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(Entered Confederation July 20, 1871)

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Her Honour the Honourable Janet Austin, OBC

FOURTH SESSION, 41ST PARLIAMENT

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Honourable Darryl Plecas

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2019

The House met at 10:06 a.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Routine Business

Prayers.

Introductions by Members

Hon. A. Dix: It's my honour today.... I know members on both sides of the House have met this week with representatives of the Hospital Employees Union. We met last night at the event they held here in Victoria and in meetings, including meetings involving the Premier and many, many, many other MLAs.

I want to acknowledge, here today with us, Barb Nederpel, the president of the Hospital Employees Union, Jennifer Whiteside, the secretary-business manager, Betty Valenzuela, the financial secretary, and many other members of the executive and staff of the Hospital Employees Union.

Hospital health care workers mean so much to our health care system and to people who need care. They are the people who provide the care that's needed. We are so, so honoured to have them with us today.

N. Letnick: I'd like to join the Minister of Health in thanking the members of the Hospital Employees Union for hosting us last night. It was a great event. I got to meet a lot of people, including a lot of people from the Okanagan, which was really a benefit.

I imagine they are sitting above me on this side of the House, because I can't see any of them on that side of the House. Maybe we'll fix that for another year, after the next election.

In particular, I'd like to thank Mike Old, the coordinator for policy and planning at HEU, for meeting with us today. I'll be meeting with him this afternoon, along with my colleague from Richmond.

Would the House please make them all feel very welcome.

Hon. J. Darcy: I really feel I do need to join with the Minister of Health and the member opposite in welcoming the Hospital Employees Union and hoping that they stay on that side, while we're on this side for many years to come.

I just want to add to what has been said and wish the members of the Hospital Employees Union a happy 75th anniversary. This is an organization.... These are health care workers who have been through such ordeals over the years. They are standing united and stronger than ever before.

[10:10 a.m.]

Happy 75th birthday to the Hospital Employees Union.

Hon. S. Robinson: I'm pleased to introduce a team visit-

ing from the IMIT policy and legislation branch of the Ministry of Citizens' Services. Joining us today in the gallery are Sarah Bose, Andrea Bingham, Erin Grant, Meghan Jezewski, Emily Jones and Dean Sutton.

These folks work hard every day to support key government initiatives related to information management and information technology. Could I ask the House to please welcome these wonderful people to the gallery.

C. Oakes: I'm very pleased today to have in the House David Black, representing the Canadian Franchise Association. The Canadian Franchise Association supports building the dreams of small businesses across this great country. It contributes \$100 billion per year to the Canadian economy and creates jobs for more than 1.9 million Canadians. There are 40,000 franchisees in the country.

We'll be meeting this afternoon to talk about red-tape reduction and regulatory reform that will reduce the amount of red tape small businesses face while protecting public interests.

Would the House please help me welcome the Canadian Franchise Association.

Hon. K. Conroy: I just looked up in the gallery and saw a fellow person from Castlegar that is near and dear to our family. He is a teacher from Castlegar that taught many — I think all — of our kids and even some of our grandkids. He's shaking his head: "Oh my god." Yes. An excellent teacher who is well loved in the community, Doug Hickey. Would you please all join me in making him very welcome.

Tributes

VICKIE SANGSTER

I. Paton: On a solemn note, I'd like to pay my condolences today on behalf of the residents of Delta. One week ago today we lost an icon in Delta South by the name of Vickie Sangster. Vickie was so well known in our community. She was a legend. She was a good friend of mine, the same age as I am. She was a community-builder, a volunteer ambassador and a great Rotarian. She was also Citizen of the Year a few years back in Delta.

Vickie fell ill several years ago. They didn't give her much time. But she fought and battled for two and a half more years and had some good times in the last couple of years.

My condolences to the Sangster family in Tsawwassen.

Introductions by Members

G. Kylo: Tomorrow we turn over a new page in our calendars and mark the first day of November. In Canada, we recognize November as Diabetes Month, a time for increased awareness and advocacy efforts across the country. Diabetes is a serious condition that affects the body's ability to produce or use insulin and can lead to many other serious

health issues. Worldwide it is the leading cause of blindness, heart disease, amputation and kidney failure.

In my riding, there is an individual by the name of Nel Peach whose generosity, kindness and dedication to community service has made a significant impact with the advocacy for diabetes in our province.

J. Rice: Today in the gallery, I have a constituent and a dear friend, Maggie Kerr, who is visiting here from Prince Rupert. Maggie is a spry 81-year-old and the most progressive recovered Mennonite I have ever met. Would the House please make her feel welcome.

S. Malcolmson: I invite the House to extend a special welcome to Nanaimo resident Ken Bennett, a member of the Hospital Employees Union and a real advocate for nurses' safety and health care in Nanaimo. I'm honoured to represent him.

Tributes

THOMAS AMBROSE FAHY

M. Dean: Today my heart is with everyone attending the celebration of life, and now the wake, of Thomas Ambrose Fahy. He was the second of seven children born in Kilkerrin, County Galway, Ireland in 1942. Eventually he settled in England and married Jenny in 1983. He was strong and resilient, he was kind and gentle, and he was a really hard worker. He leaves behind seven grandchildren, one of whom was born right here in British Columbia.

[10:15 a.m.]

Jenny nursed him through a tragic illness for the last few years of his life, with much-appreciated support from Russell and Sterling Wakefield. At least now, he rests in peace.

Iechyd da, Tom.

Introduction and First Reading of Bills

BILL 40 — INTERPRETATION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2019

Hon. D. Eby presented a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor: a bill intituled Interpretation Amendment Act, 2019.

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

I'm pleased to introduce the Interpretation Amendment Act, 2019. This bill would amend the Interpretation Act to put British Columbia on year-round daylight saving time and end the practice of changing our clocks twice a year.

The bill acts on the clear message we received from British Columbians during last summer's public engagement. Ninety-three percent of respondents said they want to stop changing our clocks twice a year. It was the biggest response

to a public engagement we've ever had in this province, with over 220,000 people participating.

The bill would create a new name for our time zone, Pacific Time, which would be the equivalent of our current daylight saving time. I should note that the bill would not make any changes to the current practice in certain parts of the province that customarily observe Mountain time.

Because we are monitoring similar initiatives with our neighbours in Yukon, Washington, Oregon and California, the change in the bill would not take effect immediately but would be brought into force later to create the opportunity for a coordinated approach with these other jurisdictions.

I note that this is a particularly special day for the member for Boundary-Similkameen and the Premier, who have a great interest in this issue. I congratulate the member for her initiatives on this.

Mr. Speaker: The question is first reading of the bill.

Motion approved.

Hon. D. Eby: I move the bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 40, Interpretation Amendment Act, 2019, 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.

Statements (Standing Order 25B)

POPPY CAMPAIGN BY HARPER LAWRENCE

J. Tegart: With Remembrance Day occurring while we are in our constituencies, I'd like to take a few minutes and share a heartwarming story about the importance of making sure our youth understand Remembrance Day.

Last year, in the kindergarten class at Clinton School, the teacher talked to the children about poppies, why they are important, why we wear them and how the money raised helps to support programs for veterans.

Harper Lawrence is five years old. She loves school, and she is a sponge for knowledge. She recounted to her mom the poppy story and that everyone was to wear one on Remembrance Day. A short while later Harper was sitting at her drawing desk and asked her mom to help her draw a poppy. She had decided that she would make her own paper poppies to sell at school.

Harper made one dozen poppies the first day. Mom posted to social media, and half were sold before Harper woke up in the morning. She asked \$1 for a poppy, and many generous souls gave \$5 and even \$10 to her great cause. That evening Harper made more poppies. The next day she made more again.

At the end of this adventure, this five-year-old kinder-

garten student presented \$59.75 to the legion members who were presenting at her school. She made a further \$26.60, which she presented at the Remembrance Day ceremony. A grand total of \$86.35 was raised by a five-year-old kindergarten student.

I want to thank all the legion members for their willingness to share the important stories and for inspiring our youth. A big shout-out to Harper for her hard work and dedication. We will remember them.

CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS

J. Rice: I'm proud to announce our government has proclaimed November 1 to 7 British Columbia's first-ever Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week.

[10:20 a.m.]

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless gas that can cause illness and, in severe cases, death. We can all take this week as an opportunity to learn more about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, how to prevent it and how to keep ourselves, our families and our friends safe. We can achieve this by knowing the symptoms and what to do in the event carbon monoxide is present in a home or workplace.

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuel — such as propane, gasoline, natural gas, heating oil or wood — does not burn completely in fuel-burning appliances and devices. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, confusion and drowsiness. At very high levels, it can cause death. Unfortunately, here in B.C., carbon monoxide has been a silent killer. According to the B.C. Coroner Service, 119 people have died due to carbon monoxide poisoning between 2008 and 2017.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can be preventable. It's important for British Columbians to have a working carbon monoxide alarm in their homes or workplaces and to test the alarm annually. It's important to properly maintain fuel-burning appliances and have them inspected annually by a licensed contractor.

If a carbon monoxide alarm sounds or people are suffering from symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, get everyone out of the home or workplace immediately, and then call 911 or a local emergency number from outside.

This Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week I urge everyone in this chamber and all British Columbians to install carbon monoxide alarms and have fuel-burning appliances inspected. Visit the office of the fire commissioner's website for more information on carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms and how you can prevent carbon monoxide buildup. It's worth it. The few minutes we all spend educating ourselves and preparing now could make all the difference for our families and loved ones.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME AND INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

N. Letnick: This coming Sunday British Columbians

across the province will turn their clocks back in time. So two o'clock in the morning will become one o'clock in the morning. Sleep schedules and routines will once again be disrupted all in the name of an antiquated and obsolete process first proposed by a New Zealand entomologist in 1895.

We began the practice in 1918 in response to a coal shortage after the First World War. Times have changed in the last 100 years. Daylight saving time ends on Sunday, and it's our hope that this will be one of the last-ever clock changes in British Columbia.

Two years and three private members' bills later, the member for Boundary-Similkameen must be pleased and proud to see Bill 40 introduced today. This is truly a non-partisan issue for the people of British Columbia, but someone had to lead. The changing of our clocks twice a year affects all of us, regardless of age, culture, economics, rural or urban.

Since first introducing the bill, the member for Boundary-Similkameen received letters and emails from across the province supporting her position. Flowing from her leadership, the B.C. government engaged in public consultation on daylight saving time and received over 223,000 responses from every corner of our province. The response was crystal clear. More than 93 percent of British Columbians want to move to permanent daylight saving time.

All members want to thank the government for listening. The people have spoken. Today in this House, we table the bill for daylight saving time. We look forward to the day soon when we can live in plain, simple Pacific Time all year round.

We'd like to thank the member for Boundary-Similkameen for her leadership and all British Columbians for making this happen.

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES UNION

R. Kahlon: In 1944, separate men's and women's unions representing 300 hospital staff voted to form a single union at the Vancouver General Hospital. Today the Hospital Employees Union represents more than 50,000 members working in direct patient care and support services across B.C.

Over the past 75 years, HEU members have become an integral part of B.C.'s health care system. The union grew rapidly with the postwar construction of hospitals across this province. By the 1970s, the union had begun organizing the nursing home sector, grappling with sometimes deplorable care and conditions and low wages. By the late 1990s, they'd established standard wages and working conditions throughout the sector.

More than 80 percent of the HEU membership are women. So the union also tackled gender-based wage discrimination and bargained a historic pay equity settlement in the 1990s.

[10:25 a.m.]

My connection to the HEU story is very personal. Like many HEU members, my mother was an immigrant. She

took great pride in working as a housekeeper at a Victoria long-term health care facility. In 2003, she was fired along with her friends, co-workers, thousands of HEU members, in the wake of legislation that voided contracting-out protection. Her work was contracted out at nearly half the pay.

I have so much respect for the HEU members who responded during this moment of crisis for many workers and their families. They were resilient. They reorganized thousands of privatized workers and led a five-year court challenge that established collective bargaining as a Charter-protected right for all workers.

I was proud to have my mom present when members on both sides of the House voted to repeal the legislation last November.

I want to extend my special congratulations to members of the HEU on the 75th anniversary of their union and thank them for all they do to support their members and their families.

PROTECTION OF WATERSHEDS

S. Furstenau: For most of my life, I had the luxury not to really have to think about watersheds. I lived in cities — first Edmonton, then Victoria. I turned on the tap. Water came out. I drank it. I never worried about it. Then, in 2011, I moved to Shawnigan Lake, and my watershed awakening began.

Outside of Victoria and Vancouver, most British Columbians do think about their watersheds and are often worried about their water. In Sechelt, the community holds its collective breath through the hot summer months, watching the reservoir levels. In Ymir, the residents are desperate to protect their small Quartz Creek watershed, the community's only source of potable drinking water. In Peachland, boil-water advisories and turbidity have become all too common. As of September 30, there were seven boil-water advisories and four do-not-consume advisories for First Nations across British Columbia.

Watersheds truly are the lifeblood of B.C. towns and communities, and in far too many places, they are at risk, especially in a changing climate. Droughts, forest fires and flooding, exacerbated by industrial activity and ecological degradation, not only disrupt our lives. They disrupt our watersheds.

We can begin to create a new story for watersheds across B.C., a story in which communities are empowered to create water security, working collaboratively with First Nations and local governments to ensure that we are restoring and stewarding our watersheds so that they are resilient and healthy. We know that this is the essential foundation for all of us and our local economies to also be resilient and healthy. A watershed security fund would help us to achieve this.

I've learned a great deal about watersheds over the last eight years, and while the journey has, at times, been a challenging one, I'm grateful to know and love the Shawnigan

watershed, and I'm determined to do all I can to restore and protect it.

DOWN SYNDROME AWARENESS

G. Begg: November 1 to 7 is Canadian Down Syndrome Week, an opportunity for us to recognize the children and adults with Down syndrome as well as their families and loved ones and the health, education and employment professionals who work to increase inclusion in our communities.

There are over 45,000 individuals in Canada with Down syndrome. In British Columbia, approximately one in every 691 live births is a child with Down syndrome.

The greatest challenge for many individuals with Down syndrome is perceptions that underestimate their potential and their abilities. To better support people with Down syndrome, we need to continue building inclusive, supportive communities where everyone feels welcome to fully participate. This work includes shifting attitudes, supporting people with Down syndrome in the workplace and focusing on empowering British Columbians with Down syndrome and their families.

The Lower Mainland Down Syndrome Society works to provide information, support and resources to individuals with Down syndrome. Established in 1989, the LMDSS circulates information, resources and support to a membership list of over 600 self-advocates, parents and professionals.

[10:30 a.m.]

The LMDSS helps to bring awareness to life with Down syndrome and helps to dispel myths and stereotypes. The organization also does advocacy work that supports the community to ensure diversity through inclusion. From the classroom to the workplace, people with disabilities must have similar and equitable opportunities to succeed at their chosen tasks.

I encourage all members to get on social media and look at the hashtag #seetheability. The thread is aimed at encouraging the inclusion and celebration of people with Down syndrome and dispelling myths and stereotypes.

Ministerial Statements

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. J. Horgan: To all members of the House: as we look to the two-week break, I know all of you will be attending a Remembrance Day ceremony in your community, recognizing and remembering those who put down their lives, as many have said today, to protect the democracy that we have the honour and privilege of perpetuating here as individuals and as a collective group.

When I was a youngster and a Cub and a Scout, I would be taken to a cenotaph here in Victoria, and there would be a handful of people. I continued that tradition by bringing my children to what was then the parking lot. The

member for Esquimalt-Metchosin will remember that the cenotaph in the Juan de Fuca area for the Langford legion was literally in the parking lot of the arena — a collection of stones, a place to remind us of the sacrifices of those who came before us.

There would be dozens of people at that time. I lamented the fact that as generations started to pass and our memories started to fade, these traditions that were so critically important to pass on, the traditions of remembering and reflecting on those who gave such great sacrifices, would be lost.

Here we are, 2019, and I can tell you that last year, at the new, revitalized Veterans Memorial Park in Langford, dozens of people didn't show up. Thousands of people showed up. Here in Victoria and across British Columbia, in Vancouver and in every town in this great province, people will gather on the 11th of November, and at 11 o'clock, we will bow our heads and will reflect on those who came before us.

We'll reflect on the responsibility we all have to never forget. "Lest we forget" means more today than it ever has before. All of us here, all 87 members, are proud to sit in this place. All 87 members are proud to represent the traditions of this great country and this great province.

On the 11th of November, at 11 o'clock, as we hang our heads, as the sun goes down, we will remember them.

A. Wilkinson: On Thursday, the 18th of April, 1918, my great-uncle Arthur Wilkinson was shot and killed by a sniper in Flanders. His body lies buried near Ypres.

A mere 26 years later my uncle was the navigator on a Stirling bomber across from the Danish coast to drop supplies to the Danish underground on October 7, 1944. Their aircraft was struck by a night fighter, the right wing caught fire, and they crash-landed at high speed in Denmark. The pilot was burnt to death on impact. My uncle and the flight engineer suffered burns. The survivors walked across Denmark. My uncle was lucky enough to get to Sweden and made his way back to England.

After 44 night missions bombing the Nazis in Europe, he was told he was too experienced, and he needed to go back in the air for another 15 missions. He was shot down again on his 59th mission. They crash-landed on the English coast, and the entire crew survived.

My parents served 13 years in the military — my mother at fighter command and my father in Algeria, Tunisia and Italy. They never saw combat. They were the lucky ones.

And we are the lucky ones. It's important, on a day like today, for all of us to know that we are the beneficiaries of those people who so bravely served this nation for freedom.

We put on the poppy, we go to the ceremonies, and we must never forget.

A. Weaver: I would like to join the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Premier in spending some time to reflect

upon what we will be experiencing on the 11th hour of November 11, in two weeks.

[10:35 a.m.]

On the 11th hour of the 11th month in 1918, World War I came, officially, to an end. A year later King George V declared that November 11 would be Armistice Day. Ever since then, we've taken a time and a moment to reflect upon what those before us have actually accomplished, done and given to make us have the ability to live the lives that we live today.

I hear the stories from the member of the official opposition, who talks about his family. Earlier this week we had a very important moment in my family's life, where we passed a bill memorializing Holodomor, a dark period in Ukrainian history. So many of our Canadian relatives have experiences through that.

To the Second World War. Many of us here will have ancestry in England. My father grew up, as a little boy, in Birmingham at a time when Coventry — the cathedral, as you all know — was bombed. They had a bomb shelter in their yard. His father worked building military planes. Outside of the house, they had smokestacks to fill the skies with black smoke so that the bombers wouldn't see the lights down below.

These are the stories that we have, but as time goes on, we begin to forget these stories. That is why November 11 is such an important day. It makes us all, each and every one of us, reflect upon what has happened so that we might collectively say: "Never again."

As such, I think it would be entirely appropriate, hon. Speaker, with your leave, for all of us to take a moment of silence, in that we won't be here together on that day.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Let us do that. A moment's silence, please.

[The House observed a moment of silence.]

Oral Questions

RIDE-SHARING SERVICES

J. Johal: British Columbians were promised by the Premier that ride-hailing would arrive by Christmas of 2017. Then he promised by December of 2018. But it seems the NDP are intent on spoiling everyone's party. We are now here in 2019, and new documents show the NDP is creating even more delays.

To the minister, will she tell British Columbians whether they will have ride-hailing by the holiday season?

Hon. C. Trevena: We are in the midst of bringing in ride-hailing to this province. Something the opposition failed to do for five years. We have 19 companies wanting to operate in B.C., from the big internationals — the Ubers and Lyfts — to Canadian companies, to small companies that want

to operate right across this province. We are confident that ride-hailing will be operating in B.C. later this year.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Richmond-Queensborough on a supplemental.

J. Johal: The reality is that the government has caved, and it's putting up even more roadblocks to the introduction of ride-hailing in B.C.

I want to remind this House that it was the minister who sent an intimidation letter to the PTB. If that wasn't enough, her cabinet colleagues all piled on. It was the then Citizens' Services Minister who piled on. It was then the Environment Minister. Then, of course, it was the Solicitor General who also piled on.

The only people they don't listen to are members of the ride-hailing committee on their side. They haven't listened to the member for Vancouver-West End. They haven't listened to the member for North Vancouver-Lonsdale. They clearly have no clout in the caucus.

[10:40 a.m.]

The NDP have modified the application process for one simple reason: to help their friends. People are demanding ride-hailing and now face a much longer delay.

Minister, why are you stopping ride-hailing from coming to B.C.?

Hon. C. Trevena: We have 19 companies coming to British Columbia or from British Columbia, ready to provide ride-hailing services. The independent.... I know that the opposition doesn't quite get this concept, but the Passenger Transportation Board is independent, an independent tribunal. They are doing their job, reviewing those applications to ensure everyone is well served — the customers, the drivers, other drivers on the road.

We are working hard to make sure we have ride-hailing this year. If the opposition wants to talk about delays and putting things off, they've just got to look at their own record. They had five years — nothing.

P. Milobar: The minister seems to not want to take any responsibility for anything under her purview, but she is very clearly in charge of the ride-hailing file.

In fact, the letter from the transportation board said this: "We're going to introduce an application process modification."

Now, the minister is right. There are 19 ride-hailing companies that want to get operating in B.C. However, the minister and the rest of the NDP government and the Premier seem to want to block them from being able to operate in British Columbia. They have stalled. They have ignored everyone, including the travelling public that wants to have ride-hailing services by the holiday season. Now we have one more roadblock, which means we will not see ride-hailing by the holiday season.

Again to the minister, when will the minister keep the Pre-

mier's promise of having ride-hailing by the holiday season and get on with it?

Hon. C. Trevena: The member opposite talks about stalling. I find this ludicrous from a government.... When they were government, they had five years and stalled and stalled and stalled.

Interjection.

Hon. C. Trevena: The member for Langley, who is happily heckling at the moment, had the unique distinction of driving out Uber from this province. When Uber came into the province, she offered a level of service cost — \$75 — that forced the company out.

I think we are 19 to minus 1 on the ride-hail file. We are confident that ride-hail will be delivered this year.

Mr. Speaker: Kamloops-North Thompson on a supplemental.

P. Milobar: With that answer there, even the peanut gallery is starting to have trouble supporting this minister and her answers and lack thereof, trying to come up with excuses for why we're not having ride-hailing.

The simple reality is.... And we shouldn't be surprised that this government fails to take responsibility for anything. Not one minister or the Premier over there has decided to take responsibility for anything in this House over the last several months.

This is very simple. The minister and the Premier...

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

P. Milobar: ...are protecting their friends and insiders. That's the only reason for this extra delay, which has been heaped upon all of the extra regulations that have already been put in place, in spite of the all-party committee, chaired by the member for North Vancouver-Lonsdale — its recommendations being totally ignored by this Premier. Again, all they are doing is protecting their friends and, I guess, catering to other friends when it comes to ride-hailing.

Again, when will the minister end these delays, get on with it and get our ride-hailing in place for the holiday season?

[10:45 a.m.]

Hon. J. Horgan: I appreciate the member for Kamloops-North Thompson wanting me to take responsibility for something, and I'm happy to do that. I'm happy to take responsibility for \$1 billion invested in child care in British Columbia. I'm happy to take responsibility for \$7 billion invested in housing in British Columbia. And I want to spread the responsibility around to all members on this

side of the House for saying that we're not going to have medical services premiums in British Columbia anymore after January 1.

Successive triple-A credit ratings. The lowest unemployment rate in the country. And I can't take responsibility for this. I'll have to pass it on to my colleague the Minister of Jobs and Technology. Vancouver now is rated No. 1 for tech jobs in North America.

SOIL DISPOSAL SITE IN SHAWNIGAN LAKE WATERSHED

S. Furstenau: Well, no treats for Shawnigan today, just the same old tricks.

In June of this year, the Minister of Environment approved a closure plan for the contaminated landfill site on Stebbings Road in the Shawnigan drinking watershed with a dozen conditions and an October 31 deadline.

Let's get a sense of where we're at. Conditions have not been met. Deadlines have not been met. The consultants who made the closure plans sued the landfill owners and put builders' liens against the property. Property taxes have not been paid, and the possibility of forfeiture to the Crown looms in one short month from now.

There's another new twist. In their most recent detailed construction plan, the company proposes to first import capping soil to this site, which would be stockpiled until all of the other closure plan activities have been completed. This, of course, overlooks the fact that there are well over 100,000 tonnes of soil sitting a few hundred metres away on the adjacent lot owned by the same people — soil that they were ordered to remove by the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources and an order that was ignored. What a tangled web.

My question is to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. Does the minister intend to allow this company to import and stockpile soil to sit unused in piles on this site during the winter rains, leeching sediment into the watershed?

Hon. G. Heyman: I believe that the member and I share the same goal, and that's that the people of Shawnigan Lake continue to have access to clean, safe drinking water — in fact, that all British Columbians have access to that.

This issue has been going on a long time. The issue of reviewing the closure plan by me went on a long time because I continued to check the details, including having ministry staff, who are not directly involved with the decision-making, review the closure plan and including having the work of the proponents' qualified professional reviewed by an independent qualified professional. As a result of that, I added conditions, significant conditions, to the full extent allowed under the Environmental Management Act to ensure that the closure was done properly and that drinking water would be protected.

As the member knows, we have allowed an extension

because the process of reviewing the closure plan over a long period of time to ensure that it would be adequate and adding conditions did not allow the work to be completed this year. But in doing so, we added additional conditions, including new shallow monitoring wells and work to ensure that the site was secure over the winter rains.

That work has begun, I'm informed by ministry staff. No additional soil has been placed on the site, nor will it be until we are assured that it is not containing contaminants.

Mr. Speaker: The House Leader of the Third Party on a supplemental.

[10:50 a.m.]

S. Furstenau: Perhaps we share the same goal, but we have certainly different approaches to how to achieve that. I and the community have been abundantly clear from the very beginning. Leaving contaminated soil halfway up a mountain in a drinking watershed, with groundwater underneath it and surface water circling around it, does not achieve the goal of protecting drinking water for the citizens of Shawnigan Lake.

There is another deadline looming, and I can't help but think that the pattern will continue. In June, the minister did put out the condition that he just spoke about. Two new shallow groundwater monitoring wells need to be installed at this site. In his letter granting the landfill closure deadline earlier this month, the minister stated that those two wells must be installed on or before 30 days of the receipt of his letter, which puts it right around the middle of November.

These wells are essential for understanding what impacts the landfill has had to the aquifer directly beneath the site. In the deep monitoring wells, levels of sodium and chloride continue to rise, and there has been a steady increase in concentrations of the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon acridine since February of this year.

My question is for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. What will the consequences be for this next missed deadline? And what assurances can the minister give to the residents of Shawnigan Lake that these monitoring wells will be installed?

Hon. G. Heyman: I'm very happy to give this assurance to all of the residents of Shawnigan Lake and this House. Our ministry continues to monitor the area, the site and the water and will take whatever action is required to protect drinking water.

With respect to the deadlines to take measures, like the monitoring wells and securing the site before the winter rains, we have every expectation that work will be completed. We will ensure it is completed. We have a range of measures under the Environmental Management Act to ensure it will be completed, and we will ensure it is completed.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING TARGETS
AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW UNITS

T. Stone: It's becoming abundantly clear to British Columbians that the Housing Minister is failing miserably to deliver on the 114,000 new units of housing commitment that has been made by her Premier. But you don't have to take my word for it. I actually have in my hands here the affordable housing investment plan report from B.C. Housing. On page 4 of this 2019-2020 first-quarter report, it reads: "This update features an update on the overall progress against targets."

My simple question to the minister would be this: can the minister confirm what percentage of projects in her plan are currently on schedule?

Hon. S. Robinson: I'm very proud. I'm very proud of the work that we have done. We have over 22,000 units that have actually been initiated. They are in progress. I think it's important to remind everybody, to remind British Columbians, that the previous government, under their 16 years — 16 years — did only 22,000. We're already doing more in two years.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Kamloops–South Thompson on a supplemental.

T. Stone: Well, you know, that's wonderful flourishing rhetoric from the minister.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

T. Stone: But let me tell the House and tell British Columbians, and perhaps this will inform the minister as well, that of the projects under construction — this is on page 12 of this report — 59 percent are behind schedule. These are your numbers. These are the numbers that are in the minister's B.C. Housing summary document here.

Interjections.

[10:55 a.m.]

Mr. Speaker: Members.

T. Stone: Now, of the units that this minister claims are initiated or underway, according to page 5 of the first-quarter update from B.C. Housing.... It says over half of the units "have been announced, but no commitment has been made towards them." No money. Lots of photo-ops, lots of announcements, lots of flourishing rhetoric, but over half these projects have no funding attached to them.

My question to the minister would be this: can the minister please take another shot here at explaining the difference

between the numbers that she talks about and the numbers that are actually in the B.C. Housing summary document?

Hon. S. Robinson: I want to point out, yet again, that when they were on this side of the House....

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. S. Robinson: When they were on this side of the House, they built nothing for women and children fleeing violence. Nothing. Nothing. In fact, they slashed programs.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. S. Robinson: They slashed programs. They slashed funding for women and children fleeing violence.

Our government is building housing for those women and those children. The member from Abbotsford was up here earlier this week talking about women fleeing violence, when they did nothing. They built nothing for those women. We are building....

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. S. Robinson: We are building 1,500 homes for those women and those children.

J. Thornthwaite: The minister can deflect all she wants, not answering the questions, but I'm wondering if she's equally misinformed about the number of units created under the community housing fund, which we also found in the affordable housing investment plan report by her own ministry. As of June 30, 2019, there were zero projects complete. Zero. And it gets worse. Eighty-three percent of those units don't have any funding committed to them.

Let me ask the minister about another program. Can the minister confirm how many units have been completed under her affordable rental housing program?

Hon. S. Robinson: Well, clearly, they don't understand how long it takes to build housing, because they didn't do it. We have thousands of units that are in progress and under construction right across this province, but they wouldn't understand that it takes several months — in fact, a couple of years — to actually get them completed. The fact that they would think that in nine months you would have housing completed is absolutely ridiculous.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

The member for North Vancouver–Seymour on a supplemental.

J. Thornthwaite: Mr. Speaker, it's quite clear that the minister doesn't have a handle on this file. The answer to my question is 71 — not 71 percent but 71 actual units. After two years of this government, the NDP has built only 71 units in the entire province. At this rate, it's going to take 100 years for you to fulfil your campaign promises.

[11:00 a.m.]

The minister needs to be honest. With so few new rental units opened under this minister, how did she expect, how does the public expect, anybody to believe their promises of 114,000 new homes?

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. S. Robinson: When I talk with people who are moving into their new homes, when I talk with the thousands of people that we have moved into supportive housing, when I talk to the women who are moving into safe and secure housing, when I talk to the young children who now have a safe place that their parents can afford, they're the ones that remind all of us how critical it is to have housing that people can afford. We're continuing to deliver on our commitments to have housing that people can afford in this province.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members, we ought to let the minister answering at least get the sentence out of their mouth without interruption, please.

WORKSAFEBC REVIEW AND PARTICIPATION OF EMPLOYER GROUPS

J. Martin: Earlier this year 46 major employer groups resigned en masse from the Labour Minister's biased review of WorkSafeBC. They were quite clear. "The employer community is taken aback and dismayed with an apprehension of bias in the review process. Accordingly, we have reached the decision not to participate in a process which we believe lacks independence, impartiality and balance."

Well, that sham review is due today. Will the minister ensure these voices are heard before acting any further on this bogus process?

Hon. H. Bains: Thank you for the question. You know that we all in this House believe that the workers who go to work come home safe and healthy at the end of their shift. That's our goal. That's what we are trying to do.

The comprehensive review of the WCB — the last time it was conducted was 2002. That's 17 years ago. We asked

Janet Patterson, who is a renowned health and safety lawyer, to review the policies and the procedures so that we could improve the confidence of the employer and the workers in the WCB system that they rely on when they need it. Janet Patterson is a renowned lawyer. She has experience, expertise and understanding of the system. That's why I appointed her.

We had very, very wide-ranging input from individuals, workers, their families, employers. And 360 employers participated in this. I am disappointed that they decided to pull out at the final consultation process. But I've got a letter — again, yesterday — that they want to participate again, to give them the opportunity so that we could, together, put a system that is good for workers — the health and safety — and that the employer could rely on. That's what our commitment is. That's what we're going to do.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Chilliwack on a supplemental.

J. Martin: Okay. Well, let's try this one more time. In reference to the letter that the minister received yesterday from the 46 major employer groups, all they're doing is they're asking for a fair hearing. Here's what was in that letter. "The employer community urges you to provide stakeholders with a structured opportunity for feedback, framed by a consultation paper, before proceeding any further with these legislative changes."

This is a simple question, Minister. Will you agree to this request?

[11:05 a.m.]

Hon. H. Bains: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. If you look at our track record, everything that we take on as the Ministry of Labour and this government, we have consulted widely. Compared to government before us.... They hired one person, one person in 2002, rewrote the labour laws of this province, rewrote WCB — by one person, no consultation. It was rammed through....

Interjections.

Hon. H. Bains: We are going around the province. We have a wide range of consultations. Their track record is nothing for them to suggest to anybody about workers and their rights.

I'm actually amazed that somebody stood up after two and a half years on that side and talked about workers. Workers were not even part of their vocabulary, except when they were ripping up their collective agreements, removing and eliminating the benefits for the injured worker and eroding the employment standards branch by cutting half the staff and half of the offices.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members. Members.

Hon. H. Bains: Workers matter to this government and to me. We value their work. We respect those workers. Their health and safety is important to us, unlike that government.

CONSULTATION ON CARIBOU PROTECTION

M. Bernier: We all know that the Minister of Forests has completely mishandled the mountain caribou file. It was so bad that the Premier actually had to come in and try to rescue him, but that seems to have not worked either.

The Premier said he would do better. He said that he would listen. He said that local governments and people in the Peace region would have a voice and that voice would be heard. But now he's broken that promise as well.

The regional district has recently written to the Premier to complain about this very issue, about the fact that he's broken his promise. But here's the thing. The Premier actually went as far as bringing in Blair Lekstrom to try to fix his mistakes and his minister's mistakes.

The local government and the regional district have written to the Premier, and this is what they've said in a recent email: "We write to you to express our extreme disappointment that our board did not even receive an invitation to participate." After the Premier came up and promised that would happen.

The Forests Minister has ignored all of rural British Columbia. Now the Premier seems to be doing exactly the same thing and breaking his exact promises of what he would do for the people in my region.

What is the Premier going to do to fix this problem and make sure there's an opportunity for all of the people in the Peace region to participate?

Hon. J. Horgan: If I could recap the last half an hour, there seems to be a theme here. Opposition party....

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. J. Horgan: Opposition party takes issue with something they did nothing about for a long period of time and then somehow blames the government of the day.

When it comes to ride-hailing, in 2012....

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. J. Horgan: In 2012, the government of the day had an opportunity to do something, and they ragged the puck for five years. Now they have the audacity to blame someone else for their incompetence.

When it comes to housing, they were quite all right...

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Members.

Hon. J. Horgan: ...to have dirty money in hockey bags pay for high-end real estate, while they let tent cities proliferate all over the province.

Now the member for Peace River South has the audacity to stand up and say: "We just found out there aren't any caribou. Why aren't you doing something about it?"

[11:10 a.m.]

The species was declared at risk in 2003. By my math, that's 16 years, 14 of which they were on watch, and they didn't do anything about it.

For those watching at home: ride-hailing, B.C. Liberals fail; housing, B.C. Liberals fail; and mountain caribou, B.C. Liberals fail. You want something done, you need to have people like us on this side of the House.

[End of question period.]

Tabling Documents

Hon. D. Eby: I have the honour to present the annual report of the B.C. ferries commissioner for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019.

Orders of the Day

Hon. M. Farnworth: I call continued second reading debate on Bill 41, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

[11:15 a.m.]

[J. Isaacs in the chair.]

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 41 — DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ACT (continued)

T. Stone: It does give me a great deal of pleasure to continue my remarks, which I adjourned last evening. I am very pleased to stand and speak here in second reading to Bill 41, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. As I said in my very brief remarks yesterday, this is a tremendous opportunity to have a discussion in this chamber, but I hope more broadly with British Columbians, about what more we can do as a province and as a people to facilitate and foster reconciliation with our Indigenous peoples in this province.

I had talked about, I believe, the incredible commitment and very good track record of the former government that I was part of — the commitment that we had through everything that we did to facilitate reconciliation and to work with First Nations and Indigenous peoples in this

province — to create employment opportunities for them and their families; to help raise more Indigenous peoples out of poverty; to ensure that more and more Indigenous children are receiving the education and graduating at rates much more in line with, if not exactly the same or even better than, the broader population in our province, to name just a few areas.

In fact, by 2017, I believe I mentioned last night, our former government had signed over 500 agreements with First Nations across this great province of ours, 345 of which were revenue-sharing deals with, I believe, 242 different First Nations. When you actually think about that — 242 different First Nations — and you think of all of the languages that that represents, the very different cultures and traditions, it's quite a remarkable reality of British Columbia and something that, I think, really enhances the richness of this province.

These agreements were designed to ensure understanding and to recognize the needs that are very unique and very different in each of the First Nations communities around British Columbia, because foundational to each of these agreements are the principles of dignity and mutual respect.

Now, as part of the jobs plan that we had in our former government, we created a new Aboriginal Business and Investment Council to work more closely with First Nations to foster wealth-creating partnerships. Between 2001 and 2015, the first citizens fund provided nearly \$51 million for over 1,700 business loans to Aboriginal businesses.

In 2015, our government launched the Aboriginal skills training development program to invest up to \$30 million over three years to fill training gaps for First Nations who want to participate in the emerging LNG sector. From 2008 to March 2016, the Industry Training Authority's Aboriginals in trades training initiatives program helped over 3,000 Aboriginal peoples to receive skills training. Through the Canada job fund, a further \$6.7 million in 2014-15 and 2015-16 was directed to support over 753 Aboriginal clients to access trades training.

In May of 2016, we hosted a children and family gathering with the First Nations Leadership Council. That gathering was the result of Premier Christy Clark's commitment at the 2015 B.C. Cabinet and First Nations Leaders Gathering to host a meeting in 2016 to bring together child-serving agencies, individuals and communities to talk about ensuring Aboriginal approaches for children who need support.

At the time of government transition, at least 40 of Grand Chief Ed John's recommendations from his report *Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification: From Root Causes to Root Solutions* were already underway, and the province was reviewing others to see how they might be incorporated.

When it comes to education, our former government increased the six-year high school completion rate for First Nations students from 39 percent to 63 percent. Still more progress to make, but that was a tremendous improvement over those years.

[11:20 a.m.]

The number of credentials awarded to Aboriginal students in the post-secondary education system increased 27 percent to 3,340 in 2014-15 from 2,634 in 2009-10 under B.C.'s Aboriginal post-secondary education and training policy framework and action plan. And 93 percent of school districts in B.C. had Aboriginal enhancement agreements that established partnerships between Aboriginal communities and school districts to meet the education needs of Aboriginal students.

In health, B.C.'s First Nations Health Authority was the first provincewide health authority of its kind anywhere in Canada. It works with First Nations, Health Canada, the B.C. government and provincial health systems to improve health programs and services and foster a health and wellness approach that best reflects First Nations cultures. In 2015, the provincial government and regional health authorities, the Provincial Health Services Authority and the First Nations Health Authority signed the declaration of commitment to cultural safety and humility in health services for First Nations and Aboriginal people in B.C.

When it comes to public safety, our government co-hosted the B.C. family-gathering event for over 350 family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The province shared their feedback with the federal government and participants of the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

I would also mention, at this juncture, that as the former Minister of Transportation, one of my proudest accomplishments, when I look back at everything that we were able to accomplish in the Ministry of Transportation in the four years that I was so honoured to serve in the capacity as minister....

One of those actions that really delivered results was our Highway 16 transportation plan. That was all about making sure that there are safe, reliable transportation connections between communities up and down Highway 16, from Prince George all the way west, but also making sure that for First Nations communities, which are often more remote and off of Highway 16, there were vehicle programs to be able to purchase these community vans, again, with the safety of their family members and their loved ones first and foremost in mind.

That program, that transportation plan, is not only still in place today, but it's been renewed. The partnerships have been renewed. The services have been extended further. This was a true example of collaboration and commitment of multiple parties to true reconciliation with First Nations. This involved all of the local governments through that corridor. It involved many First Nations. It involved the First Nations Health Authority, B.C. Transit and a range of other agencies. So something, I think, to be very proud of. It's something that's made a real difference in the safety of the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who live along the Highway 16 corridor.

Now, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that

once we get to committee stage, we'll have lots of questions, and rightfully so. There are lots of very valid, good questions that need to be asked to make sure we truly all understand what this new framework really represents. What are the consequences of this, intended and otherwise? So we're going to be asking questions, a lot of which will be very practical questions.

How does this legislation impact grazing rights for cattle on Crown leases? How do we manage B.C.'s parks and the use of B.C.'s massive backcountry? Will the forest industry need to make adaptations because of this legislation? How will mining activity and other resource development be impacted? Will there be any impacts to private landowners?

These questions will be posed to the government of the day, as each election cycle comes and goes. They will be asked here in this House. Many of us will get up and ask very focused questions on behalf of not just our constituents, Indigenous and otherwise, but all British Columbians so that there's maximum transparency on exactly what the impacts of this legislation will really, really be for British Columbians.

We need to address these issues. We need to address these concerns and, all the while, do so in a very respectful manner and in a manner that, I think, is underpinned with a great deal of respect and goodwill — goodwill at being open, being transparent, being respectful, and all wanting to try to get to the same place. That is reconciliation.

I wanted to touch briefly on some lessons that I have been taught by some of my dear Indigenous friends back in Kamloops.

[11:25 a.m.]

The people of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc and all of the other surrounding Shuswap nations have a deep, deep, deep history in extending their hands of reconciliation towards settlers, towards the rest of us who came in subsequent years. I've learned a lot about what reconciliation really means to them.

One of, I think, the greatest examples of reconciliation, which former Chief of the Tk'emlúps Indian Band, Manny Jules, who is no stranger to most members of this House, I believe.... He was the very first person who drew my attention to what's known as the Laurier Memorial.

The Laurier Memorial is a document. It's a document that was drafted in 1910. It was drafted by the Chiefs of the Shuswap, Okanagan and Couteau tribes of British Columbia. But most interestingly, it was drafted, and it was hand-delivered to the Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who, in 1910, was travelling through British Columbia by train. He stopped in Kamloops, and he was met by these Chiefs.

The letter that was presented to the Prime Minister, I think, is very, very instructive. It is as instructive today, in 2019, as it was in 1910, insofar as what true reconciliation really means. The general gist of the letter.... It's a lengthy letter. I encourage folks watching to pull this letter up on line and read it. It's very touching. It walks through, from the perspective of these Chiefs, on behalf of their peoples in 1910,

what they believed to be the history of the events of their peoples before there was any contact from European settlers through to 1910.

The document also speaks in a very hopeful tone about what the future could be like if we worked together, what the future could be like for Indigenous children but also the children of non-Indigenous peoples, what life could be like if we shared, if we worked together. There are some very moving passages in this letter that basically reflect a desire, an intention, a willingness of these Chiefs in 1910 to say to everyone who they viewed as guests: "What is ours is yours; what is yours is ours. Let's share. Let's share the bounty of what we have on the land and in our rivers and streams. Let's work together for the betterment of all of our peoples."

I want to read one particular passage. I think this passage resonates incredibly — certainly, it does with me — as to what reconciliation is really all about. Again, this is the Chiefs that are talking. The Chiefs wrote this in 1910.

"With us, when a person enters our house, he becomes our guest. We must treat him hospitably as long as he shows no hostile intentions. At the same time, we expect him to return to us equal treatment for what he receives.

"Some of our Chiefs said: "These people wish to be partners with us in our country. We must, therefore, be the same as brothers to them and live as one family. We will share equally in everything — half-and-half in land, water and timber. What is ours will be theirs, and what is theirs will be ours. We will help each other to be great and good."

Now, that last line, I think, really strikes at the heart of what reconciliation is all about. "We will help each other to be great and good."

[11:30 a.m.]

That was a reflection of Chiefs in 1910, in a letter hand-delivered to Wilfrid Laurier. As I said earlier, I do believe that it embodies the spirit and the intent of what true reconciliation is all about.

With that, I want to say that while we will have a thorough, thoughtful discussion in committee stage on this bill and while there will be a lot of valid questions that will be directed at the government of the day that has brought this bill forward.... As we ask those questions, it will be coming from a place of respect. It will be coming from a place of best intentions and goodwill. It will be coming from a place of hope and optimism that we can truly, through this framework that's being presented, advance reconciliation in British Columbia like never before.

With that, I conclude my remarks here in second reading. I certainly look forward to engaging in a thoughtful, thorough, respectful discussion in committee stage.

Hon. M. Mark: I want to acknowledge the traditional territory that we're gathering on today. I want to acknowledge all of the speakers and their truth and their advocacy, representing the 87 constituencies across British Columbia. I want to recognize that the lens for which we look through is different. I want to emphasize the lens for which I've seen in my life.

My Nisga'a name is Hli Haykwhl Wii Xsgaak. I come from the Eagle clan. My village is Laxgalts'ap. My people are from the Nass Valley. I am very proud to be Nisga'a. I'm very proud to be Gitksan. I'm very proud to be Cree and Ojibwa.

I don't have enough time in these chambers to talk about the colonial efforts and policies that had a long-lasting impact on my family: my grandfather, who hid in the bushes from Indian agents so he wouldn't go to residential school, and my other three grandparents that did go to residential school in St. Michael's, Elkhorn and Brandon.

It is a historic moment in time. It is October 2019. One day people are going to look back on this debate in these chambers. They are going to look back on the opportunity that we have before us to come together in unity, all 87 members, to vote and support a historic bill, Bill 41, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

Now, in my time.... I grew up in East Van. I was seven years old when the Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into play. It wasn't until later on in life that I studied political science and I learned about the impacts of section 35 and the rights of Indigenous people. It also wasn't until my 20s that I learned about residential school. I went 20 years without knowing the impact on my grandparents.

We know about the impact of the residential school through the truth and reconciliation calls to action, a human rights framework that.... Canadians, across the country, believe they are calling on government at all levels to turn things around, to acknowledge the truth of what happened to children that went to residential school and to make things better.

I believe that the people that voted for us have called on us to make things better in our communities. When I got elected in 2016, I became the first Nations person to ever hold a seat in these chambers. The reason why I'm so proud of that is because it is a testament to the warrior spirit of Indigenous people, the briefcase warriors who have fought for their rights for hundreds of years. It doesn't matter which canoe they were in or where they were going. They've always stood firm that it is about rights. It is about our land. It is about our children. It's about our prosperity.

All people want that. All people want prosperity. All people want to be able to live free and have freedom.

[11:35 a.m.]

Let's not forget that it wasn't too long ago that we had to fight for rights. I'm not talking me as just a native person. Me as a woman. People have been fighting for rights for a very, very long time. The fight for rights is, hopefully, going to come to an end with this act. This act, this declaration, is about affirming the rights of Indigenous people, recognizing their rights and recognizing that, as the members talk about, we can do things differently.

I often talk about paddling together. Most people accept that notion. It is not a canoe full of Indians. It's not a canoe full of First Nations or Métis or natives. That is divide-and-conquer language. It is a canoe for anyone who wants to fight

for change — the change that was identified in the calls to action to address child welfare and to address the conditions of people that are overrepresented in jail and the poverty that hits our communities.

When I say our communities, all of our communities. Most members in these chambers have their constituencies on some traditional land. So when I say all, we're talking about equity for all. We're talking about rights for all.

I want to pause for a moment, because this is a historic moment in our history. I want to remind people about the lens which I've looked through over my 44 years in my life. In my life, I've seen that our rights were recognized in the Charter. In my life, I've seen royal commissions go across the country to highlight the injustices to Indigenous people. Not too long ago we had an inquiry highlighting the conditions for missing, murdered and Indigenous women, whose rights were obviously ignored.

We have a lot of work to do. We have a lot of work to do for kids in care. Before I got into politics.... Lots and lots and lots of reports highlighting the conditions for kids in care. People are calling on us to turn things around and make things better.

I'm not going to spend the few moments that I have in here to speak to a historic bill.... There is lots to say, but I will say that in my life, I will see the light. That climb that Frank Calder had as one of the first Indigenous people to ever get elected. What did he see in his time, and what do I get to see in my lifetime?

My grandparents aren't alive, but I wear my grandmother's pendant close to my heart. I'm very sorry about the things that she had to see in her life. We need to turn things around, and we are. I am so optimistic that things can get better if people work together.

The member opposite, not too long ago, talked about education. I'm the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. I'm the first Nations person to serve in cabinet.

I believe that we can turn things around. What I've been able to do in my life and in my time as minister.... I've been able to implement the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples. I know I'm not allowed to use props. I'm sorry. I hope I don't get kicked out. But those articles emphasize the importance of training.

My ministry has invested in Indigenous teachers, because they should be in the front of the classroom across our province. My ministry has invested in the first Indigenous law program — not just in B.C., not just in Canada but in the world. That was article 50. It was a call to action, and we implemented it. The framework was based on the human rights framework of the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

We should embrace this historic opportunity to implement the rights of Indigenous people. It will be good for our families, our communities, our economies, our children and our future.

I'm going to close with my eagle feather.

[11:40 a.m.]

My name is Hli Haykwhl Wii Xsgaak. I'm the proud member for Vancouver–Mount Pleasant. I want to thank every person that exercised their right to vote. They voted for me and gave me a chance to be in these chambers for this historic moment.

J. Rice: I'm really happy that I get to speak today on Bill 41, implementing the rights of Indigenous people in British Columbia. I would love to speak for a long time, but I'm going to keep my remarks very short. A lot of my colleagues have covered a lot of what I would say.

I do want to just acknowledge this special time as an MLA, a representative of 11 distinct nations within the North Coast, also including a large population of Nisga'a members. More Nisga'a live in Prince Rupert than in their traditional territories in the Nass Valley. So I do have the honour of representing really diverse and interesting people.

It's an important day for my constituents as well as myself. This is a historic first. We're going to be the first province in Canada to implement the UN declaration into action, recognizing the rights of Indigenous people. We're moving in a clear path forward that will create good jobs and opportunities for everyone. At the same time, we'll be protecting the rights of Indigenous people and the environment.

Together, we're creating a clear and transparent process for ensuring Indigenous peoples are included in the decisions that affect them directly, that affect their rights within their own territories. These are inherent rights that are protected in Canada's constitution and recognized in court decision after court decision but somehow, subsequently, colonial governments — such as ourselves, the government that I represent — have time and time again ignored.

Some of B.C.'s biggest employers are already doing things differently with Indigenous peoples. I wanted to just recognize, in my own hometown, the Port of Prince Rupert. They have already adopted the principles of UNDRIP, whether they intended to or not. In Prince Rupert, we have successful Indigenous businesses that are thriving and numerous Indigenous people that are employed with good-paying jobs, family-supporting jobs. In part, that is due to the work, the progressive forward-thinking work, that the Port of Prince Rupert has already conducted and how they relate with Indigenous peoples where their port operations operate in their territories.

What I really wanted to do — and I have a couple of minutes — was I just wanted to share a letter that every MLA received on both sides of the House. I'm not going to identify the person. But actually, the questions, I think, are some of the questions that a lot of people are thinking, that people are concerned about. The subject line reads: "Opposition to UNDRIP legislation." The first question was: "Why not just have a declaration for all people instead of just Indigenous people? The United Nations doesn't always get it right." That is true.

What I wanted to just point out is the irony of some of

these questions. That is that all people.... We do all have, in theory, equal rights in British Columbia. But time and time again Indigenous rights have been ignored. Not only have Indigenous people been ignored; they've been mistreated and abused.

"Why should one group of people be singled out for what really amounts to special treatment?" I just wanted to point out the irony of that, in that we're all supposed to be treated equally, but for 160 years, white people and non-Indigenous people have been singled out and treated differently. They've been treated special as the superior race. So what we want to do is uphold the rights of Indigenous people that already are there and that already exist.

An example would be that in education, per-pupil funding for people on reserve is significantly less than off reserve. We still have Indigenous communities without drinking water, a disproportionate number of Indigenous people incarcerated, the child poverty rate....

[11:45 a.m.]

What we're doing is trying to make this legislation, essentially, uphold what's already there and make what's right. We don't need to have a conversation about who has rights. They already exist. We've been ignoring Indigenous ones. We've been trampling on them. This legislation sets the path right.

N. Simons: I'm really very pleased to have the opportunity to speak, if I can.

The work that's been done has been so important. I want to recognize everyone in cabinet who has pushed this, the caucus and everyone in British Columbia who has seen the importance of fulfilling not just our promise but the promise that we made to bring in legislation so that we are in accordance and we act in accordance to the United Nations declaration. I thank my colleagues for their hard work.

I think about the hard work that was done in the communities to get here. I wrote down a list of people I'm thinking about, from the shíshálh Nation, the first Nation in Canada with self-government, the proud signatories to a foundation agreement that sets a new course of economic and social cooperation and partnership on the Sunshine Coast. They're leading the way. They're leading the way with the Chiefs and councils that I've worked with. Years and years ago, hearing stories of Premiers dropping in at the house of Clarence Joe. His family strongly, fiercely protecting their rights and ensuring that they're entrenched — in 1986.

The people that were involved in that deserve so much credit. It was against stiff headwinds, against the incoming tide. Yet they persevered, and they gave strength to the leadership of today, to make sure that they carried this through.

I think of the matriarchs, those who kept the communities strong and resilient. They deserve this credit. They did the real work. They lived through the real experience. This is a result of that.

We are proud to be legislators at this time.

I think of the leadership of today in the shíshálh Nation. I think of Chief Warren Paull. I think of his sisters — strong,

community-minded people who kept the communities together. The Craigan family — Stuart Craigan, the Chief. Gary Feschuk, the Chief who worked so tirelessly and continues to work on reconciliation at a grassroots level. Stan Dixon and his wife, Lori — community members that have been embraced throughout our communities.

They're the ones with their briefcases, with their well-thought-out arguments and with their knowledge that their fights were for justice — with the knowledge that they were doing this not just for the people that came before them but for the little ones who come next.

This isn't the end of everything. We haven't reached a place where we can say that the work doesn't need to continue. The work needs to continue. I think the partnership that we've formed will allow that work to go forward. When we get along well and agree on everything, and when we have disagreements, we have a pathway forward.

I'm pleased to be here at this time. I pay tribute to those who come before us, and I thank members for this opportunity.

Deputy Speaker: Seeing no further speakers, the minister shall close debate.

Hon. S. Fraser: I thank all the speakers that have come before on this powerful second reading on Bill 41, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

[11:50 a.m.]

I just want to remind of the work that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission did and the calls to action that that led to in 2015. Anyone who attended those hearings across the country, across the province.... I attended a number of them — tear-wrenching horrors of the residential school system that so many had to endure.

The calls to action. I have never met anyone that did not support those calls to action from the commission. The key call to action is for governments to adopt and implement the UN declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples. That is what this is all about. You cannot support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission without supporting what we're doing here in this House.

I want to read into the record, before I close, a quote. "Taken together, this bill gives us hope, and not only for a

more certain path towards necessary reconciliation. It gives us hope that British Columbia can differentiate itself globally, setting the course for Canada to create an economic climate that supports sustainable development and advances the self-determination of Indigenous peoples. If successful, we foresee a more certain, respectful and prosperous society for all who live, work and invest in our province."

That quote is from Greg D'Avignon. He's the president and CEO of the B.C. Business Council, and it's co-written by Laird Cronk, who is the president of the B.C. Federation of Labour. This powerful statement has brought great organizations together in support of this bill.

This is about recognizing the human rights of Indigenous peoples in law in British Columbia. That's the first time in history in this country. Again, I'm going to repeat myself from my first reading opening. Let's collectively make history.

With that, I move second reading of Bill 41.

[11:55 a.m.]

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Second reading of Bill 41 approved unanimously on a division. [See *Votes and Proceedings*.]

Hon. S. Fraser: I move that the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House to be considered at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 41, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole House for consideration at the next sitting of the House after today.

Hon. M. Farnworth moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

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

The House adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

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