



Commonwealth Youth Parliament

November 6-10, 2016
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

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DEBATES OF THE

EIGHTH COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

(HANSARD)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2016

Speech from the Throne



THE HONOURABLE LINDA REID, SPEAKER

**LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

Honourable Rick Hansen, CC, OBC British Columbia, Canada

**SPEAKER
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

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The House met at 1:33 p.m.

[Hon. Linda Reid in the chair.]

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Good afternoon, Members. I call upon Sheridan Hawse to lead this House in prayer.

Sheridan Hawse: I wish to acknowledge the ancestral, traditional and unceded aboriginal territories of the Coast Salish Nation and, in particular, the Lekwungen and Esquimalt peoples on whose territory we work, live and play and on whose territory we stand. Let us reflect on our continued path to reconciliation, as those who continue to benefit from colonialism.

[1335]

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Hon. Members, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor will be making a broadcast appearance. Please remain in your seats while we await his arrival on screen.

Speech from the Throne

Hon. Rick Hansen, CC, OBC (Lieutenant-Governor): Hi, I'm Rick Hansen. As the representative of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, I am honoured to deliver the Speech from the Throne.

Hon. Members of the Eighth Commonwealth Youth Parliament, it's a pleasure to welcome you to this Legislative Assembly, where you will conduct your business over the coming days. I congratulate you on your recent election and, of course, wish you well in your new parliamentary responsibilities. You have come together to consider important matters, guided by the principles of democracy, good governance and equality for all.

There are 65 new Members of the Legislative Assembly as a result of the recent election. With this change, with your enthusiasm and with your ideas, increased opportunities and prosperity will come to this country.

Your government's agenda is clear and focused. We will put the interests of families and youth at the centre of the work that we do in this Legislative Assembly. Our priorities will be growing and diversifying the economy, creating jobs, protecting the environment, increasing accessibility to post-secondary education



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and ensuring a sustainable health care system.

Health care is consuming an ever-increasing portion of the budget. Moving forward, we will face growing pressures on our health care system as our population ages. Many people in this country are concerned about the sustainability of health care for themselves and their families.

Your government is committed to renewing and reforming health care to ensure sustainable, high-quality, accessible care for our generation and, of course, for future generations. The path to this goal begins with engaging the people of this country in the decisions that will shape this change. In the coming months, your government will launch a public consultation on the sustainability of our health care system.

Enhanced post-secondary education. We know that 70 percent of all new jobs in the global economy will require post-secondary education and training. Your government believes that all people of this country, particularly youth, should have a real and fair chance to succeed. In order to support our youth and all people of this country in the global economy, it is time to take the next step towards extending the frontier of accessible public education.

Your government will act to increase accessibility to post-secondary education and ensure that every qualified student who wants to pursue post-secondary education has the opportunity to do so. Our youth are the single best investment we can make in the future. This investment will provide a stronger economy and a greater capacity to sustain our system of health care, preserve our environment and strengthen our role in the global environment.

Of course, we have to also deal with a strong economy. Within the borders of our country, one can find natural resources and economic potential that would be the envy of any sovereign state on this planet. We have successful sectors where products are reaching markets around the world.

Your government will continue to strengthen trade ties in growing international markets like China and India, because in a global economy, international trade is essential to creating jobs at home.

This country's historic strength in the resource sectors has allowed us to have sustained success in the mining, forestry and energy sectors. Your government will build on this strength by providing supports for these industries.

To ensure our economy remains strong, we must also diversify. This country is blessed with amazing human resources, hard-working people who strive for innovation and excellence. These attributes become evermore important as this country's economy transitions and expands, particularly in the service industries,

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including science and technology, tourism and recreation, and retail trade. A growing economy is the key to our future. It means opportunities for everyone and increased revenue to pay for public services.

[1340]

Environmental protection. Environmental protection and a strong economy go hand in hand. These are not incompatible goals. This country is a land of great natural beauty. It is a source of pride for its people. Of course, your government is committed to ensuring that this land remains preserved for future generations.

Pollution, climate change and our continued dependence on fossil fuels are real challenges that we all face. Your government is committed to finding solutions to the environmental problems facing our country and our planet.

This country is currently not on track to meet legislated targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. For the sake of future generations, this must change. Your government will take immediate action to ensure that we meet our international environment, climate change and energy obligations.

Collaborative relationships. Your government is committed to working with aboriginal people, acknowledging that they are full partners in our country's economy and society while preserving and building on their own unique heritages and communities. Your government will continue to build and maintain relationships with aboriginal people, relationships based on recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership.

Your government will partner with aboriginal communities to close the socioeconomic gap between aboriginal people and non-aboriginal people of this country to ensure that we actively support cultural traditions and provide all of our citizens with real opportunities to participate in economic growth and prosperity.

Strengthening youth employment. Your government will take steps to address the challenges faced by youth in today's job market. We will harness public sector resources and partner with the private sector to create opportunities for youth in our job market.

In the coming days, your government will introduce legislation to improve youth employment opportunities. Your government will set clear annual targets for education and training and a reduction in rates of youth unemployment.

We will create the jobs fund, a grant program that will incentivize employers in the private sector to take on new youth apprentices. We will also introduce the internship initiative, a grant program that will incentivize employers in a broad range of disciplines to take on new youth interns. Your government



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recognizes that some youth face additional barriers to employment. Apprenticeship and internship placements, through these new programs, will be targeted at these youth and ensure that those barriers are removed.

The measures that I have outlined here today are immediate actions to implement the vision of your government — the government that has laid out a view for this amazing country.

Hon. Members, you have been tasked over the next four days to take on the challenge of leading this country. I trust that you will represent the interests of your constituents and discharge your accountabilities transparently, honestly and with integrity.

I would also like to ask you, personally, to help prepare for Canada's 150th birthday in 2017. Our constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms state that people with disabilities are included as equals in our society. In this ambitious agenda that I have outlined in all areas of priority concerns for you to address, please ensure that the close to four million people with disabilities in our country don't get left behind.

Think about how barriers can be identified and removed, and how we will leave Canada a nation-building birthday present that continues annually for decades to come, continuing to build the Canada we want — an accessible and inclusive Canada. Never give up on that dream.

Speaker and hon. Members, I wish you well, and I now leave you to your important deliberations. May your work and actions be guided by wisdom and our shared commitment to parliamentary democracy.

[1345]

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Hon. Members, in order to avoid mistakes, I have obtained a copy of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor's speech.

Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne

Andriy Krugliak: Madame Speaker, I move that we, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Eighth Commonwealth Youth Parliament and 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.

I am pleased to rise and speak of my own home, the province of Alberta. This year we are celebrating the 111th year of Confederation in Alberta. Not many people know the history of my home province, and I will be pleased to provide that to this House.

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We were founded in 1905 along with the province of Saskatchewan. Ever since, we have been a thriving democracy. Our name comes from Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, the fourth daughter of Queen Victoria and the wife of the Governor General at the time. Incidentally, Lake Louise actually happens to be one of the most beautiful lakes in Alberta, and I encourage all members of this House to visit that lake.

Alberta's history is also rich with progress. We were one of the first provinces to grant the vote to women, doing so in 1916. Last year we became one of the few jurisdictions in North America to include gender identity as a prohibited ground of discrimination — something that was previously available through case law but is now enshrined in the statutes of Alberta.

I would encourage all members of this House to visit my home jurisdiction, and I hope that they do so soon.

Elise Delpiano: This government has an ambitious agenda with broad goals that have no way of actually being implemented. They live in a utopian system that unfortunately has no direction apart from to throw money into the wind and hope that an interventionist government will solve all these problems that our countries are facing — Commonwealthland especially.

Firstly, the sustainable health care system. It now has just a small fee, yet we don't know whether this health care system that is supposedly free to all includes services such as dentistry, specialist care or even things such as plastic surgery.

This government has no clear plan as to how they're actually going to fix the problems that are hurting our economy and society in Commonwealthland.

Secondly, education. The government has this clear plan that we're going to make education free for all even at a tertiary level. Once again, I reiterate the fact that, unfortunately, money doesn't grow on trees. This opposition recognizes this. While we understand it is important to ensure people get the opportunity to pursue apprenticeships, internships and tertiary study, it is impossible to ensure that our economy can move forward by just allowing everyone to have a free university degree.

We need to ensure that our education sector becomes strong and that we can become a services sector in the global economy. Once again, this government has broad ideas but no clear plan on how to actually implement them.

Further, the government wants to diversity the economy, yet this government insists on employing a protectionist system to keep sectors afloat that need to modernize in order to contribute to a strong economy for Commonwealthland.

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Further, with environmental protection. Well, their goals are certainly noble on paper, and it certainly needs to be addressed. However, once again, this government has not actually outlined how this is going to be put into place. There is no clear plan. Once again, they are utopian goals with no clear plan on how this is actually going to work, let alone be implemented and become effective.

Finally, youth employment is indeed an issue, and we, the opposition, recognize this. However, this government, once again, presumes they can intervene in the free market and magically fix these problems that run much deeper than throwing money at the wind.

This opposition knows that money cannot buy you happiness. It cannot buy you a strong and successful economy. And we need to be smart about how we go about things, investing in education, health, the economy and youth employment.

Jody Aldridge: Thank you very much, Madame Speaker and hon. youth parliamentarians. I would just actually like to introduce myself. I'm Jody Aldridge, and I'd like a few minutes of your time to actually talk about where I'm from and what I'm hoping to gain out of the experience today.

I'm from the Falkland Islands, and I'm really excited to be here for the Eighth Commonwealth Youth Parliament. Currently, at home we don't have a youth parliament, so my aim, along with my other representatives, is to come here to learn from all of you — the other youth parliamentarians that are here and our mentors for today — and to be able to take this back home with us and actually be able to create a youth parliament for us.

It's vital that the youth today are able to talk and actually have their voice heard, and this is something which is missing where I'm coming from. To be able to have the support of this session — to be able to learn things, and also, when we return home, to have the support of our elected members to push this forward and give our youth the voice to be able to talk and actually be able to have things pushed through and passed on to our elected members to go through — is going to be wonderful.

I'd like to take this time to thank all of you here for allowing us to come along. I'm really looking forward to the days ahead.

Aaron McDonnell: I rise in response to the speech given by the Lieutenant-Governor today and acknowledge his presence in the chamber. It's all well and good, as our leader has said, to have motherhood statements. They're fantastic. They're catchy. They're appealing. However, words without action are worthless,

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and these catchy sayings, these catchy proposals put forward by the government, as espoused by His Honour, deserve better. The people of Commonwealthland deserve better.

Under the leadership of our dear leader here, Elise Delpiano, we have a plan, a plan that will strengthen our economy and create jobs. Finding solutions, I must say, is the agenda of the government. They are going to look for and find solutions, and to the credit of this government, that is applaudable. Well done. You know, look for all the solutions you can under every rock and in every cupboard you can find.

However, people can say that they care, but it means nothing until they can prove it. You can have all the plans. You can have all the big, fancy reports in the world. But until you deliver an actual, worthwhile agenda that's going to deliver jobs, deliver growth through our economy.... That's why I stand here today and I tell you that our party, the opposition, would deliver Canada the 150th birthday present that will keep giving for many, many more years to come.

Our party has a plan. Our party will no longer rely on government handouts. Yes, fantastic — you've got an agenda for jobs and growth. However, unless that agenda involves small business and the mothers and fathers with the local store on the corner or the small and medium enterprises, you are not going to have a strong foundation for the economy and the future of this country.

And so many of us from Commonwealth countries all around the world will no doubt learn from the example of many failed states and many failed programs, from governments like what we have here, governments that rely on socialist policies that everything's free, everything can be paid for. But how will they be paid for if you do not have the jobs and the plan to create and stimulate the economy that will pay for that plan?

[1355]

David Akombwa: Hon. members of the Legislative Assembly, I, David Akombwa, from the Republic of Zambia, the home of the mighty Victoria Falls — which I advise you should visit — would like to express my humble gratitude for this opportunity that you have accorded us to be here as distinguished guests.

As a member of the Progressive Party, we will ensure that legislation that leads to alleviation of poverty will be passed. I, for one, know that you cannot convince a monkey that an apple is sweeter than a banana, but we will ensure to educate the opposition just why we stand for the policy that we stand for.

With this and so much more, we understand very well the



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importance of education. That is why, when we hear what the opposition has to say, we smile, because we know we have a lot of work to do.

Sonniel Pickering: I stand here on behalf of the delegation from the British Virgin Islands, and I want to commend the Hon. Rick Hansen for that fun-filled and idea-filled Speech from the Throne. I have understood what was said, and I realize that it is just ideas. It is just things that have been tabled, put on paper and laid before us to read before we get here. But I do want to admonish the government to heed what has been spoken by the Hon. Lieutenant-Governor. It sounds good, but is it practical? It sounds good, but is it realistic?

We understand the need for growth in the economy. We understand the need for post-secondary education. We understand the need for developing the health care system. But let us not look at these things as just mere words. Let us understand that these things are key to the survival of any nation, any country, any people. It is not just to put them in practice, but it's to ensure that it does what it's supposed to do.

The mom-and-pop stores, the people that can't afford health care, the people that are lacking in post-secondary education... Don't just implement something for implementation's sake. But let us look at the nitty-gritty and understand that it is not just to implement, but it is also to ensure that every man, woman, boy and girl can love, adhere to and acknowledge that which is given unto them.

I speak for my hometown in the British Virgin Islands, where we enjoy the sun, the sand and the sea. But it is also key to understand that we not only sit here to represent British Columbia and the country in which we sit now, but we are here to represent the Commonwealth islands. So let us not only implement things that can work here, but let us look at all jurisdictions.

Let us look at Trinidad and Tobago. Let us look at the British Virgin Islands. Let us look at Pakistan. Let us implement these things that can transcend all jurisdictions and ensure that every Commonwealth place — nation, island or state — can sit peaceably and comfortably to know that all things laid before us here in this Speech from the Throne can be implemented in our own states, in our own nations, in our own territories so that we can smile at the end of the day and lay back, prop our feet up and put our head on a pillow and that we can say: "Well done."

Avery Roberge-Eadie: Madame Speaker, I rise in response to the Speech from the Throne. My name is Avery Roberge-Eadie,

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and I am here representing Alberta, Canada. I thank you for my first opportunity to address the House.

I would like to first thank the CPA for giving me this exciting experience to meet all of you and participate in these proceedings.

With that, I'd like to take this opportunity to speak about the beautiful place I call home — Alberta, Canada. Alberta is rich in both resources and beauty. Comprised of the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains, it makes for one of the most beautiful tourist spots in Canada. I encourage you all to come and visit.

Albertans are very hard-working people, and our fluctuating economy is mostly driven by our energy sector. Alberta is very rich in crude oil, found in our oil sands.

Again, I thank the CPA and the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia for this opportunity, and I look forward to working alongside all of you.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): If I might invite the last speaker to move adjournment of the debate.

Avery Roberge-Eadie moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Aaron McDonnell moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Hon. Members, this House stands adjourned until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2 p.m.



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