailed in the drama category.

Also on the list was Victoria's own Joan MacLeod for *Another Home Invasion*.

Kate Pullinger, a native of Cranbrook, won the fiction award for *The Mistress of Nothing*. She beat out New Westminster's Annabel Lyon and Victoria's Deborah Willis.

North Vancouver poet David Zieroth won the poetry category for *The Fly in Autumn*. Nominees also included *Little Hunger* by Philip Kevin Paul of Brentwood Bay.

As we can tell, we have incredible artists here in B.C., artists who have received the support of government's investment and which has allowed them to share our stories with the world. Would the House please join me in supporting B.C.'s artists.

Introductions by Members

D. McRae: I'm pleased to say we have some guests from the Comox Valley here today. We have three students and their teacher from the Comox Valley Christian School. We have students Helen Beacham, Marika Donovan, Diane Le Goff and their teacher Mrs. Joy Tansky. They're here today visiting us from the Comox Valley. Would the Legislature please make them welcome.

Hon. B. Penner: It's a pleasure for me to introduce and ask the House to welcome a constituent, Sheldon Starrett, who is studying political science at the University of Victoria. I understand he's joining us here today in the gallery.

[1345]

Just a warning to Mr. Starrett to be careful, because that study of political science can be a very slippery slope and can lead to a place like this.

Would the House please make him welcome.

Hon. M. de Jong: Mine is not an introduction — rather a reminder from our ever-dutiful staff that take such good care of us here in the chamber that as we move towards the conclusion of this fall session.... All of that extremely confidential and personal material in everyone's desks — please take it with you. That will save the staff a great deal of time and worry about what to do with that confidential material.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Tributes

MARY SMITH

B. Routley: Today in the Cowichan Valley people are gathering to remember and commemorate Mary Smith,

who died recently at 28 years of age of H1N1. I just would like to say a few words. Mary will be remembered in the Cowichan Valley for her hours candystripping at the Sassy Lion, her time spent at the Lunch on Clements, with her hours spent helping both Bill and Doug Routley with their campaigning.

Mary's smiley face and sunny disposition were always found at the farmers market and at all of the Cowichan Capitals games in the Cowichan Valley. Anytime she popped in on people, she always had this wonderful smiling face. She was a proud participant in the Special Olympics in both swimming and bowling.

I ask that this Legislature please join with me in sending our condolences and our wishes to the family and friends in the Cowichan Valley.

Tabling Documents

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have the honour to present the Legislative Assembly Management Committee annual report, 2007-2008.

Statements (Standing Order 25B)

B.C. GUIDE DOG SERVICES

V. Huntington: "Tucker has completely changed my life in ways I could never imagine. He is my best friend and I love him very much." "Even if I could write a book a million pages long, I would still not be able to put into words all of the things Zammy means to me." "When I'm out and about with Leami, I feel more confident and I can walk with my head held high."

Who are Tucker, Zammy, and Leami, and how did they earn such heartfelt declarations of love? Well, they are three of the amazing canine graduates of the B.C. Guide Dog Services program, graduates who bring friendship and independence to the blind and visually impaired and more recently to autistic children as well.

My community is proud that the B.C. Guide Dog Services began in Delta. Since 1996 the program has bred, trained and supported guide dogs for B.C. and now for Alberta. The past three years have seen B.C. Guide Dog Services raise more than \$1 million annually with no government support whatsoever. Instead, this amazing organization depends solely on the generosity of corporations, foundations, service clubs, special events and individuals.

There is a saying that dogs leave paw prints on your heart. I invite everyone to visit the B.C. Guide Dog Services facility of Delta. Go to their website and see some of the wonderful service dogs. Support them by raising or sponsoring a puppy with volunteer work, donations, bequests and gifts in kind. You will help this great cause, and I guarantee you will end up with paw prints on your heart as well.

MOUSTACHE FUNDRAISER
FOR MEN'S HEALTH

J. Slater: Mr. Speaker, you and many others in this House may have noticed something unusual growing on men's faces throughout the building over the course of November: an uncanny amount of men with hair on their upper lip. The reason for this phenomenon is an annual month-long phenomenon, an international fundraising effort called Movember. I and many others have stepped up to the challenge and for the past 26 days have had a moustache, for better or for worse.

The idea for Movember originated Down Under in 2003 by some young Aussies who wanted to bring the moustache back into the limelight. They never imagined that a simple mo — slang for moustache — would lead to a global movement that would get men talking about a taboo subject: men's health.

[1350]

During this month men use their mo to garner support from friends and family in the form of donations for prostate cancer research. Research, research, research. While growing a moustache is, thankfully, left to the men, Mo Sistas form an important part of Movember by actively recruiting and helping to raise funds.

Prostate cancer research needs all the assistance it can get, as one in six men in Canada will develop this disease during his lifetime, and one in 26 will die of it. In 2000 alone, an estimated 25,000 men will be diagnosed, and 4,400 will succumb to this battle.

In Canada there are over 34,000 participants this year, and approximately \$5.3 million has been raised to date — \$25 million globally. Over a quarter of a million Mo Bros and Mo Sistas. All funds raised in our nation go directly to prostate cancer research. This money is used for the development of programs related to awareness and public education.

CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE AT
WINDERMERE SECONDARY SCHOOL

A. Dix: On Friday, December 11, a group of Windermere secondary school students will be hosting C3, a climate change conference timed to coincide with the United Nations conference in Copenhagen. C3 hopes to build a connection to Copenhagen by gathering the youth of Vancouver together. Already, 250 participants have signed up.

At C3 youth will engage with a variety of topics and will also be inspired to take action as active members of the community. The goal of the organizers is to work together to make a positive and practical contribution to dealing with climate change.

The volunteer spirit and community engagement of Windermere students is well-known in our community, and I'm sure all members of the House will be inspired

by their efforts to raise awareness of climate change and engage youth on a local level with global issues.

The organizing group is also working to make the conference zero-waste, an example of the commitment that these students are showing in their efforts to change the world. I wish to congratulate the organizing committee, Amber Bangu, Anson Lee, Brendan Chan, Cassandra Lee, Chanelle Lee, Chita Manorinjian, Chris Li, Chris Tam, Eric Lam, Henry Lau, Henry Tan, Jenny Ho, Jonathan Fung, Kevin Yu, Linda Fan, Mitchell Agostino, Nilam Carr, Peggy Lam, Guneed Rihar, Tiffany Tran and Emily Chan for their outstanding work on behalf of all of us.

JOHN COTTRELL

T. Lake: It is with great sadness that I rise today to inform the House of the passing of one of Kamloops' best-loved citizens. John Cottrell lost his fight with cancer earlier this month and leaves a huge hole in both the business and social fabric of our city.

John was the founder and owner of a Kamloops institution, Surplus Herby's, an emporium of marvellous proportions where you can find just about anything you could ever want. Long before Costco or Wal-Mart, Surplus Herby's was where you could spend hours shopping for household items, fishing and hunting gear, hardware, small appliances — literally everything from soup to nuts and bolts.

John's well-known advertising campaign features a mannequin telling the audience, "I'm not your average dummy," a slogan I briefly thought about borrowing for my election campaign.

Surplus Herby's in Kamloops will always remind us of John, but people in Blue River, where John opened the Lo-Boy Market, and in Cache Creek, where his dad owned the famous Hungry Herbie's, will also remember John Cottrell.

John will be remembered by all who loved him as a generous and kind man who always had time for charitable pursuits and helping those in need. John was recognized by the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce and was a past president of the North Shore Business Improvement Association as well as a long-serving member of the Lions Club and an avid patron of minor sports in Kamloops.

John Cottrell will be remembered tomorrow at a service in Kamloops, and his family, fittingly, would like people to honour John by doing something kind for someone else. That's how John Cottrell lived his life, and he will be sorely missed by the Kamloops community.

OLYMPIC GAMES BANNERS
BY SURREY STUDENTS

H. Bains: I was honoured to attend an unforgettable event hosted by the Surrey Crime Prevention Society. I

witnessed the unveiling of eight Olympic banners created by Surrey students. These banners were breathtaking. To think that all this talent came from one school district, the Surrey school district, is unbelievable. These students portray the compassion, strength and dedication of the athletes attending the 2010 Winter Games through colour and design. Their talent and spirit are captured in these incredible pieces.

[1355]

This did not happen by accident. Their teacher Mr. Marc Pelech, who was just awarded the Prime Minister's award for education, had a vision to gather some of the finest artists that went through our school system, and he drew them together to do this amazing project. The students worked tirelessly the whole summer of 2009 to complete this fine work. They have donated two of these banners to the city of Surrey, which has committed to hang them in the Games Preparation Centre located in the Tom Binnie Park in Whalley.

The other six banners have been purchased by Central City Mall to be proudly hung in the north foyer of the mall starting in early December 2009. I encourage everyone from Surrey and all those who visit Surrey to go by Central City and take a look at this exceptional work.

I would like to take this opportunity and ask this House to join with me in thanking Mr. Marc Pelech and congratulating Angela Lin, Brooke Hallman, Carmen Bright, Erika Woo, Jennifer Lee, Jenny Lee, Leira Zamfirescu, Sharon Lui, Viviana Ordonez, Yvonne Littlewood and Michael Caleb for their outstanding ability and talent.

EXPERIENCES OF WAR VETERANS

J. Rustad: Remembrance Day was several weeks ago and was a time to remember those who served, but I believe it's incumbent upon all of us to continue to thank our veterans.

Many years ago two young men answered the call of their country and enlisted to serve and to protect our freedoms. In 1943 William Henry Smith, affectionately known as "Wid," and Klaas John Veenstra started their training and were deployed overseas. John was deployed to England, while Wid eventually landed in Italy. There isn't enough time to recount all of their history, but I'd like to share one brief story from Wid.

After 12 days aboard a dirty ship packed full of soldiers and vomit, they landed in Naples. They were loaded onto trucks and headed for the front. "We were close enough that night to hear the small-arms fire, and we sure started to sober up and get quiet." He remembers how dangerously tired they all got from the endless shifts on duty and remembers that you could sleep right through the shelling and gunfire if off duty.

Wid was seriously wounded by a grenade that he threw but was tossed back. Although his entire right side was damaged, he managed to walk miles to get a

ride in an ambulance that ended up sliding and flipping over into a watery trench. After four weeks in hospital, he returned to active duty in Belgium. Upon discharge, both of these men returned to Houston and joined the Royal Canadian Legion branch 249 when it opened in 1952.

From their service to their community to now their community and country, both John and Wid have been very active in their legion looking out for the care and benefit of men and women who have served. Words are never enough to express our gratitude or to describe their sacrifice. I'm proud to be a representative of citizens with such decorated service lives. Please join me in recognizing Wid and John and thanking them for the freedoms we have today.

Oral Questions

GOVERNMENT HANDLING OF SECURITY BREACH INVOLVING PERSONAL INFORMATION

C. James: The B.C. Liberals have been completely caught off guard by a major breach of private information in government. It took seven full months for the public to learn that 1,400 income assistance recipients had had their personal information compromised. The minister says he wasn't told until a few weeks ago. The Minister for Children and Families said she wasn't told at all.

The B.C. Liberals are scrambling. Yesterday the Minister of Citizens' Services promised a review with few details. So my question is to the minister. Will he table the terms of reference for that review, tell us what ministries are covered and tell this House exactly when it's going to be made public?

Hon. B. Stewart: First of all, I want to remind the House that the government is deeply concerned by this error. The reality is that when I was first notified of this privacy issue, I acted. I immediately directed the chief information officer of British Columbia to act with whatever investigation he needed to find out exactly what concerns he had.

[1400]

I also instructed the head of the Public Service Agency to look into the personnel matters on that, and as such, we've announced that he is doing an investigation. However, that won't be completed until into the new year, and at that time we'll be happy to release that information to you, Mr. Speaker, and the rest of the House.

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

C. James: The public was kept in the dark for seven full months about this scandal. That's completely unacceptable.

If the B.C. Liberals were a competent government, the public would have been told right away about what had happened to this personal information.

Again, my question is to the minister. Will he table the terms of reference for this review, and will he ensure that the review has access to all correspondence — all officials, all cabinet ministers, the public affairs bureau and the Premier's office — to make sure that nothing is hidden?

Hon. B. Stewart: Through to the Leader of the Opposition, I want to just remind them that the terms of reference of this particular investigation have not been finalized, although the investigation was started immediately, as I indicated.

I directed the chief information officer of British Columbia — who, as well, notified the Privacy Commissioner, who is an independent officer of this House — to do his own investigation, of which.... From speaking to the commissioner, I understand that he's going to be doing his own parallel commission. Those findings will be available to the public as well.

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

C. James: It's very clear that this minister and this government are scrambling. The minister said he heard about this weeks ago, and yet he still doesn't have the terms of reference for the review finished. British Columbians want full disclosure.

This issue goes to the heart of public trust in government. Someone knew about this in government. Someone received those files from the RCMP.

So my question, again, is to the minister. Will he promise today in this House that no stone will be left unturned and, if the path leads to the highest levels of government, that path will be followed and disclosed to the public?

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Please take your seat.

Hon. B. Stewart: Again, I repeat that we take this matter in government very seriously. We're deeply concerned about the privacy of these individuals, and as such, we've taken steps.

As I mentioned before, we've directed the Housing and Social Development Ministry to send out a letter to the affected individuals. But more importantly, I have indicated to the chief information officer of British

Columbia to make certain that his investigation is broad and that there is no stone unturned. The reality is that that information will be forthcoming.

As far as the terms of reference, we're happy to release those. But at this point, as I said earlier, they are not available and ready to be released.

D. Routley: The minister still doesn't know what this review will look like, but there are some basic elementary questions he should be able to answer to the people of British Columbia today.

Did he even pick up the phone to find out who got these files and when the government knew about it? Did he ask the other ministers when they knew about it? And will he tell British Columbians — particularly those 1,400 people who have had their information out on who knows what market for the last seven months — when he and those ministers knew?

[1405]

Hon. B. Stewart: I want to let everybody know that we take this matter very seriously and that there is a thorough investigation into the full circumstances of this matter. But more importantly, the fact that we've notified the Privacy Commissioner, who has full independent powers to be able to look at this matter.... It should be enough for this House to realize that there will not be any stone not overturned.

Mr. Speaker: The member has a supplemental.

D. Routley: The minister says he didn't know. The Minister of Children and Family Development says she didn't know. Somebody knew about it. The public affairs bureau knew about it, apparently, before the ministers knew about it. Someone received these files, and they're not talking.

Which B.C. Liberal ministers knew about the breach? Did their deputies know about the breach, and when did they know it? Why did this minister and this government fail to inform the people affected and the people of B.C. for seven long months?

Hon. B. Stewart: I want to make certain that we.... As far as the other ministers that are a part of this particular investigation, they found out at the same time as myself — when I spoke to them the following day. The reality is that we're doing a full investigation ourselves to make certain this matter is completely investigated and that this information comes to this House.

S. Simpson: Today newspapers are calling for this minister to resign. For now, we'd be happy if he'd just answer a few questions.

The minister says that he's known for about a month about this security breach, and in the last few days he's learned that he was kept in the dark for seven months.

The minister simply can't continue to hide behind this call for a review, to not answer some basic questions. It's not believable that he doesn't know by now which officials received these files back from the RCMP, and it's not believable that he hasn't asked the public affairs bureau why they didn't inform him sooner, since it appears that they knew. Will the minister answer those questions now?

Hon. B. Stewart: Through to the members opposite, I want to be clear that the reality is that when I found out about this, all I could do was initiate an investigation that was to find out the facts that you're asking about. The reality is that we've agreed to share those facts once they're known, and I don't have that information for you.

The investigation is ongoing. But more importantly, we should be talking about the privacy concerns here of those individuals. The reality is that we are deeply concerned about that. That's why we're doing the investigation. I remind you that the RCMP believes there has been no compromise in that information, from the testing that they have done.

Mr. Speaker: The member has a supplemental.

S. Simpson: Those 1,400 people who have been put at risk — certainly, if they haven't been compromised, it's no thanks to this minister and his colleagues.

This story continues to grow. We understand and we've been informed that the spouse of the employee who was fired for this situation was exempt staff working in the Public Service Agency. It's our understanding that she has also been fired. Can the minister confirm that? Was she fired, and is there an investigation of her activities in the Public Service Agency, and will that be part of the review?

Hon. B. Stewart: I will confirm that there has been a second individual in this matter that has been terminated, but as the matter is a personnel issue, I'm not prepared to discuss it in the House at this present time.

FREEDOM-OF-INFORMATION REQUEST FEES

J. Kwan: The opposition have been raising questions for months regarding freedom-of-information requests for Olympic costs. With each request, reams of paper are received, but inevitably the cost is severed each time.

[1410]

Well, on this last day of the session, we finally got a document that has a cost on it. Unfortunately, it is for a hefty bill. It is \$10,310. It's a bill from the Ministry of Citizens' Services — \$10,310 to access records and contracts related to the 2010 hosting activities in the Ministry of Small Business.

Is the Minister of Citizens' Services saying that openness and accountability are only available to those who can afford to pay?

Hon. B. Stewart: I'm not, certainly, aware of this particular individual matter, but I can tell you that the fees under freedom-of-information access are clearly set out and reviewed by an independent committee. As such, they're set by an independent commission.

Anyway, I'm just trying to say that those fees are not necessarily set by the Ministry of Citizens' Services. They're set by a committee of this House.

Mr. Speaker: The member has a supplemental.

J. Kwan: The fees are actually set by government.

Mr. Speaker, British Columbians have the right to know how much the Ministry of Small Business is spending on hosting activities related to the Olympic Games.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

J. Kwan: It should not cost \$10,310. This is information that should be on the public record.

The Premier once believed that "information rights are meaningless...if fees become an obstacle to access." Does the minister agree with the Premier that information belongs to the people, not the government, and that government should facilitate access and not obstruct it?

Hon. B. Stewart: First of all, I want to remind the House that British Columbia has some of the most comprehensive privacy and information legislation. The process and policies of freedom of information are administered by independent staff. As such, so are the fees.

STAFFING FOR PRINCE RUPERT AUDIOLOGY CLINIC

G. Coons: Four weeks ago I asked the Minister of Health about the brand-new \$600,000 audiology clinic sitting empty in Prince Rupert. At the time he said that he would get back to me. I even sent him all the pertinent information, but still no answers.

The clinic still sits empty. Community groups involved in the fundraising are baffled, while no action is being placed to fill the audiology position. There was even federal aboriginal money available for this position, and it's still not posted. Will the minister today finally release the funds and post the position?

Hon. K. Falcon: This is a real good example of the NDP again just trying so desperately to find an issue that they can complain about in health care.

Let's actually look at what has happened here. They had an audiologist who has retired from providing the service. The health authority is trying to find a new audiologist. They are out trying to get a new audiologist.

This is a crisis in that member's.... In our eyes, it is a confirmation of the challenges of finding very specialized individuals, like audiologists, in a place like Prince Rupert.

[1415]

I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker. The most important part of what that member opposite said was the fact that it was this government that invested the \$600,000 in that audiology clinic.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Just take your seat, Member.

The member has a supplemental.

G. Coons: The only desperation in this Legislature is on that side of the room.

The minister obviously didn't do his homework, because he's wrong. It was not this government that put in the money. It was Child Health B.C. that put in over \$585,000, and the only commitment this government had was to provide ongoing operational costs each year.

So five years of local fundraising, a workload analysis done saying that we need an audiologist, the highest ear infections in the province, and this government refuses to act. A single audiologist will not meet the needs of the hundreds of kids needing this service in the North Coast. The federal aboriginal money for this position was "reassigned back into aboriginal health for a different initiative."

Will the minister finally look into this situation? Will he release the funds that were given, keep his commitment to provide ongoing operational costs each year and post the position?

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. K. Falcon: Actually, Northern Health is out actively recruiting for that audiologist position. But I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker.

It is quite fascinating to hear this line of questioning, because I can tell you this. In the NDP years they didn't have to worry about hiring an audiologist. There was no audiology clinic to actually provide the services in the north, and today there is. That's the difference. It was this government and this Premier and the former Health Minister that ensured that every child born in British Columbia receives screening, including audiology, right across the province — this government.

Mr. Speaker, at the risk that this may be my last opportunity, I want to remind the public that even in an era with a 20 percent budget increase, even in an era where we are adding almost \$3 billion of health care capital, there are still challenges in the system. I want you to know that we're not afraid to think about change.

We're not afraid to try change on this side. They are opposed to change. We support change, and we'll continue to see change for the benefit of British Columbians.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Member, just take your seat for a second. Member for Burnaby–Deer Lake.

[1420]

ACCESSIBILITY OF OLYMPIC GAMES TICKETS

K. Corrigan: Well, thousands of British Columbians have been unable to obtain tickets for our own B.C. Olympic Games. Yet a professional scalping company — Jet Set Sports — has locked up 125,000 tickets to the hottest events, tickets they are selling for hundreds and even thousands of dollars more than the face value.

My question is to the Minister of State for the Olympics. British Columbians are paying for these games. Why should they be shut out while rich scalpers obtain 125,000 of the best tickets to the events?

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. M. McNeil: The members opposite are correct. There are 78 days left — 78 days before the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games come to this province. This government could not be more proud that we are the host province for the Olympics.

There are 1.6 million tickets to these Olympic Games, 250,000 people are coming to these games, and there will be over \$4 billion in economic generation to happen because of these games.

The Vancouver organizing committee, VANOC, has worked very hard on their ticketing, and many, many, many British Columbians, Canadians and people from around the world are going to be enjoying the events.

Mr. Speaker: The member has a supplemental.

K. Corrigan: So 1.6 million tickets and 125,000 — I make that out to be almost 8 percent, almost one in ten tickets going to a scalper.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Take your seat, Member. Continue, Member.

K. Corrigan: Many people in this province tried to get tickets to high-profile Olympic events and left disappointed.

Yet Jet Set Sports managed to get their hands on tickets to hockey, figure skating, the opening and closing ceremonies. And the list goes on.

British Columbians are paying for the games, but this government is allowing scalpers to use our B.C. 2010 logo to flog tickets for thousands of dollars above their face value. My question, again, to the minister: why is the government letting a scalper haul in the gold while British Columbians are left in the cold?

Hon. M. McNeil: As I said, in 78 days these games are starting. These tickets to all of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games are popular, and that is why....

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Continue, Minister.

Hon. M. McNeil: People around this province are excited about these games. These games are the largest economic stimulus that we could ever ask for. These games are going to drive tourism, they're going to create jobs, and they're going to reinvigorate our economy.

I think it's about time those on the other side of the House get excited about the games, because we're ready to be the host province. Our athletes are ready, and it's going to a great time for this province.

[1425]

COMMENTS BY CULTURAL OLYMPIAD ARTISTS

S. Herbert: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. A Vancouver theatre artist, Andrew Laurenson, wrote in an e-mail newsletter that he was concerned about the B.C. Liberals' massive cuts to the arts, sports, social programs and environmental organizations. He said that he thought it might be because of massive cost overruns on the Olympics.

To his surprise, VANOC issued a warning to him and other artists involved in the show he's working on. VANOC says: "The artist shall at all times refrain from making any negative...comments respecting VANOC, the 2010 Olympics and Paralympic Games, the Olympic movement generally, Bell and/or other sponsors associated with VANOC."

But the artist wasn't criticizing VANOC. He was criticizing the B.C. Liberals. Does the minister responsible for the arts support this flagrant abuse of B.C. artists' free speech and artistic freedoms?

Hon. K. Krueger: This government has flowed over half a billion dollars to arts and culture — \$531 million in the last 8½ years. That's a record that speaks for itself.

Mr. Speaker: The member has a supplemental.

S. Herbert: Let me get this straight — 50 percent arts cuts this year through gaming, 92 percent cuts next year. That doesn't sound like supporting the arts to me.

But we'll return to the question, since the minister obviously didn't hear it, or maybe he was ignoring it. The head of the Cultural Olympiad for...

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

S. Herbert: ...Salt Lake City Winter Olympics said, "If this is a trend, it's a bit of a dangerous trend for the arts," and that Salt Lake had no restrictions on artistic freedom or free speech.

The Cultural Olympiad is supposed to be about the celebration of the arts and B.C.'s diverse voices. Will the minister stand up for the B.C. artists today and demand that VANOC stop this outrageous attempt to muzzle British Columbians' free speech?

Hon. K. Krueger: A few weeks ago I had the privilege of attending, with the member who asked the question and a whole bunch of his colleagues, the official opening of the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, affectionately known as the Cultch. We put \$9 million into refurbishing that building.

The architect who supervised the work said that when he crawled under the building to have a look at the foundations, he was thinking: "This building, when it first went up a hundred years ago, was a church."

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.
Continue, Minister.

Hon. K. Krueger: The architect said: "This building, when it was first built a hundred years ago, was a church, and it was built on a foundation of faith." That's a good thing, because there was nothing but faith holding it up until the B.C. Liberals put \$9 million into restoring the structure. So if the member wants a tangible demonstration of supporting the arts, I offer that one.

[End of question period.]

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

C. James: I seek leave to make an introduction.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed.

Introductions by Members

C. James: There are none of us in this House who could do our jobs without the support of family and friends, and I have a surprise visit in the gallery today. I would like to introduce the love of my life, my husband, Albert Gerow.

[1430]

Petitions

M. Farnworth: Hon. Speaker, mindful of your words, I rise to table a petition of thousands of people opposed to the HST.

A. Dix: I rise to present a petition signed by 1,680 people, collected by Ron Eikenberry, in opposition to the HST.

J. Kwan: I rise to table a petition. I have a petition with 924 names from British Columbians who are opposed to this much-hated tax called the HST.

B. Ralston: I rise to table a petition from 798 British Columbians who oppose the government's introduction of the HST.

M. Karagianis: I rise to present a petition from 1,267 people opposing cuts to programs for special needs children.

C. James: I rise to present a petition signed by 3,106 British Columbians who oppose the HST. This brings the total of signatures this session to 31,625 British Columbians opposed to the HST.

Tabling Documents

Hon. B. Penner: I rise to present the annual report 2008-2009 for the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Authority Trust Fund.

Hon. M. de Jong: I have the honour to present the following annual reports: B.C. Utilities Commission annual report for 2008-2009; Crown Proceeding Act report for fiscal year ended March 31, 2009; and the annual report of the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia for '08-09.

Motions Without Notice

LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR

Hon. M. de Jong: With leave, I move the following motion, which relates to the proposed schedule for the sitting of this House in the spring of 2010.

[That effective immediately, the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia be amended as follows

for the Second Session of the Thirty-ninth Parliament, which will commence on February 9, 2010:

That section 2 (2) (a) (i) be amended to read "from the second Tuesday in February to the first Thursday in June inclusive".

That section 2 (2) (b) be amended to read "The House shall stand adjourned during the weeks of February 15, February 22, March 15, April 5, and May 10, 2010."

That section 2 (2) (c) be amended to read "As soon as possible after the passing of this motion the Clerk of the House shall publish a calendar which shows the days on which the House shall meet, according to the Standing Orders."

I have shared the contents of this with the hon. Opposition House Leader, and by leave, I move that motion.

Leave granted.

Motion approved.

Hon. M. de Jong: I call Committee of Supply in this chamber.

Committee of Supply

ESTIMATES: LEGISLATION

The House in Committee of Supply (Section B); L. Reid in the chair.

The committee met at 2:35 p.m.

Vote 1: legislation, \$73,529,000 — approved.

ESTIMATES: OFFICERS OF THE LEGISLATURE

Vote 2: Auditor General, \$15,536,000 — approved.

Vote 3: Conflict-of-Interest Commissioner, \$440,000 — approved.

Vote 4: Elections B.C., \$41,440,000 — approved.

Vote 5: Information and Privacy Commissioner, \$3,822,000 — approved.

Vote 6: Merit Commissioner, \$955,000 — approved.

Hon. M. de Jong: I move Vote 7, Ombudsperson. I'm sure the person who prepares those motions will make that correction.

Vote 7: Ombudsman, \$4,773,000 — approved.

Vote 8: Police Complaint Commissioner, \$1,974,000 — approved.

Vote 9: Representative for Children and Youth, \$7,027,000 — approved.

Hon. M. de Jong: I move that the committee rise and report completion of Votes 1 through 9.

Motion approved.

The committee rose at 2:39 p.m.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

The Committee of Supply (Section B) reported resolutions.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the report be considered?

Hon. M. de Jong: Now.

Motion approved.

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that the reports of resolutions from the Committees of Supply on September 21, 23, October 6, 8, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28 and November 2, 3, 5, 17, 24, 25 and 26 be now received, taken as read and agreed to.

Motion approved.

[1440]

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that there be granted from and out of the consolidated revenue fund the sum of \$32,315,474,000. This sum includes that authorized to be paid under section 1 of the Supply Act (No. 1), 2009, and Supply Act (No. 2), 2009, and is granted to Her Majesty towards defraying the charges and expenses of the public service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Motion approved.

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that there be granted from and out of the consolidated revenue fund the sum of \$746,115,000. This sum includes that authorized to be paid under section 2 of the Supply Act (No. 1), 2009, and is granted to Her Majesty towards defraying the capital, loans, investments and other financing requirements of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Motion approved.

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that there be granted from and out of the consolidated revenue fund the sum of \$1,194,257,000. This sum includes that authorized to be paid under section 3 of the Supply Act (No. 1), 2009, and is granted to Her Majesty for disbursements to other entities for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Motion approved.

Introduction and First Reading of Bills

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2009-2010

Hon. C. Hansen presented a message from His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled Supply Act, 2009-2010.

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that the bill be introduced and read a first time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. C. Hansen: Mr. Speaker, this supply bill is introduced to approve funding for the operation of government programs for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. The amount requested is that resolved by the Committee of Supply after consideration of the main estimates. The House has already received, taken as read and agreed to the reports of the resolutions from the Committees of Supply and, in addition, has resolved that there be granted from and out of the consolidated revenue fund the necessary funds towards defraying the charges and expenses of the public service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010.

Mr Speaker, it is the intention of government to proceed with all stages of this supply bill this day.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I'd ask you to remain in your seats for a few minutes while the bill is being circulated.

In keeping with the practices of this House, the final supply bill will be permitted to advance through all stages in one sitting.

Bill 22, Supply Act, 2009-2010, introduced, read a first time and ordered to proceed to second reading forthwith.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2009-2010

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that the bill be read a second time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that the bill be referred to the Committee of the Whole House for consideration forthwith.

Bill 22, Supply Act, 2009-2010, read a second time and ordered to proceed to a Committee of the Whole House for consideration forthwith.

[1445]

Committee of the Whole House

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2009-2010

The House in Committee of the Whole (Section B) on Bill 22; L. Reid in the chair.

The committee met at 2:46 p.m.

Sections 1 to 4 inclusive approved.

Schedules 1 to 3 inclusive approved.

Preamble approved.

Title approved.

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that the committee rise and report the bill complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The committee rose at 2:46 p.m.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

**Report and
Third Reading of Bills**

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2009-2010

Bill 22, Supply Act, 2009-2010, reported complete without amendment, read a third time and passed.

M. Farnworth: I seek leave to make an introduction.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed.

Introductions by Members

M. Farnworth: In the gallery today we have two groups from Cedar Drive Elementary School in my riding, not far from where I live — grade 5 students. They're up in the gallery. I don't know whether they know what they've just witnessed here, but we have just passed the ability for the government to spend \$32 billion in about 32 seconds, which is a rather unique thing that most people don't get to see because it happens so quickly.

Anyway, I hope that they enjoy their visit here and that they've witnessed a very unique thing that happens once a year. With that, I'd ask the House to make them all welcome.

Orders of the Day

Hon. M. de Jong: I call debate in reply to the throne speech.

Throne Speech Debate*(continued)*

J. Horgan: Thank you, hon. Speaker, and my colleagues on the opposite side. It is a rare opportunity, as you can well imagine, to stand in this place three months after the throne speech and offer my comments and thoughts on that document presented in this place in August by Lieutenant-Governor Steven Point.

It's a rare opportunity to reflect back on the past three months and see how the government did. How did they measure up to the lofty promises and rhetoric of August? How does that measure up after a September and an October and a November?

I'm here to tell you — listening to my constituents, they're a little bit startled. They're a little bit startled when they reflect back on the promises and commitments the government made during the election campaign, just seven or eight months ago, to keep the deficit to \$495 million — "guaranteed," the Premier said, on CKNW talk radio, B.C.'s talk radio; \$495 million, guaranteed.

Well, since the throne speech was introduced, we've had a budget tabled, and it had a rather large deficit, hon. Speaker. You'll remember that. I'm sure your constituents wrote to you about it and said: "What happened?"

The Premier said in May, during the election campaign — that accountability session we have, as legislators, with our public.... He said at that time: "\$495 million, guaranteed." Well, he missed by a wee bit. He missed by a wee bit.

[1450]

When we look now at the \$2.8 billion budget deficit that was introduced by the member from Quilchena, one of the defining moments of this session has been the reduction in credibility of the fiscal management capacity on that side of the House, and the elevation of my friend from Surrey-Whalley, the opposition Finance critic, to the point of having much more credibility than those on that side of the House.

That's one of the measurements we can have, hon. Speaker, between what was promised in May during the election campaign to curry favour and votes from the people of British Columbia, what was then promised in terms of the vision as we look ahead by the Premier and his government in September, and now the profound disappointment that I think we all feel — certainly those on that side in the House, 14 points down in the polls; and certainly the public, looking down the barrel of a \$1.9 billion harmonized sales tax.

I'm thinking that the feel-good throne speech that I am standing and responding to today looks a bit tarnished, a little bit ratty. I mean, I don't spend a lot of time on throne speeches. My copy, I have to confess, is not dog-eared.

I listened intently. I'm very close, as you know, to Steven Point, the Lieutenant-Governor, when he's reading his

remarks. So I listened intently, and I skimmed through it when I began my response to the throne speech some three months ago.

But standing here now, it seems rather irrelevant. We go through the pomp and the pageantry and the ceremony. We have a whole bunch of people come in with braids and uniforms. The speech is offered. There are appetizers served in the rotunda, maybe a glass of wine or two for those who indulge in that sort of thing, and then we carry on about the business of the people.

When you get the opportunity, as I have today, to stand in this place and look back over the three months of debate and activity that's happened in this place and outside of this place, it's rather interesting to say that that pomp and pageantry, that rhetoric and that apparent vision by the government seems to me to be sadly lacking.

More is the pity, I would suspect, for those watching at home — British Columbians who were told one thing before the election and delivered something completely different afterwards.

We had in this session, as well, hon. Speaker, you'll remember.... One of the more disappointing aspects of this job is having to sit and take what the government gives, regardless of what the public thinks about it.

Of course, I'm referring to back-to-work legislation for paramedics and ambulance attendants and ambulance workers in British Columbia forced back to work days before Remembrance Day while they were voting on a contract that had been offered by the government. We then voted them back to work in this place, with members on this side and one member on the other side opposing that action. Again, the government carries on as if nothing had happened.

Well, it's just not good enough. When I go back to my community.... I have the good fortune of living here on southern Vancouver Island. Unlike other members of the House, I can be home comfortably with my family within 30 minutes from this place. Of course, if there was commuter rail on Vancouver Island, I'd be able to reduce my carbon footprint and get there five or ten minutes faster, but that unfortunately was not contained in the budget that we've debated and passed — as the House Leader so eloquently pointed out, \$32 billion in 32 seconds.

[L. Reid in the chair.]

There were some highlights of the session, and I want to run through those before I speak about a few issues in my own constituency. I've got before me a B.C. Liberal index from the fall 2009 session. The eager beavers in the basement have worked this up. I think I'll offer it and see what I get back from my colleagues. We have the following.

The amount that consumers will fork out as a result of the HST. Do I have any guesses from my colleagues sit-

ting here? It's \$1.9 billion. During the election campaign — not on the radar. I think that the Premier used a different word. He's moved off "radar." Yesterday in estimates with the Leader of the Opposition he used a different word. Was it "not on the map"?

N. Simons: Not on the sonar.

J. Horgan: Sonar. In any event, before the election, "We're not going to do it. We will not harmonize the sales tax," and here we are in November with my modest comments on the throne speech, a tax shift of \$1.9 billion.

Tourism jobs that will be lost due to the HST. Do we have any guesses on the other side? Guesses over here? Ten thousand jobs potentially lost in the tourism sector; 12,000 in the restaurant industry. Unbelievable.

Here's a number that I think we'll all be excited about, and we're hopeful certainly on this side. The number of B.C. Liberals it would take to vote down the HST: seven. That's all we need — seven on that side of the House to listen to their constituents, do the right thing, live up to their campaign commitments to the people in their ridings and vote against this legislation. Only seven.

[1455]

What will the HST cost schools in British Columbia in the first year of implementation? Any guesses?

An Hon. Member: Forty million.

J. Horgan: Forty million. My friend from Columbia River–Revelstoke, right on the button. Forty million dollars will have to be found by school districts right across British Columbia just to implement the HST — unbelievable.

Here's a really good number — and one that I don't want to dwell on too long, because we did spend some time talking about it: the amount B.C. Ferries CEO David Hahn will make this year. Any guesses? One million dollars. "One million dollars," says Dr. Evil. Holy cow. That's twice as much as Kevin Mahoney, the CEO of B.C. Rail, will get for running — how many trains? — zero trains.

Interjection.

J. Horgan: No, 38 kilometres of track. This is metric, and my colleague from Surrey–Whalley is back in the 1970s. He needs to bring it forward. We're on the metric system now, hon. Member.

The number of months after the election before the B.C. Liberals cancelled the LiveSmart program: three months — correct. My colleague the Environment critic from Victoria–Swan Lake nailed that one. Three months.

The response from the minister — of course, it's not numeric — was: "We had to cancel the program because it was too successful." We're yearning for conservation

measures and initiatives, certainly, here in the south Island and right across British Columbia — reducing our carbon footprint, reducing the impact on our reservoirs and our electricity system — and the program was cancelled because it was too successful, three months after the election. Recession is a bad time to invest in anything.

We had representatives from the arts and culture community here today, and the percentage cut in their budget next year will knock me over. I'm not going to repeat the number here, but it is over 90 percent.

The number of salmon that went missing in the Fraser this year, since we had our throne speech: ten million — which, fortunately, is ten times the number of Atlantic salmon that escaped from fish farms in the Broughton Archipelago.

The number of consecutive years that the B.C. Liberals have led the country in child poverty: six. Again, my colleague from Columbia River–Revelstoke must have read this document before I started reading from it, because he's getting all the answers correct.

Olympic tickets purchased for B.C. Liberal MLAs and Crown corporations, total cost: \$2.4 million, which would have supported 7,000 Special Olympians, had that money not been clawed back from Special Olympics programs.

The list goes on. Again, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to recite this litany of failure by the government had I been responding to the throne speech back in September, as members normally do.

I want to speak just for a moment about a program that I'm going to be meeting with the Minister of Children and Families about next week. It's the early intensive behavioural intervention program for children with autism. This is a program, a modest contribution annually, about \$5 million. For those who are still in the galleries and watching at home, \$5 million out of the \$32 billion that we just approved is a very, very modest sum indeed, to see enormous progress in the lives of children with autism and their families. Some 70 families a year can access this program.

Initially, the minister's rationale for cutting it was that she wanted to spread the money around. Well, of course, you don't necessarily need to spread money around to make it fair. You want to focus public dollars where they can have the greatest impact, and the EIBI program is one of those.

I'm meeting with the minister and some of my constituents next week, and we're very hopeful, indeed, that she will change her tune on the EIBI program and that we'll see those funding cuts restored.

We had back-to-work legislation, a deficit that was four times what was promised, a tax that no one was talking about, and what are the ramifications for our communities of the long list of cuts? We've had parent advisory committees, which, when I was the Education critic, were the foundation of solid education outcomes, said the Minister of Education at the time.

I have to confess that I was dubious of that undertaking by her at that moment, but over the past four years I've come to know the value of parent advisory committees. In my community and right across the province I try regularly to go to the district PAC meeting so that I can get a flavour of what's going on in the community. As a legislator, this is a valuable tool for me, because I can see firsthand how parents — the clients of the education system — are viewing what's going on.

[1500]

I've had an epiphany on this, and I acknowledge that to the minister now. She had a point of view when I was her critic. I disagreed with it. I agree with her today.

Unfortunately, funds for parent advisory committees were cut by 50 percent. Their function in the system, now entrenched and, in fact, in statute in some cases... Parent advisory committees assist with appointing people to school planning councils. It's in legislation. They have a statutory obligation now, parents do, not just to drop their kids off at the door of the various schools in our districts, but they now have a function under law within the school system, and now they've been cut by 50 percent.

In addition to that, we had withdrawal of support for facilities grants — annual facility grants. What does the "annual" imply, hon. Speaker? I'm not going to ask my colleagues, because they know the answer. Annual means every year. Every year you can count on it — unless the B.C. Liberals are re-elected in May, when all bets are off.

"What we said then really doesn't matter because the important thing is that we protect health care and education." That's what they said. "We want to keep the deficit down. We've missed our guarantee by a billion dollars, \$2 billion, \$2½ billion — but who's counting? We can get \$32 billion in 32 seconds. We just did it. Why are we quibbling about those little sums of money? Let's focus on protecting health care and education. What are we going to do first? We're going to cut annual facility grants. We're going to pull that money back." That's protecting education, apparently.

"What else are we going to do? We're going to reduce by 20 percent the number of MRIs we're going to do in a year. We're going to go from 22,000 down to 18,000." That somehow, in Liberal bizarro world, is protecting health care.

So we've got protecting education by reducing funding for programs, for facilities, and we've got protecting health care by reducing access to diagnostic tools. We've got surgeries reduced. We've got cuts to mental health programs. We've got cuts to sports programs. We've got cuts to the arts. Somehow, in all of that, the rhetoric continues to come back from the people on the other side that we are protecting health care and education. It's inconceivable to me how members on the other side can do that.

It must be very, very difficult indeed to look at all of the evidence, to read the public opinion polls and get

up every day and say: "The HST is going to be good for you. The deficit is going to be a little bit bigger than we thought, but we're protecting health care and education by reducing diagnostic services, by reducing surgeries, and we're helping education by restricting the ability of parents to participate in the programs that we've forced them by legislation to participate in. And oh, by the way, if you've got a boiler that's leaking in the basement, leave it alone. We know we told you that you had to reduce your carbon footprint. We cancelled the LiveSmart program."

I'm looking at my colleague from Stikine. He's saying: "Somehow, the member for Juan de Fuca has actually come circuitously to the point where he started out." Hon. Speaker, you know me to do this all the time, but the new member is marvelling at my ability to do that. "Somehow he managed to get back to where he started from."

I have only a few moments left, and I know my colleague from Swan Lake is going to find out exactly how many minutes, but I want to touch on a few issues in my own constituency before I move on. Ten? Oh, I've got months here. I was going to rush to an end.

I've got more time, and I can see the Minister of Agriculture is delighted at the prospect. I would say I was the designated speaker and go on for the full two hours, but I know some people have ferries to catch, and I'll just limit my remarks to the time that was available to me.

The Belmont replacement program. I spoke yesterday in Education estimates....

Interjection.

J. Horgan: Thank you. Again, the most auspicious of occasions — I have my friend from Surrey-Whalley supporting me on not just commuter rail on Vancouver Island but also the Belmont replacement project.

This is a program that's been built over the past three years. I've talked to the former Minister of Education about it. She's well versed on it. Her staff have done good work on it. The current Minister of Education met with me in early September before her illness, and just yesterday I had the opportunity to talk with the acting Minister of Education, who also confirmed, as all three of them now have done, that the Belmont replacement program is a good business plan and should move forward at the earliest opportunity.

Well, wouldn't that be great were I a member of the Liberal caucus, because apparently stuff moves through there fairly quickly. This one, Belmont replacement, for some reason seems to be stalled.

It's a good business plan. It's replacing a 60-year-old building. Talk about carbon footprints. The seismic moneys approved are \$25 million. The government has approved \$25 million to fix a 60-year-old building. Well, the business plan will put a brand-new school in a brand-new location for \$10 million more. New school.

New facility. Carbon footprint greatly reduced. Good program. Belmont replacement, hon. Speaker — put that on your list. I think it's something I might get in my stocking for Christmas, as I look over at the Minister of Finance.

[1505]

An Hon. Member: Only coal, brother.

J. Horgan: Only coal — because I'm the Mines critic. Nice. A precious metal would be fine. I could at least melt it down and maybe put it towards the Belmont replacement project.

Primary care. Everyone will acknowledge, anyone who has even touched a research paper on health outcomes will know that primary care in communities like Sooke and rural communities — my friend from Stikine, my friend from Columbia River-Revelstoke.... If you can bring health care providers together, multidisciplinary projects work. It gets your communities healthier. If there ever was a community ready for a primary care facility, it would be Sooke.

The CHI, the Community Health Initiative in Sooke, is led by Marlene Barry, who's an outstanding woman — reflexology and other alternative health therapies are her bag — but local GPs are involved, health care providers in other communities that come to Sooke to offer their expertise.

It's just ripe for opportunity, and I'm enthusiastic that the new Minister of Health is getting up on his files, and he has the assistance of the able former Minister of Health to direct him to the programs that he should be supporting in places like Sooke. I know Shuswap supports Sooke. They'll certainly support primary care in that community.

Another challenge in Juan de Fuca. Those who have been out on the west coast will know that there are some wild lands and wild beaches. Sandcut Beach — my friend Amber Nash; it's a second home for her, just south of Jordan River on the West Coast Highway — a beautiful location that is, regrettably, in the hands now, unfettered, of Western Forest Products....

It was formerly part of a tree farm licence, and I know I have gone on a lot on the decision by the government in 2007 to release private lands owned by Western Forest Products from the tree farm licence without any compensation, without any consultation with the community. But two things could have happened, and two things still need to happen resulting from that deletion.

One is that we need to find opportunities for treaty settlement on the west coast. Three nations — the Beecher Bay band, the T'Sou-ke nation, and the Pacheedaht in Port Renfrew are all at treaty tables. The ability for them to reach agreements that will be accepted and endorsed by municipal leadership, by the broader community, is hampered by the lack of land availability.

The Crown lands in question, certainly in Metchosin and some of it in and around Sooke, make it difficult to reach agreement. We have federal lands, Department of National Defence lands, all along the coast of Vancouver Island that should be on the table.

I've talked to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs about that. The federal government needs to recognize that they are a large land owner in my community, and that they need to come to the table with something other than their good wishes.

I think that the treaty process established by then Premier Mike Harcourt in the 1990s has hit a number of bumps along the road. We've had some successes. The government side has had some successes.

We had successes with the Nisga'a Nation in the 1990s, but if we're going to make real progress so that we can see real economic opportunity for first nations and a better sense of what the land base of British Columbia is going to be devoted to, we need to get the federal government at the table with some land. I encourage the minister in any way possible to expand our ability to make treaty settlements, not reduce it.

The last thing I want to talk about is the sense of disappointment that I hear when I'm in my community in Langford, in Highlands, in Sooke, and that is the lack of support from the provincial government to address the challenges that our communities now face because of the release of these private lands to Western Forest Products.

There are significant land use issues that are being addressed at the capital regional district board. They have a Spartan staff there. The electoral area rep is doing his level best. The federal Member of Parliament is participating in discussions with myself and others to the best of our ability. Western Forest Products sits aloof in Duncan. My colleague the Forests critic urged the CEO to sit down with myself and others in the community to talk about solutions. I've yet to be able to secure a meeting, some three and a half months after making the first request.

[1510]

I'm hopeful that Western Forest Products will recognize that this is an opportunity for them to demonstrate good corporate citizenry and come to the community with a plan to ensure that we save places like Sandcut Beach, that we can participate in land use planning for the benefit of all of the people in our region.

The regional growth strategy. My colleague from Victoria-Swan Lake was integral in that discussion when he was a councillor in the city of Victoria. The regional growth strategy on southern Vancouver Island is absolutely critical to maintaining the way of life we have here, to ensure that the values of conservation and of economic innovation can somehow all come together with a land base that is second to none.

We have such a bounty here in southern Vancouver Island, particularly in my constituency of Juan de Fuca, and it will go as a waste if the province doesn't recognize that.

I know that the Premier is making notes and listening intently. I really do believe that as we look at legacies as politicians, we should look at the whole totality of the options available to us. Someone having the fortitude to revisit the Western Forest Products deletion with an eye to improving the situation rather than just letting it languish would be a great benefit to the people of my region, and I would suggest it would be a good legacy for those who may be departing the stage sometime in the future.

The last issue on the Western Forest Products lands I'd like to talk about is that there was a three-year moratorium on the export of raw logs from lands in my constituency. That was the single concession the then Minister of Forests was able to extract from Western Forest Products as he gave them hundreds of millions of dollars in value.

That moratorium will expire this January. Before this House returns there will be raw logs leaving my community, driving past shut-down mills, by the coffee shops in Sooke where forest workers who can't access the land base in my community will watch them head off to ports unknown for construction jobs somewhere else.

What we did do in this session is pass what's called the Wood First Act. It made no reference to B.C. wood. It just said "wood." We on this side encouraged the government to add the two letters "B" and "C" to the bill.

They didn't see the wisdom of that, so we could have, as a result of B.C. Liberal policy, jobs go wanting in my community. Logs could now potentially, come January, be cut and be shipped offshore. While we're watching the Olympics, there will be raw materials that should be going to economic development and diversification in my community heading off somewhere else.

I encourage the Premier, while he's got a minute or two before he has to get his Christmas shopping done, to think about the people of Juan de Fuca, go back to the drawing board, pull in his Minister of Forests and solve the problems that the previous Minister of Forests created.

It must have been unintended consequences. They just might have been sleeping on that day. I know it was on a Friday afternoon. We probably weren't paying attention when the press release went out. This is an opportunity, three years on, for the Premier to correct what was an egregious error by his government.

With that, I want to thank you for your attention as I've been speaking. I want to thank those in the gallery who stuck around for the 20-odd minutes I had at my disposal. Although I don't think you'll get the same level of candour from whoever is going to get up on the other side, they might be pretty good too.

With that, to my colleagues, to everyone in the House: have a very merry Christmas.

Hon. G. Campbell: Let me thank the hon. member for his festive holiday greeting and good wishes. We certainly wish the same to all of the other members of the Legislature.

I'm particularly pleased to rise in response to the Speech from the Throne. We have, in this first session of the 39th Legislature, passed a number of pieces of legislation which will strengthen British Columbia. We have brought forward a fiscal framework which will create the foundation for a stronger British Columbia as we lead Canada into the future.

I have appreciated all the comments of the members of the opposition as they have suggested how they would manage some of the challenges that we face as we go through one of the worst economic downturns in the last almost 30 years.

I think it actually has created an opportunity for people to see what the differences are between the opposition and the government. Every single piece of legislation that has been brought forward and that has been passed here will strengthen British Columbia socially and economically as we drive to move into the 21st century.

[1515]

We have only had about five months since the election, so there will be plenty of time for the opposition to see the wisdom of the decisions that have been made. As difficult as they have been, as challenging as they are, it is often more important to make difficult decisions in the best long-term interests of the province than to try and curry short-term political favour. I can tell you that we will continue to do that.

I think again we see with the framework that is outlined in this throne speech that it is a strong private sector economy that will actually support the health services, the education services, the children of British Columbia — indeed, all people in all regions of this province. It is a strong economy that creates jobs. It is jobs that create the quality of life, and British Columbia intends to continue leading the country in dealing with the challenges that confront us.

There's no one in this House that could have predicted that between the end of June and the middle of August there would be \$2 billion of revenue that would have been lost to the provincial treasury. It's not just in terms of our natural resource revenues but in terms of people and companies trying to manage their way through a \$2 billion loss in revenues. It's the largest single loss in revenues the province has ever faced in history — at a time when, indeed, the world was suffering one of the most challenging economic times ever.

The world was on the brink of financial disaster. We are fortunate that we did not fall over that precipice, but I can say this clearly. British Columbians should be proud of the work that this Legislature has done in the last five months and over the last year.

We do face a significant deficit as we provide for services and start to build the bridge to the future that's required. It is important to note that this government is going to work tirelessly and relentlessly to eliminate that deficit, because as easy as it is to say that we should continue to

simply allow the deficits to build, we should all remember that those financial deficits are deficits and taxes on our children and our grandchildren.

We have a responsibility, indeed an obligation, to protect the financial foundations of this province so that we can sustain health care and provide excellent education for our children and grandchildren; lead the world in developing a new, low-carbon economy; and take Canada into the 21st century with its head high and setting an example for the rest of the world.

If you compare with other jurisdictions British Columbia's response to the challenges we face, you will see that we, indeed, are one of the best jurisdictions in North America in terms of dealing with this issue. Yes, we have watched a substantial reduction in the revenues that came to government, but I think it's important to recognize that with this fiscal plan, we invest hundreds of millions of more dollars in health care for the people of British Columbia in every part of this province.

While Alberta is facing a \$7 billion deficit as they take on the challenges of this time, as Ontario faces a \$25 billion deficit as they take on the challenges of this time and as the government of Canada faces a \$55 billion deficit as they take on the challenges of this time, I am confident that with the will and the dedication and the commitment of this Legislature, we will not just take on our deficit, but we will defeat our deficit within this fiscal framework and build a stronger future for British Columbians.

[1520]

As we do that, it does require difficult decisions to be made. It does require us to recognize that the world has changed. We will not restore the world of the 1980s or the 1990s. God forbid that we restore the world of British Columbia in the 1990s. What we will do is continue to build on the successes of this century as we launch British Columbia's economy and our communities and our families into an exciting time of opportunity for all in the province of British Columbia.

To do that, it is necessary for us to create a tax regime that encourages investment, a tax regime that encourages productivity, a tax regime that encourages investment so we can reduce our emissions and build a low-carbon economy in forestry, in mining, in energy, in transportation and construction. A tax regime that says: "We want your investment because we want your jobs. When we have your jobs, we strengthen our province and our country." That's why this government will introduce an HST that will mean more jobs for British Columbians.

I've heard the opposition speak, once again — as they so often do — against tax reductions, against increasing people's paycheques, against improving and, in fact, reducing the regressivity of the provincial sales tax with the adoption of a new tax. They speak against new investments that improve services in the quality of life for people in British Columbia.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

They speak against a new tax regime that will mean thousands of jobs in the construction industry as we create a productive, competitive construction industry and give benefits to those workers of \$880 million.

The opposition is....

Interjection.

Hon. G. Campbell: Hon. Speaker, I am overwhelmed by the adulation of the member for Powell River–Sunshine Coast, but I can tell you that.... I can assure the member for Powell River–Sunshine Coast that in his riding he will benefit from the \$210 million for the transportation industry and the \$140 million in benefits for the forest industry and forest workers.

Interjection.

Mr. Speaker: Member.

Hon. G. Campbell: I can tell you that I'm sure that his riding, like all the rest of our ridings on this side of the House and that side of the House, will benefit by a commitment to a low-carbon economy that drives new energy investment in alternative energies that will create thousands and thousands of jobs in all parts of British Columbia.

As we look to the future, we will continue to improve the lot of British Columbians. We will continue to increase their disposable income. We will continue to improve on the quality of life of the people that live in this province, in families, for seniors, for young people, for children. We will ensure that this province is recognized for its leadership across our country and build an even stronger nation as a result of that.

We face a challenging but an exciting future. As we go through the months ahead, we face the challenges of climate change with a sense of optimism as we hear that the countries of China and the United States have agreed that they are going to start to look at ways that they can cap their greenhouse gas emissions as they move towards 2020. I am proud of the work that British Columbians have done in that regard.

[1525]

We have the third-largest alternative energy concentration in the world, and we intend to continue to build that as we move into the future.

We have been in leadership with the state of California in assuring that we build a cap-and-trade system that works not just for the western part of the continent but that stretches across Canada to Ontario and to Quebec, that ensures that we embrace our country, just as California is reaching across the United States with Washington, with Oregon, with New Mexico, with Montana, with Arizona to the northeastern part of the United States, as in unison

we create a continent-wide cap-and-trade system which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which will encourage job creation and which will build a better world for the future of our country.

Again, we have lots of time left in this session. In spite of the fact that the opposition was against the world's first-ever, revenue-neutral carbon tax, which has been embraced by environmentalists and those who are truly concerned with climate change, in spite of the fact they voted against a cap-and-trade system, they are slowly seeing the light. It's taken them a couple of years. They'll get there. They will finally understand that it's only a strong, low-carbon economy that will support our public services, and that's what this government's committed to.

As we move through the weeks ahead, I will be going to Copenhagen on behalf of the people of British Columbia. I will be working with other subnational leaders as well as with the Minister of the Environment from our federal government as we work to put together an unified position which will strengthen our country's economy as we deal with the issue of climate change.

We will work with the western climate initiative. We will work with the International Carbon Action Partnership, and although the opposition may belittle them, I can tell you that these are activities that are making progress. We will deal with this. We will take it on full flight, and British Columbia will continue to create a low-carbon economy that will work for everybody — most importantly, our future.

I can tell you that this province and this government are going to continue to build a new relationship with first nations. We intend to continue to shrink the gap in health care, in education, in economic development, in community infrastructure with first nations in the province of British Columbia.

We have made important first steps and early steps, but I can tell you, as we look to the future, we know there are treaties that are just around the corner. There are new reconciliation agreements that are virtually on deck, and I can tell you this, only when every British Columbian, non-aboriginal and aboriginal alike, can take advantage of the exceptional abundance and opportunities that this province has to offer, will we rest. We must make sure that every British Columbian shares in the bounty of this province as we create a better future.

As we look to the future, there is an immediate future that creates an enormous opportunity for us in British Columbia. In 78 days the eyes of the world will be on this province once again. Three billion people — three billion people — will be introduced to our province and the people who live here.

They'll be introduced to the opportunities that are created by the great inland port of Prince George. Building on the incredible successes of the Port of Prince Rupert, the new airport, the new road and rail infrastructure will create new economic opportunity in the north as we create the great energy potential, the forestry potential,

the mineral potential of the north to maximize the benefits for every British Columbian, particularly those that live in the northern part of our province.

[1530]

They will discover the incredible Kootenays, one of the great resort and tourist areas in the world — a place that sometimes has felt hidden. I can tell you that when they see those all-season resorts, see the industrial activity, see the quality of life, see the strength of character of the people of the Kootenays, they will come back, they will invest, they will create jobs, they will create opportunity, and they will build a better future for that region of our province.

When the world visits British Columbia, they will discover our institutions of higher learning. They will discover the excellence of our research and of our public health officials. They will discover the exceptional work that's done in our community colleges. They will discover the strength of the people that live here. They will discover our diversity. They will discover that we are a community that has innovation and imagination in our hearts as we build a quality of life for the 21st century that will be second to none. That's British Columbia.

As we host the world to the 21st Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, we will not just be introducing the world to Canada. In many ways, we will introduce British Columbia to Canada, and in some ways, we will introduce British Columbians to one another.

As they reach out to host the world, they will discover new things about our province. They will discover new strengths, and they will discover that it is their resilience and their character that has continued to build the quality of life of this province for generation upon generation. Our obligation, and our opportunity, is to ensure that our children and our grandchildren have the quality of life and the benefits that we have all enjoyed.

It will require us to change. It will require us to make difficult and challenging decisions. But I am confident that in this Legislature, if we keep the lives and the futures of our children and our grandchildren in mind, we will not just provide them with opportunities that we can imagine.

We will give them the gift of pursuing their imagination, of pursuing their dreams and knowing that there is no place better when a young person can pursue their dreams and know that their whole province will be behind their success and their whole province will be hoping that they can not just reach but supersede their commitments and their goals. We can do that here.

I've seen in the lives and the eyes of children as we've watched that Olympic flame go down the street past those children — whether it's in British Columbia or other parts of the country — that that flame is the flame of inspiration. It's the flame that says: "Make sure you reach for your aspirations. Reach out; work hard. Dedicate yourself to those things, and you will succeed in this great country and this great province."

British Columbia is the place to be. British Columbia will launch itself into the 21st century as we set example after example — in health care that cares for patients first; in education that gives opportunities to students; with an economy that creates jobs, that encourages small business, encourages investment and encourages community after community to be the best that they can be.

British Columbia has to continue to strive to be the best that we can be. This government intends to do that. I know this Legislature will join us in doing that as we build a 21st century that we can all be proud of.

Mr. Speaker: Seeing no further speakers, the question is on the motion: "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia in session assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has addressed to us at the opening of the present session."

[1535]

Motion approved on the following division:

YEAS — 45

Horne	Letnick	McRae
Stewart	I. Black	Coell
McNeil	Chong	Polak
Yamamoto	Bell	Krueger
Bennett	Stilwell	Hawes
Hogg	Thorntwaite	Hayer
Lee	Bloy	Reid
Lekstrom	de Jong	Campbell
Hansen	Bond	Abbott
Penner	Coleman	Thomson
Yap	Cantelon	Les
Sultan	McIntyre	Rustad
Cadieux	van Dongen	Howard
Lake	Foster	Slater
Dalton	Pimm	Huntington

NAYS — 27

S. Simpson	Fleming	Farnworth
James	Kwan	Ralston
Popham	B. Simpson	Austin
Karagianis	Brar	Hammell
Lali	D. Routley	Horgan
Dix	Macdonald	Herbert
Krog	Simons	Elmore
Donaldson	Fraser	B. Routley
Conroy	Coons	Trevena

[1540]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we do have a few minutes while we're waiting for the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor.

At this at this time, I would like to first thank all the staff in the building. The session started in late August. It's certainly been a long session, but I know that whether it's the dining room or the Sergeant-at-Arms or security or even the Clerks in front of us or whoever it might be, all staff in the buildings have done an exceptional job for all members, and I'd like to thank them.

This being our last session prior to the Christmas break, I know that members will have the opportunity to head home and be with their families. I know that most of us have spent a great deal of time away from our families. We've had kids' birthdays that have been missed; we've had grandchildren born. Some have grandchildren that are soon to be born, but certainly, I know that on my behalf I want to wish people safe travels and certainly a very merry Christmas to spend time with your family.

With that, we're going to wait — if the members would remain in their seats and wait a few minutes — for the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor.

N. Letnick: On behalf of the three members here, I just think a point of order is in order. I don't believe our names were actually read in the affirmative, and I was listening very carefully. I don't believe our names were read in the affirmative of the vote.

Mr. Speaker: They will be put in as the affirmative.
[1545-1550]

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor entered the chamber and took his seat on the throne.

Royal Assent to Bills

Clerk of the House:

Housing and Social Development Statutes Amendment Act, 2009

Health Statutes (Residents' Bill of Rights) Amendment Act, 2009

Assistance to Shelter Act

Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act, 2009

Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2), 2009

In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth assent to these acts.

Supply Act, 2009-2010

In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth thank Her Majesty's loyal subjects, accepts their benevolence and assents to this act.

Hon. S. Point (Lieutenant-Governor): Have a very happy holiday. See you next year.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor retired from the chamber.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Hon. M. de Jong: Firstly, a reminder about your desks.

Secondly, I move that the House at its rising do stand adjourned until it appears to the satisfaction of the Speaker, after consultation with the government, that the public interest requires that the House shall meet or until the Speaker may be advised by the government that it is desired to prorogue the first session of the 39th parliament of the province of British Columbia. The Speaker may give notice that he is so satisfied or has been so advised, and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice and, as the case may be, may transact its business as if it has been duly adjourned to that time and date. And in the event of the Speaker being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, the Deputy Speaker shall act in his stead for the purpose of this order.

[1555]

Safe travels, bon voyage, 'till we meet again, *à la prochaine fois*, happy holidays.

Hon. M. de Jong moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

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