



Commonwealth Youth Parliament

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

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DEBATES OF THE
EIGHTH
COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT
(HANSARD)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2016

Morning House Proceedings



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**

Honourable Linda Reid Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

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Hon. Laura Elliott	Minister of Environment
Hon. Kareina Mohammed	Minister of Social Development
Hon. Farah Hussain	Deputy Leader & Minister of Foreign Policy
Hon. Connor Mycroft	Minister of Defence
Hon. Mark Munnich	Minister of Indigenous and Cultural Affairs
Hon. Sara Aslam	Minister of Justice
Hon. Jordan Kerr	Government Whip and Minister Responsible for Youth
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Jabari Lynch	Trinidad and Tobago	Jenae Whittaker	Cayman Islands
Essalene Martin	Montserrat	Robert Winspear	Jersey

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2016

The House met at 9:32 a.m.

[Hon. Linda Reid in the chair.]

Routine Business

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Good morning, Members. Rebecca Cross will lead this House in prayer.

Rebecca Cross: Please stand.

Lord, grant us wisdom that we may walk with integrity, guarding the path of justice and knowing the protection of your loving care for all. Lord, guide our hearts and our minds in the spirit of fairness, right thought and speech. Impart your supreme wisdom upon our activities so that our heirs may reach successful conclusion.

Thank you for being our source of guidance today and for the gift of friendship we have shared with each other. Amen.

Point of Order

Aaron McDonnell: I'd just like to seek a point of clarification before we commence question time today.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Please proceed.

Aaron McDonnell: Yesterday in question time, the government Whip was answering questions on behalf of other ministers who were not delegated authority to him. The Clerk may tell you that a ruling was given yesterday. However, the ruling that was given is actually inaccurate. The Deputy Speaker advised that the government Whip is detailed on this list provided to all hon. members as the government's spokesperson and delegated minister for other affairs. However, the list clearly states that the Hon. Jordan Kerr is simply the Whip.

Can you please make a ruling as to whether he can answer questions on the behalf of other ministers that actually are present in the chamber?

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): We'll hear the submission from the other side as well.

[0935]



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Hon. Ashvini Savanthrapadian: As noted in my introduction, I believe, on Monday, when I introduced new cabinet ministers, I did mention that Mr. Jordan Kerr is our Minister of Youth as well as our House Leader and party Whip.

Aaron McDonnell: Madame Speaker, with respect, the questions that were asked yesterday were on Health and, I think, Finance, and that meant the Whip actually answered those questions.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): I thank the member for his submission. But, indeed, questions for answer can be directed to any member of cabinet, and the caucus and the cabinet can decide.

Please proceed.

Andriy Krugliak: Madame Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege today. Yesterday, the Leader of the Official Opposition failed to provide sufficient copies, for this House, of an amendment that she introduced. This prevented me, as a member, from executing my duties for my constituents, and I was unable to provide full representation for my constituents, because of the hon. member's failure to provide sufficient copies of amendments. I ask that you find her in contempt of this House.

Elise Delpiano: Madame Speaker, I wish to clarify what happened yesterday, for those on the back benches over here, of the government, who do not seem to know what happened.

I presented the government, via their Whip, with all of the amendments.... Apologies. My Whip gave the government Whip copies of all of the amendments we were to debate, and the Chair of the committee made a decision to have a recess so that the government could deliberate on these, as they'd failed to do so prior.

It is not the opposition's fault, nor my personal fault, that the government fails to be organized, as it has been throughout this entire week's proceedings.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): I thank both members for their submissions, and I'll take them under advisement.

Oral Question Period

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND CARBON TAX

Aaron McDonnell: My question without notice is to the Minister of the Environment. It was revealed in yesterday's press

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conference that this government is in cahoots — the back pocket, if you may — with the resources and mining industry. The Address from the Throne and the Premier herself have indicated that Commonwealthland will grow and strengthen ties with China and India. Further to this, the government intends to introduce a carbon tax to address the issues of climate change.

Minister, how can you reconcile your government's commitment to protecting the economically vulnerable by introducing a big, fat tax and engaging gross polluters like China and India?

Hon. Laura Elliott: Thank you very much for your question.

A lot of the theory covered in yesterday's press conference was, in fact, conjecture, so I'm not going to add anything to those rumours. In terms of working with other countries, we do want to be seen as a global leader in our commitment to effecting positive change. So, yes, we will work with countries across the world, both prominent countries and vulnerable countries, in order to pull them along in line with our policies.

We are supporting increased carbon taxes, which implies there is already a carbon tax in place. It's a responsibility of all to reduce our carbon footprint, and by increasing these carbon taxes, we are able to pass on that responsibility to the individuals and the businesses to make everyone accountable for their decisions in their way of life.

I'd also like to take this opportunity, as I have the floor, to wish my colleagues luck in the Marrakech Climate Change Conference, which is happening right now. Unfortunately, I've had to send a delegate, as I know how you feel about cabinet ministers not being present when government is sitting.

We want to increase the ability of our citizens to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, fostering climate resilience and low greenhouse gases in a manner that doesn't threaten food consumption, something which is very close to my heart. I'm sure that through our consultation....

Interjection.

Hon. Laura Elliott: We have a policy to increase carbon taxes, which we will be able, then, to implement into....

Interjections.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Members.

Hon. Laura Elliott: That would be a question for my Finance colleague. But, obviously, some of the taxes put in place will be



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looking to help businesses and individuals through innovation to help them....

Interjection.

[0940]

Hon. Laura Elliott: Yes. Part of what is mentioned in your policy, yet there's nothing, actually, which has how you're going to pay for it.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Aaron McDonnell on a supplemental.

Aaron McDonnell: If I may, thank you.

Thank you, Minister. This opposition, I must let you know, Minister, isn't hell-bent on blocking the government at every opportunity. But come on. You can't have your cake and eat it too. Why introduce a big, new tax on the people of Commonwealthland under the guise of protecting the environment while you're continuing to let our trading partners carry on as usual? Is this not yet another smokescreen for your economic incompetence?

Hon. Robert Winspear: I think it's pretty inappropriate to regard a carbon tax, which is saving our world and Commonwealthland, as a smokescreen to disguise big business from the tax we're going to implement on them.

DEBT-TO-GDP RATIO

Danish Bhutto: The debt-to-GDP ratio of British Columbia was as low as 12 percent in 2007 and '08. Over the years, it has, however, increased to an alarming 20 percent. Given over-ambitious policies of government, it is quite evident that over the next few years, debt-to-GDP ratio is going to most likely double.

I would like to ask the minister concerned, since government finally realized it needed a portfolio for Finance — better late than never: how is the government going to finance that? Is it going to drown our grandchildren in debt?

Hon. Robert Winspear: We share a concern that climate change is a very important issue, and we understand that it is important to put the right measures in place. We have been working with our European partners on the aviation directive that they've introduced recently, and we wholeheartedly believe in it. We believe that it's a sustainable scheme that can help the whole world and will not put our Commonwealthland in danger.

DEFENCE POLICY

Honeylynn Lisson: My question is for the Minister of Defence. In light of recent developments in the United States, is the Minister of Defence worried about any instability spilling over into Commonwealthland?

Hon. Connor Mycroft: Thank you, hon. Member, for the question. Considering that this is the first question I've received so far, it would appear as though the opposition does not prioritize national defence. I'd like to reaffirm that this administration definitely has a policy on defence.

In regards to the question, we're observing the developments very closely. As of right now, we don't believe there's any concern for any spillover. But we'll be continuing to observe closely, and should any of our neighbours to the south like to come and immigrate here, we're all open.

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Gabriel Laurence-Brook: The question is for our hon. Premier. Would the Premier join me in condemning the Leader of the Opposition, who said yesterday that she wanted to privatize the health system in Commonwealthland?

Hon. Ashvini Savanthrapadian: As we're all well aware, this government's mandate is to deliver an affordable and sustainable health care system within a public delivery system. We have acknowledged that we will look at all options to deliver this. However, we maintain that public delivery will be the best option. We will consider partnerships with private sector....

I am appalled that the opposition would consider privatization of the health care system as the only option moving forward, without considering the other options and without considering the impacts on the public sector.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Sheldon Paul: My question was originally destined to be for the hon. Minister of Indigenous and Cultural Affairs, but I will gladly accept a response from the Premier.

Yesterday the hon. Leader of the Opposition decried the government's position on indigenous affairs, labelling First Nations' communities equal sovereignty over their land as unjustified due to its economic impact.



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Interjection.

Sheldon Paul: Excuse me. Madame Speaker, I am trying to direct my question towards the Premier.

[0945]

Madam Premier, are you as utterly appalled as I am that for some reason, the opposition thinks that the economy takes precedence over the human rights and dignity of the communities already systematically oppressed within Commonwealthland?

Hon. Ashvini Savanthrapadian: This government's position is to recognize all indigenous peoples and First Nations as equal partners in this economy. This is exactly why our Minister of Indigenous and Cultural Affairs is currently conducting discussions with our indigenous populations to begin the dialogue with them and to invite them into the fold of leadership in this Commonwealth.

We acknowledge that there are past grievances, and we acknowledge that we need to find a way forward. Our starting step with this is to make indigenous peoples and cultural groups feel welcome and feel that they can approach us to start dialogues.

We will not turn them away simply by saying that we won't hear what they want, that we won't give them what they are looking for. We will consider all options, as is our approach for all policies that we're moving forward with.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Sonniel Pickering: My question is directed to the Minister of Education and Training, but in her absence, I would direct it to the Premier.

In the Caribbean, many adults have to forsake their post-secondary education to enter parenthood. Now that the government is willing to provide post-secondary education for all ages, what plans does the government have to deal with the inflow and influx of adults who are eager to challenge the government's sincerity of their plan, while simultaneously taking into consideration the already high inflow of teenage applicants?

Hon. Kareina Mohammed: I thank the member for their very important question. I do understand that, yes, persons have stopped school to take care of their children. However, on behalf of the Minister of Education, I'd like to say that this government is indeed committed to providing educational opportunities for all, no matter what their age.

We have had a success rate thus far, and this is what this

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government is committed to doing. So no matter what your age in life, you would be taken care of.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): On a supplemental, please continue.

Sonniel Pickering: I commend the minister for answering the question that I did not ask. My question to the Premier was: what plans does the government have? I understand the government's willingness to provide post-secondary education to all ages, and she clarified that, yet again, to me. But I'm asking the government, by way of the Premier: what plans do they have to ensure that this is done correctly?

Hon. Kareina Mohammed: These plans will be coming forth through the Ministry of Education. Don't worry, those documents will be forthcoming.

YOUTH IN BUSINESS

Nicholas Hawkes: My riding, like many others represented at this parliament, is suffering from a youth brain drain. So I ask the minister for economic affairs what plans this government has to ensure that young people can set up small businesses and incubate new ideas.

Hon. Robert Winspear: Thank you for your question. As a preliminary to answering it, as well, I'd like to acknowledge my support of the opposition for the concern they share for this matter in proposing the incubation fund amendment to our youth unemployment bill.

There was a little confusion yesterday when voting in favour of the amendment, as I'd raised my support for a similar fund earlier in the week. The reason we rejected the proposal was because we feel supporting small businesses and young people with an entrepreneurial spirit deserves more specific focus and legislation of its own.

I would like to assure the opposition that consultation into the best method of proceeding is already underway, as this government believes in the youth and helping people to help themselves.

[0950]

SEPARATION OF POWERS

Rebecca Cross: My question is directed at the Minister of Justice.

One of the great virtues of Commonwealthland is the common



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law and the rule of law. A system of checks and balances is so important in our constitution.

My question to the government minister is: what is their position on the separation of powers? And how are they going to ensure a true, independent tribunal for dealing with complaints under the human rights code when their government is a puppet government run and controlled by the Whip?

Hon. Sara Aslam: First of all, we are very committed to going in line with our constitution. Secondly, each of us is very much dedicated to our individual portfolios, so I find the comments very offensive.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Rebecca Cross on a supplemental.

Rebecca Cross: With all respect, Madame Speaker, the minister hasn't answered the question.

Hon. Ashvini Savanthrapadian: Thank you for your question, opposition Member. As you'll note, we are a parliament, and we are a government party. We conduct government business, as we are mandated to do. Our roles as Premier, deputy leader, cabinet minister and Whip are sometimes fluid, and we answer questions as we see appropriate and as suitable to our portfolios. The separation of powers is about the separation between parliament, the executive and the judiciary.

Of course, we would have an independent tribunal for human rights. And, of course, the executive would run as it always has. Our internal business within our party and within this parliament is running exactly as it's intended to and has no bearing on how the separation of powers already exists and will continue to exist in this government.

CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN AND RESOURCE INDUSTRY CONSULTATION

Sky Losier: The fact is this government's climate plan is all sizzle and no sausage. This government has no real plan to address the pressing issue of climate change, other than to tax our industry into oblivion.

On this side of the House, we are proud of the hard-working men and women in our resource industry. While this government has left them behind with their tax grabs and out-of-proportion incentives, our opposition will stand by these hard-working men and women. We will continue to defend the workers and the corporations in the resource industry.

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Will this government commit today...?

Interjections.

Sky Losier: Will this government commit today to saying that we will not tax our industry until they have engaged in meaningful consultation?

Hon. Ashvini Savanthrapadian: I commend your enthusiasm, opposition Member. I dare say that if the opposition would take a moment to listen and not interject during our responses, you might actually find that you have the opportunity to contribute constructively to what this government and what this parliament are seeking to do, and your views would be taken on board.

[End of question period.]

Orders of the Day

Hon. Jordan Kerr: I call the closing speeches of this parliament.

Closing Speeches

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Hon. Members, it's hard to believe that this is our final sitting of the Youth Parliament. The last few days have gone by so quickly, and it was regrettable to call the end of question period.

Thank you for being here, for actively participating and for doing so with respect and great humour. You have brought some life to this chamber.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the mentors, who have taken time from their busy lives to join us, sharing your knowledge and experiences. You truly have done a stellar job. Thank you so very much.

I also want to thank Mr. Rick Hansen for so graciously agreeing to act in the role of Lieutenant-Governor. He is truly an inspiring individual and an amazing role model.

As you can imagine, the event would not have been possible without the support of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and all of their wonderful staff. A special thank-you to the Hon. Ingrid Moses-Scatliffe and Mrs. Phyllis Evans from the British Virgin Islands House of Assembly for joining us and offering your assistance. We are ever so grateful to the CPA and to the British Virgin Islands.

Please join us in a round of applause. [Applause.]



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I would also like to again extend my gratitude to all those of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia who worked so very hard to bring this event together.

[0955]

As you may know, in April of 2017, we will mark the 100th anniversary of women being given the right to vote and stand for office in the province of British Columbia. Related to this milestone, in 2018 we'll recreate the 100th anniversary of the election of B.C.'s first woman Member of the Legislative Assembly, Mary Ellen Smith. Women like Mary Ellen Smith and the people involved in the suffragist movement in British Columbia have a lot to teach us.

The campaign to extend the vote to women spanned 45 years. These people set their eyes on a goal and persevered until that dream became a reality. Their dedication and commitment changed the nature of politics in British Columbia.

Mary Ellen Smith and those involved in the movement to extend the vote to women in British Columbia were leaders and role models who worked hard to make their communities a better place. I am proud to say that today more than 38 percent of the Members of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia are women. That is a Canadian record.

All of you have the potential to make a positive difference in shaping the future of your own communities and countries. I trust that this week's Youth Parliament will inspire and empower as you return to your homes.

For those of you unable to attend the Remembrance Day ceremony and luncheon later this morning, I want to wish you a safe journey home and all the best in your future endeavours. Thank you so very much for visiting British Columbia.

Craig James (Clerk, Legislative Assembly of British Columbia):
Good morning, everybody. Let me start by thanking all of the youth parliamentarians. The success of this program relies on your participation and engagement. So thank you for your contributions throughout the week.

I think that when you started this exercise at the beginning of the week, none of you knew each other except those who were travelling from the same jurisdiction. You wondered, probably, what you were getting yourself into. Now you know. You're probably leaving, we hope, with some remorse — that perhaps this event could have lasted longer or that it will occur again and that all of you could be in the same place one more time, at least.

I would also like to thank everyone who provided support in making this event possible, from Madame Speaker through

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all of the employees of the Legislative Assembly and those at Government House who put on just a fabulous time for us last night. Of course, who can forget about the entertainment?

I think we can all agree that this Youth Parliament has been a memorable and an enjoyable time. We certainly hope so.

It has been fascinating to watch friendships develop during the CYP8 over the last few days. I've had the opportunity to attend some international conferences during the course of my career, and I assure you that these connections you have made here at CYP8 will last a lifetime. We certainly hope so.

The CPA Youth Parliament program focused on parliamentary democracy. As you likely noticed, a great deal of the House proceedings followed procedures based on history, tradition and practice. However, keep in mind that although parliamentary democracy is rooted in history, it is evolutionary in nature. Much has changed since the earliest days of parliament, and much continues to change.

During the House proceedings of the past few days, we saw many different approaches and perspectives during your debates. There are many ways to make parliamentary democracy work, and this is one such vehicle, one such important vehicle, that enables that to do so.

CYP8 was the beginning of a conversation that I encourage all of you to continue. As I've said before, when you return to your home jurisdictions, make sure that you promote the CPA and all of the great work that it does. Try, to the best of your ability — throughout your early careers, maybe your later careers — to get more actively involved in parliament, perhaps politics or parliamentary life, by way of becoming a member, standing for election or as parliamentary staff. Seek ways to share what you have learned, and continue on the road of professional development.

On behalf of everyone here at the Legislative Assembly, it has been a pleasure hosting all of you.

I will now turn the floor over to your youth leaders to provide their closing comments.

It's been an honour and a privilege having you with us this week — meeting all of you, speaking with you, hearing you debate, and the collective rapport that all of you have had together now, this time going forward.

[1000]

I hope that over the course of the coming months and years, at least some of you, if not all of you, manage somehow to reconnect or to remain connected. Thank you very much.



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Hon. Ashvini Savanthrapadian: Good morning, everyone. It has been a whirlwind of a week, but we made it.

In New Zealand, there's a Maori proverb which goes: "*He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.*" It means: "What is the most important thing in the world? It is the people. It is the people. It is the people." This is not only a metaphor for parliamentary democracy. It perfectly captures the most valuable part of my experience here at the Commonwealth Youth Parliament.

This week I had the pleasure of meeting a wealth of inspiring individuals from across the Commonwealth in the form of youth parliamentarians, mentors, government officials, organizers and the many, many others involved in making this event a reality. If nothing else — although, believe me, there are many other things — what will forever stick with me from this experience is the multitude of genuine connections I have made with the people I have met this week.

On behalf of us all, I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Meenakshi Dhar and her team here from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, without whom we simply would not be here today.

I would also like to extend a special thank-you to all the mentors and also, in particular, to those who worked with the Progressive Party: MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert, MSP Kate Forbes and MP Chathura Sandeepa Senaratne. Your wisdom and counsel this week have been second to none. We truly appreciate your time and patience in helping our newly formed government to learn to govern.

Equally, to you, Madame Speaker, Mr. Craig James, Ms. Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Ms. Susan Sourial, Ms. Allison Lloyd, Mr. Artour Sogomonian and the myriad of others on your team. None of this would have been possible without you. Thank you for your support, for co-hosting this event in beautiful Victoria and for your constant willingness to guide us, even through the moments of mild chaos that the Progressives sometimes found themselves in.

This leads nicely to our opposition members. Thank you for challenging us through excellent debate and for holding us to account with intellect and candour. The opposition has played a crucial role in this Youth Parliament, and we have thoroughly enjoyed debating, answering questions and raising points of order with them this past week.

A special thank-you to my illustrious counterpart the Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Delpiano; the deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mr. McDonnell; and opposition Whip, Mr. Haughton, for your hard work, dedication and good humour this week.

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Lastly, I wish to say a personal thank-you to the members of the Progressive Party. Thank you for electing me as your Premier and for having confidence in my ability to lead you through the Commonwealth Youth Parliament. This has been an incredible opportunity for me, and it has been an absolute pleasure and privilege to lead you.

I have been in awe at the calibre of speeches and responses from all the youth parliamentarians this week. It has been truly humbling and inspiring to hear your voices.

Thank you to my members of cabinet, who so ably managed their portfolios that I never needed to worry. And a huge thank-you to my deputy leader, Ms. Hussain, and Whip, Mr. Kerr, without whom I could not have done this. For one, I certainly would not have had the stamina to do as many laps of the chamber as Mr. Kerr has clocked up in only three days.

To conclude, it is the people that have made this parliament what it was. “It is the people. It is the people. It is the people.”

Elise Delpiano: I would like to reiterate the comments that the hon. Premier across from me has said here in the fact that it has been such an absolute privilege to be here today. Never, as I boarded the plane in Sydney on Saturday morning, would I have imagined that I would have the privilege to stand here before all of you as a Leader of the Opposition, as a member of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament and, certainly, as a member of a greater variety of people who come from all corners of the Commonwealth who have been so incredibly inspiring throughout the course of this week.

[1005]

I would like to thank the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in New South Wales for nominating me and all of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association branches for their organization and support of this Youth Parliament.

We have all come to this place with different life experiences and political views. But it is commendable to all of us here that we have been able to work together, albeit sometimes with a heated debate, to pass important legislation and discuss issues affecting all people across our Commonwealth.

Despite the fact that this government continued to make idealistic plans on the fly and that this opposition held them accountable time after time again, we have managed to overcome our differences and work together for the benefit of all in Commonwealthland.

I hope each and every youth parliamentarian here takes these experiences back with them to their respective Commonwealth

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nations. I hope each and every one of you savours the last moments you have here in this House, in this incredibly special place, a home of democracy, and never forgets what you have learned here and throughout the course of this week.

I would like to wish the delegates from the British Virgin Islands all the best for the Ninth Commonwealth Youth Parliament, which I'm sure will be just as fantastic as we have experienced here today.

Thank you to the CPA; the British Columbia Legislature; yourself, Madame Speaker; mentors; and all my fellow youth parliamentarians, from whom I have learnt so much. I hope our paths cross again in the future. I can't wait to see what the future holds — not for you as the leaders of tomorrow but for the leaders of today.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): From the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat, Ms. Meenakshi Dhar.

Meenakshi Dhar (Director of Programmes, CPA Secretariat): At the CPA, we see young people as assets to a country's development, and we believe you should be empowered to realize your potential. As such, our annual Commonwealth Youth Parliament is one of our most important programs, and we are delighted that you could all join us.

This is the first time that the Commonwealth Youth Parliament has been hosted in Canada, and it is particularly exciting to be here in British Columbia in the year that the Legislative Assembly is celebrating the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote — a fitting theme for this year, when the Commonwealth Youth Parliament has, for the first time since becoming an annual event, had women both at the head of government and of the opposition.

Young people have a proven capability to lead change and are a vital and valuable investment for now and the future. As the CPA Secretary-General noted in his opening speech, it is precisely the energy, imagination and views of young people that the CYP aims to capture. I believe we have done exactly that.

As our young parliamentarians, I know you will agree with me that parliament is the key pillar of any functioning democracy. In fact, it is difficult to imagine what kind of democracy can exist without an effective parliament that scrutinizes governments and ensures transparency while promoting good governance. Furthermore, there can be no democracy where the voices of our citizens are not heard or amplified through a strong and independent parliament.

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The CYP was designed to demonstrate to potential future young parliamentarians the fundamentals behind the processes of parliament. It seeks to show, to some extent, how most Commonwealth parliaments are able to make legislation, to debate matters of national and international concern, to demand accountability from those in government, to make use of committees and to make and enforce their own rules of conduct, practice and behaviour.

I would like to thank you all very sincerely, our young Commonwealth parliamentarians, for joining us at 8CYP. It is my sincere hope that over the week, this program has offered you an opportunity to experience one of the key institutions which underpins democracy and good governance and has helped you to appreciate the skills that are required for sound debate and the other aspects of the legislative process.

Mr. James said in his opening remarks this week that every legislature is a microcosm of society in that it represents the wide range of backgrounds. You, as the Commonwealth Youth Parliament, are no different.

[1010]

As young people under 30, you represent a demographic that makes up 60 percent of the Commonwealth. Selected by your parliaments, you represent 22 nations and 32 jurisdictions. I know that the significance of this exercise will last in your memories as you prepare for possible future careers in parliament. I also believe that this opportunity will provide you with the knowledge to make you a better and more informed citizen of the Commonwealth.

I think you will agree with me, however, that this program has not been solely focused on the principles of parliamentary democracy but has largely centred around those of openness, inclusion and friendship. You have taken the rare opportunity to interact with your counterparts from across the world, forging friendships over the course of the CYP that span oceans and continents. I am sure they will be maintained on your return to your home jurisdictions.

The CPA each year holds an annual CPA conference for our own members, where we report back on our work to member jurisdictions, which you represent. The Youth Parliament is, of course, one of the key programs we will report on this year, and who better equipped to speak about it than yourselves? As such, those of you that would be interested in presenting your experience of this Youth Parliament at the next CPA conference, in 2017, please do indicate your interest and leave your names with my colleague Arlene, if you would like to speak on behalf of this Youth Parliament.



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I'd like to thank you all for your engagement over the course of this program and for taking time to provide us with valuable feedback, which we will be using to shape the Ninth Commonwealth Youth Parliament, hosted by the Parliament of the British Virgin Islands, on behalf of the Caribbean region.

With your assistance, we will work to develop and refine the Commonwealth Youth Parliament year by year and engage even more bright and enthusiastic young people from all corners of the Commonwealth. I thank you, but before I depart this podium, I'd like to, on behalf of the CPA and on behalf of you all, to make some small tokens of appreciation to our hosts here at the British Columbia Legislature.

A rather fetching goody bag for Madame Speaker.

For Mr. James, the Clerk. Thank you so much.

For Kate Ryan-Lloyd, our Deputy Clerk.

For Ms. Allison, thank you so much for coming all the way from Yukon.

And to Artour, who's kept us on time and on schedule every morning.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Thank you, Meenakshi.

I call upon the Hon. Ingrid Moses-Scatliffe, Speaker of the British Virgin Islands House of Assembly.

Hon. Ingrid Moses-Scatliffe (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Madame Speaker, hon. Members, mentors, Clerks and Deputy Clerks, youth parliamentarians, CPA personnel — good morning. It's an honour and privilege for me to have witnessed and participated, albeit for a small part, in this, the Eighth Commonwealth Youth Parliament.

It's a very exciting program, which I find both informative and engaging. To see youth parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth in this Legislative Assembly actively participating in parliament and robust debates is an experience that I am very glad I was able to observe.

You are a dynamic and inspiring group of young people with much to offer your respective communities, country and parliament. Kudos to all of you.

To the Secretary-General of the CPA and all of the support staff, this is an excellent program and one that can only benefit youth parliamentarians around the Commonwealth. I thank you for all that you do and continue to do to help advance the ideals of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

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To Speaker Reid and the staff of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, I extend a heartfelt thank-you for your generous and kind hospitality in hosting this year's Youth Parliament and for setting the bar for us to follow. I will take all that we have learned and implement and tweak to ensure that the Ninth CPA Youth Parliament is also a success.

It would be remiss if I didn't thank our government and the governments of all of the Commonwealth countries represented here for their commitment and support of parliamentary democracy. It is a testament to them ensuring that requisite training takes place so that the youth, all of you, can make an easier transition to whatever role that you may decide to take up in your respective country or territory. The future is secure, and the evidence is right before us here today.

We — and I'm speaking on behalf of the entire House of Assembly of the British Virgin Islands — look forward to hosting the Ninth Commonwealth Youth Parliament in Nature's Little Secrets and furthering the commitment of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the various governments in ensuring that future generations are prepared to take up their leadership role.

I thank you.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): I call upon Rea Vanterpool.

Rea Vanterpool: Good morning, everyone.

Guys, if it was up to me, I would talk about everything. The inspirational and educational sessions conducted by our mentors — who, from what I can tell, probably have their respective Legislative Assemblies on fire on a regular basis. Or the absolutely thrilling debate sessions, where points of order were very much the order of the day. Or the introductions each day, where we got to learn a little bit more about where we all come from. Unfortunately, time is limited.

When reflecting, it's always rewarding for me to focus on one thing that truly fills my heart with gratitude. For me, it is that in the British Virgin Islands, we launched our Youth Parliament just last year. I am 28 years old. I guess that makes me most grateful that the Commonwealth definition of youth is not that of Commonwealthland as outlined in the Youth Apprenticeship and Internship Act, or I would not be here. I do not take for granted the opportunity to represent my territory in this capacity.

As I listened to the issues raised by fellow youth parliamentarians, from human rights violations to the neglect of aging populations, I was reminded of how different our life experiences are. Our diversity

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shows up not only in our parents or our culture but also through issues facing our jurisdictions. It is apparent in our personalities, our interests, our abilities and our weaknesses. When we truly celebrate all the ways that we are different, we can more fully appreciate how partnerships can bring about change.

I will be the first to tell you that I am not very good at keeping in touch, but I urge all of us to take the friendships that we started cultivating here and turn them into partnerships to confront the issues facing our regions and our Commonwealth.

I thank the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for recognizing the importance of engaging young people meaningfully and for honouring that we can be contributors right now. Every issue is a youth issue. We live in these communities. We will not inherit them, as people love to tell us. They are already ours. We are the ones who will create the practical, innovative solutions that are needed to make our communities prosperous.

Finally, thank you to everyone who played a part in carrying out this conference, especially to Madame Speaker Reid for her continued efforts to engage young persons across the Commonwealth.

We leave today, and we leave tomorrow. I think we can all agree that this legislative chamber is going to miss us.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): We will definitely miss you.

We opened this House with a poem from Zoé Duhaime, and we have the absolute privilege of closing this House with Mr. Jabari Lynch.

Jabari Lynch: Please forgive the reoccurrence of this poem once again. We are doing this for the sake of posterity in terms of a legacy that you have all laid here over the past couple of days.

[1020]

My soup is oily.
Globs of oil float and tote no weights on their backs.
Streams of heat rise from the soup,
soup simmering through cracks of being as the components
correlate and coagulate.
My father made the soup. My father made the bowl.
Soup swimming in it. Boy, my soup is oily.
I gaze at its rhythmic formation. My spoon moving like the
hand of God.
This soup, bubbling. My spoon, moving like Moses's rod to
those deep, oily seas.
Soup bubbles, lava-like. Dumplings bump into little peas.
Pieces of garlic slip on pumpkin bits. My spoon is moving.
They dance so cohesively — spaghetti slur and celery stalk,
carrot drop and a spot of black pepper.
All these different ingredients cascade and parade so happily.

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The scent, soft, sweet to the nose, is greeted.
All these different paths together. All these different paths
make a whole.
All these different paths, yet wholly, all together, all blend to
make a unique flavour.
Because carrot can't be carved without dumpling,
and pumpkin without lentils loses its something.
Know they're different — together but different.
Yet no black pepper revolution over garlic coups,
no dashing dictatorships, no potato bourgeoisie, no 400 years
of carrot charter sous-vide, marinate together.
Bound by the boundaries of the bowl made by my father and
your father,
my spoon moves and takes and grabs.
All bits fall into my throat, into my stomach, into the place of
being and not being,
the divine hope that we may one day hope to grasp.
So if it wasn't for being eaten, I wouldn't mind swimming in
that soupy utopia
made by my father. My father and ours.

[Applause.]

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): Government House Leader.

Hon. Jordan Kerr: In dark and unknown times, we should light a candle rather than start a fire. Sometimes it is better to accept finite disappointment yet never lose infinite hope.

With these closing remarks, I move that the Eighth Commonwealth Youth Parliament be dissolved, thus ushering the way for a new cohort of young people from across the Commonwealth to embark on this journey in preparation for the sitting of the Ninth Commonwealth Youth Parliament in the British Virgin Islands in 2017.

Motion approved.

Hon. Linda Reid (Speaker of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament): The Eighth Commonwealth Youth Parliament is now adjourned.

The House adjourned at 10:22 a.m.



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