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4TH SESSION, 37TH PARLIAMENT

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Morning Sitting

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2003

The House met at 10:03 a.m.

[H. Long in the chair.]

Prayers.

Private Members' Statements

TAKING CARE OF SENIORS

J. Nuraney: It was in 1967 that we first heard the Beatles ask the famous question: "Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm 64?" Well, here we are nearly four decades later, and some of us are just now beginning to take that line a little more seriously.

[1005]

Some of our constituents may find it difficult to fully understand and appreciate the concerns that B.C. seniors have for their future, but rest assured that this government has done an outstanding job to reach out to the people, to hear their concerns and to provide them with a social system that ensures they will be cared for when they need our help.

I would like to talk about a few of those success stories. Hopefully, we can bring a little peace of mind to the constituents who may have some questions about what direction we are taking to provide for their future needs. About 550,000 British Columbians, close to 13 percent of our population, are over the age of 65. Over the next 25 years that population will grow to 670,000, or 21 percent of the population.

Our seniors are living much longer than the generation past, and that is good news, in my opinion. They are enjoying more active, healthier lives. It is no surprise that they desire a better health care system and options than those provided under the previous governments. Independent Living B.C. is this government's innovative approach to providing seniors with greater independence and a better quality of life. The program is part of the provincial government's new-era commitment to provide 5,000 new intermediate and long-term care spaces before the year 2006. Since June of 2001 the government has opened 663 new independent living units with support services and 811 new residential care beds across the province. In my region, the Fraser health authority provides more than 7,000 residential care beds and is committed to adding another 1,100 assisted-living units by the year 2006.

In most cases assisted-living units are self-contained, barrier-free apartments. Tenants are provided with hospitality services such as housekeeping and laundry services, a 24-hour emergency response system and recreational opportunities. Meals are also sometimes provided on occasions. One recent project that springs to my mind is the announcement that was made this summer with respect to the Royal Crescent Gardens, a development in Maple Ridge. It is there that 45 seniors will be provided with the first publicly funded assisted-living development in that commu-

nity, which is great news for our health region. As of last year the Fraser health authority also offered 19 adult day program centres, with the equivalent of 237 spaces available for seniors each day.

These are excellent programs that ensure our seniors stay active physically and mentally. They provide opportunities for health officials to tend to the health needs of seniors as they're needed day by day. As for the home care nursing, the most recent statistics show that in the Fraser health region alone, more than 10,000 clients are receiving close to 200,000 visits per year. Of those clients, just about half are discharged from home nursing care fully rehabilitated. That's excellent news. This shows that we can deliver excellent health care services at home without unnecessarily burdening our hospitals.

[1010]

But for those cases in which hospitalization is unavoidable, British Columbia has an excellent delivery system for long-term care. As of August 2002, there are 93 facilities in the Fraser health region providing 7,660 long-term care beds. The staff at these care facilities are highly trained, highly dedicated and extremely compassionate.

What I am getting at is that seniors in B.C. appear to have a very diverse area of options available to tend to all sorts of health care needs. I'm wondering if perhaps the minister could tell us a little more about what sort of other projects are on the horizon, which will be of interest to our constituents looking ahead in their later lives.

Hon. K. Whittred: I want to congratulate the member for his very insightful comments about seniors care and particularly for his insightfulness into the contribution of the Fraser health authority, which has been a leader in the area of seniors care. I want to focus just for a moment on his very first statement: "Will you still need me when I'm 64?" Well, the answer is yes, and I think I want to just celebrate the contribution of seniors for a moment.

It seems to me that when we talk about seniors, too often we confine our remarks to those who are vulnerable and who are not well. I would like to remind the members, however, that the vast majority of seniors live independently. They contribute to their communities. They contribute to the economy. I can't help but notice that when we talk about this 13 percent of the population that is over 65, we've just selected as our new Prime Minister a person who falls into that category. I don't mind acknowledging that some of us in this House are nearing this magic age of 64 or 65. I think that we all want to feel like we are needed and supported.

I can't help but remember that just a few months ago we were celebrating the Olympic bid and that our bid committee was led by a senior. So seniors, in fact, play a very, very valuable role in the social life, the life of government and the life of the economy throughout not only our province but Canada and the world.

However, there are those segments of seniors who are vulnerable and who do need our support, and that

is the group of people that we in government most often target for our initiatives. I like to think that the fact that this group of people is growing represents one of the most amazing successes of our most recent generation. You know that my great grandparents, and this is going back two generations.... I don't think that any of them — well, one of them — lived beyond the age of 70. The others were all gone by the age of 70. Today most people are alive much, much longer than that, and of course we know now that the longevity has reached well into the eighties in terms of an average life span.

The member opposite in his remarks did a very good job of focusing on the kinds of supports that we as a government are trying to develop for our vulnerable seniors. I don't know how many of the members saw a recent article in *B.C. Business Magazine* written by the commentator Bill Good. In it he talks about aging and how his generation — 50-something, our soon-to-be seniors — are going to be demanding a whole range of choices and are not going to be content to sit back and not have the kinds of supports they feel they need. This is exactly what we as a government are trying to prepare for.

[1015]

I think one of the things our government has done that sets us apart from others is that we have decided we are going to plan for this very significant number of seniors who are going to be living, in the next several generations.

The challenge for government is to find themselves the options to provide the range of supports in housing as was mentioned by the member opposite. He mentioned assisted living. That is one option. Other kinds of supports in terms of independent options are other options. The other great challenge is affordability. It is not a challenge for people who have money. That is an easy option. The challenge for government is: how do we prepare and how do we provide a range of choices, whether it be home care or whether it be various kinds of housing, that are in fact going to be affordable for those people who are the most vulnerable?

With those comments, I once again thank the member for his comments. I really commend him on the communication that he keeps with his local health authority.

J. Nuraney: I thank the minister for elaborating on some of our points. As she was making her statement, she said repeatedly that special care is going to be taken for those who are vulnerable. For those who are a little better off in our society, it's needless to say that they have the means to take care of themselves. It is those vulnerable groups, the sector, that really need to be paid special attention. I was very pleased to hear the compassion with which the minister spoke about some of these challenges, and that it is in good hands.

At this point, I would also like to say that we must be very cognizant of the fact that our seniors are our parents and the elders in our society. It is because of them that we are enjoying the fruits of their labour

today. Their pioneering spirit, their tending to our needs when we were young, their hard work, their care in raising us and providing us with education and the tools to sustain our lives have been achieved with great sacrifices. They did their part and did it very well at that, if I may say so.

If I may, I would like to submit that it is now our turn to ensure that they have a secure environment to spend the rest of their days in comfort, free of fear, and to provide assistance at every level that their needs demand. I have no doubt in my mind that our government is determined to fulfil our part of the bargain.

YOUTH IN PHILANTHROPY

S. Orr: I want to talk to you today about the notion of philanthropy and what that means in our society. According to the dictionary, it means: "Disposition of effort to promote the happiness or social elevation of mankind by making donations, and love or benevolence to mankind in general." So what exactly does that mean? It means good people who have acquired wealth through good fortune, hard work or circumstance, and have chosen not to hoard that wealth but to share it with others.

This often refers to people of great wealth, and some of the famous philanthropists of the past are people like Jane Addams. Who was Jane Addams? Well, she was born in 1860 and is credited as the founder of social work. She was actually the first generation of privileged women who did not have to marry in order to live well — that sounds good to me — because of her inherited wealth. Rather than just taking it easy, as a lot of people and privileged wealthy did in those days, Jane Addams devoted her life to social causes and activism.

Andrew Carnegie was one of the world's greatest philanthropists and also one of the wealthiest men who ever lived. Cesar Chavez was born in 1927. He was a noted civil rights activist and a crusader for non-violent social change. His life is a testament to the fact that philanthropy is about more than giving away money.

[1020]

There are thousands and thousands of kind-hearted people who understand the benefits of philanthropy, like Henry Ford; Benjamin Franklin; John D. Rockefeller; and people in our modern day like Andre Agassi, the tennis player; Doug Flutie, the football player; British Columbia's own Michael J. Fox, who created the Foundation for Parkinson's Research; and other great Canadians like Neil Young, one of my favourites.

What was it that inspired these people to become philanthropists? How do you create philanthropists and foster good citizenship? I would like to think that it was by example — someone they had admired who had done the same thing or something, perhaps, they had been taught in school. That is why I'm up today to talk about this subject.

Here in Victoria we are blessed to have an organization called the Victoria Foundation, which was estab-

lished in 1936. In fact, it's the second-oldest foundation in the country. The Victoria Foundation manages more than \$27 million in permanent endowment funds and \$42 million in trust. Now the Victoria Foundation has just launched a pilot project called Youth in Philanthropy. This is an in-school extracurricular program designed to get young people engaged in supporting charitable organizations and strengthening their communities.

This is the first phase of this philanthropic project, and to date three of our local high schools have agreed to participate. These schools are Oak Bay high school — I had a child graduate from that school; Belmont senior school — I had a child graduate from that school; and Victoria High School — I had a child graduate from that school. Yes, I had a lot of children.

Each school receives \$3,000 in startup funds with more dollars to come as the young people launch their own fundraising projects. As they raise more money, they will have more to grant out. Each high school will form a youth advisory committee that decides how to allocate their funds. They will examine their own values and goals, and then they will set their own goals.

There are four components to this project: firstly, the introductory exercise — that's the in-school session; secondly, the reviewing of the charities, and this is to determine which charity they would like to work with; thirdly, endowment-building, and this is the fundraising activity. Then lastly, which is the good part, is the grant-making which, of course, for these students will be the most rewarding.

This project will not only help local charities, but it will help students gain hands-on and hearts-on experience in philanthropy. Over the centuries philanthropists collectively have probably given, I would guess, zillions of dollars. I never thought I would ever use that word — "zillions" of dollars. It's as much as...

Interjection.

S. Orr: ...the Speaker has. You're right.

Many things throughout the world would not have happened without these donations. The world is by far a better place because of philanthropy.

I have to say that I am incredibly proud that this community, through the Victoria Foundation and this project with our students, is setting the stage for future citizens who I think will learn about the benefits of giving. Who knows where or what these students will achieve in their lifetime? This learning could maybe bring along many other future philanthropists, and they will all continue to make our world and our community a better place to live.

S. Brice: I am pleased to rise in response to the member for Victoria-Hillside, who has brought to this chamber this morning an issue that I don't recall having been canvassed in my time here. That is this issue of philanthropy, planned giving, generosity and all of those things that touch on the remarks that the member has brought here this morning.

[1025]

First of all, I too, like the member for Victoria-Hillside, want to recognize the work of the Victoria Foundation. I did have the honour of serving as a director on the Victoria Foundation at one time and was one in a long line of people in our community who had the privilege of serving on that well-established foundation and making determinations that would affect the lives of so many people.

The foundation, of course, is about philanthropy, but it's also about stewardship. I think the difference in being able to make a determination about how other people's generosity is spent is what elevates an organization like the Victoria Foundation. It's one thing for me to go about and determine things that are important to me and take the money that I have earned and donate to those worthy causes. But in the foundation — and this, of course, is what these young people are going to learn — when other people's generosity is amassed, and then you have the privilege of making a determination about how their dollars are going to be allocated, this is going to give these young people a wonderful opportunity and an insight into the very serious issue of where we give our charitable dollars.

Well, why expand to the youth? As the member for Victoria-Hillside points out, the Victoria Foundation has been established for many, many years. So why would they choose to expand it to youth? I suspect that the directors on the Victoria Foundation recognize that they have to be nurturing tomorrow's donors and also tomorrow's directors on organizations like the Victoria Foundation.

What will these youth learn? Well, as I have said, when they're there, they will learn that not only is it a serious matter when you determine yourself how you're going to spend your own charitable dollars, but when you're entrusted with the responsibility of allocating other people's precious given dollars, that raises it to a much higher level of responsibility. They will also learn that there are many worthy causes calling for the philanthropic dollar. They will grow to learn that any number of issues in health care, social services and the environment, to name just a few, will come with very good programs. These young people will have to work together to examine the requests and to discern where it is best for these dollars to go. They will learn to be discerning about which dollars donated at this time can do the most good for the most people.

I bring this up because this is certainly a very worthy thing — charitable giving — and no doubt is given across the board regardless of political stripe. But there are some parties — not the party on this side of the House — that could claim that government is responsible for taking care of all of the issues in society. But those communities that have a strong social program supported by the generosity, the giving and the charitable insight of the citizens within that community gain something far bigger than government is ever going to be able to do. They have gained the love of their fellow citizens.

So I would like to echo the member for Victoria-Hillside's comments that these youngsters will learn

hands-on, they will learn hearts-on, and I would also add that they will learn a heads-on examination of dollars given to worthy organizations for maximum value. I applaud the member for Victoria-Hillside for bringing this issue to the chamber this morning.

[1030]

S. Orr: Thank you to the member for Saanich South for her kind words.

This is the first phase of this project, and I personally believe that it will eventually run in many high schools in the region. It could possibly run in many high schools throughout the province. The reason I believe that is that we do have great kids. Unfortunately, we only ever read about the bad apples. They tend to get the press, and we all know that they are few. Most of the youth today are bright, intelligent, confident and very socially conscious. When I think back to my days as a youth — and I chuckle, because I'm really stretching the thoughts here — I can tell you I did not have any understanding to the level that these kids have today.

I am excited about this. I am very excited about the Youth in Philanthropy project, and I believe that the youth who get involved in this program will make a huge difference to our community. Because our youth have such exuberance and I think many other students in other schools will hear about it, this will catch on. My hope is that this program will grow and grow, and at the end of the day, a better life will be created for a lot of people.

Well done, Victoria Foundation, for putting this project together and a huge applause for the students who are getting involved.

NEIGHBOURHOODS GOING TO POT: THE RISKS IN OUR BACK YARD

R. Stewart: I want to speak today about grow ops. Marijuana grow ops are an enormous problem. Marijuana use, as we all know, is growing, and new drugs as well are putting pressure on our young people — pressures that didn't exist when I was young.

Included among those pressures is the issue of grow ops. It has been recognized that virtually every neighbourhood in our communities, and in communities across the province, contains a grow op. Every week Coquitlam RCMP receive about three calls about suspected grow ops. These calls come from concerned neighbours, from utility companies, from fire departments and from others. This is way more than the local police force can handle, and it's not just here in B.C. of course. It's in Alberta, it's in Ontario, it's in Quebec, and other communities across the country are facing this problem. It is a serious problem of neighbourhoods. It affects neighbourhoods; it puts people at risk.

In my own neighbourhood recently — about ten houses away, on my daughter's paper route — there were two grow ops side by side. They were shut down several days before Halloween after the neighbours, including myself, expressed concerns about our suspi-

cions because of the constant loss of power that several homes were facing as a result of an overheated transformer. Now, when we were young, Halloween was a magical time. There was lots to fear as we ventured around trick-or-treating. But of all the things we feared, all of them were in costume, and we weren't in the kind of danger that parents worry about today.

People will die because of grow ops, and neighbourhoods will be destroyed. There are other concerns, of course. There is theft of power, which most grow ops — a lot of grow ops — initiate. By some estimates, it's \$50 million per year, and that's out of our pockets — out of the pockets of ratepayers, B.C. Hydro's ratepayers. There are burned-out transformers, such as we saw in our neighbourhood, and other electrical equipment that's overheated. There are risks to utility employees that are saddled with the task of anticipating the kinds of risks that exist from unapproved electrical changes to people's homes. Of course, it puts firefighters at risk. Firefighters are often the first ones called in the case where something went wrong in a grow op and a fire has started. They can be faced with chemical exposure and the possibility of a booby trap in order to protect the grow op. Firefighters worry a lot about those risks.

Let's face it. Because of the enormous power needs of a grow op, many operators attempt to bypass the electrical meter so as to avoid detection by B.C. Hydro for the inordinately large power consumption. This often creates the kinds of electrical hazards and fire hazards that don't exist in regular homes in our neighbourhoods. We don't want our firefighters and our communities exposed to such risks. There's also a big draw on public resources such as police, fire, hydro and other community response services that get tied up when a grow op is discovered.

[1035]

Of course, we know that a great many grow ops are linked to organized crime of some type. There are links to meth labs and speed labs and other illegal activity. We know that the national number of makeshift labs discovered in Canada is growing from virtually none five years ago to more than 40 uncovered last year. B.C. accounts for half of them.

We also know now that grow-op rips — they're called grow rips — are a growing problem. That's where criminals use violence to rip off grow ops. They find someone that has spent two and a half months growing a crop of marijuana, and they decide on a home invasion to essentially harvest the crop and gather the profits for themselves. Now, one might think that's entirely justified, but there are innocent victims of that. We know that in some cases, a home invasion has occurred at the wrong home. We also know that a grow op will necessarily try to protect its crop and that we've seen people die as a result of grow rips.

There's one more personal concern that I heard as I was reviewing this issue. It happens not necessarily with organized crime but with homeowners who are now faced with the news stories about how prevalent

grow ops are. I spoke with one person who felt this issue very personally when a close relative was electrocuted. He and his wife had made the unfortunate choice to try to supplement their income by growing marijuana. He was electrocuted because of a mistake he'd made in establishing the grow op's electrical system. This is a great example of the associated problems affecting the whole community when someone decides to grow pot in their basement. Their neighbours, friends, family, employers, etc., all feel the consequences of those choices.

What causes those choices? What causes organized crime and grow ops to become so prevalent? Well, the law and the courts don't deal with the issue of grow ops aggressively enough. Incarceration is almost unheard of, and 82 percent of people convicted of growing marijuana don't receive incarceration or a significant fine. You can be convicted as many as seven times before you get jail time. For example, in the lower mainland there will be some 2,000 to 3,000 grow ops reported this year. Almost none will result in jail time. Just south of us in Whatcom County, there will be perhaps ten this year. In each case a conviction will result in jail, even on the first offence.

As well, the resources of police. In the Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam areas some 150 to 200 grow-op tips per year will be reported to police. Police will eventually get inside about 30 or 40 of them with limited resources. Very time-consuming investigations are involved in trying to get convictions — and the difficulty of getting warrants and the difficulty of getting charges laid. There are tools such as infrared cameras that are no longer available to police for a number of reasons.

I've got four kids, and my community and my neighbourhood are very important to me. I know that exists across my community. The issue of grow ops in our community and the issues of drug use and drug abuse are enormous problems that we as parents and we as communities must come to grips with.

Hon. G. Cheema: I would like to thank the member for his remarks. This member has been an exceptional advocate for mental health and addiction in our province.

[1040]

I would like to start my comments with some statistics. In 1994 a Health Canada report found that 23 percent of Canadians had used marijuana in their lifetime. A 2003 survey found that the rate was 44 percent. British Columbia had the highest use, with 53 percent of the residents reporting they had used marijuana in their lifetime and 14 percent reporting use in the past year.

Here is another statistic. Most frequently, the reported age of first use of marijuana is 13 years — only 13 years old. A lower mainland youth drug use survey in 2000 found that 62 percent of youth aged 12 to 25 used marijuana, and 19 percent had used methamphetamine. Although these substances are illegal, the use and demand are increasing. The regular heavy use

of marijuana may lead to a tolerance, and heavy long-term use can cause dependence.

Long-term effects of smoking marijuana include risk of lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and other lung diseases. Excessive doses of methamphetamine like crystal meth can cause mental confusion, serial anxiety, paranoia, violence and psychosis. Long-term effects include memory loss, difficulty completing complex tasks, brain damage and permanent psychotic symptoms. Crystal meth may also induce schizophrenia.

Parents, schools and the wider community must be involved in the educational efforts around drug use, and education needs to begin before the onset of harmful practices at ages eight, nine and ten. It does not help to preach to youth, and it does not help to use scare tactics to try and prevent youth from using drugs. Parents need to educate themselves first and talk with their children about the problematic use of illegal drugs and legal drugs, and I suggest that parents need to talk with their children rather than talk to their children.

The discussion should include the harm associated with drugs and alcohol, and parents should determine whether it's more effective to talk about the prevention of drug abuse rather than the prevention of drug use. This discussion should occur at the breakfast table, at the lunch table and at the dinner table. Parents need to shut off the TV and talk to their children. Healthy and resilient kids with good coping skills will be best able to make the right decisions when it comes to drug use.

Educating children honestly at a young age will enable them to make the right choices. It's important that we prepare them in an honest and informed way, because as long as there are illicit drugs, there will be a profit to be made. The profits of illegal grow ops and chemical labs are enormous, and the involvement of organized crime is integral to these operations. As a society, we cannot condone this criminal activity.

I would like to finish with a final comment. As I have said, profits will continue to be made from the illegal drugs, but it's important to recognize that the profits will continue to be made from legal drugs as well. The costs to society as a whole from alcohol and tobacco use are still the greatest by far.

R. Stewart: I want to thank the Minister of State for Mental Health. Included in his portfolio is the portion of our government's work on addictions, and that's tremendously important. With four children, the oldest of which is 17, I understand fully the pressure that parents are now facing with the issue of addictions in our society. It's tremendously important that we sit down with our children and work on them to reduce the demand for illegal drugs.

At the same time, it's important that we as a society come to grips with the issue of drug manufacture and drug trafficking. We know we cannot change drug behaviour. We cannot tackle the drug problem only by restricting the supply of drugs. That never works. Prohibition doesn't work, but prohibition is one of the ways in which government and society can try to pro-

tect our children by supporting them as much as we possibly can.

On the issue of drug labs and grow ops, society must come to grips with it, must recognize its importance and must tackle it. We must have reasonable search warrant requirements. We should impose civil forfeiture of the proceeds of crime legislation that would put a reverse onus in place. We should have tougher sentencing of grow-op operators.

[1045]

The police want to tackle this problem. From my perspective, almost every member of a police force that I've ever met had a real drive to uphold the law and protect our society from the kinds of dangers associated with criminal activity. Those I've spoken with on this topic feel exactly that way — like Sgt. Steve Leclair of the Coquitlam RCMP and Cpl. Tim McKernan, in charge of the four-man drug investigation team for that police force.

Likewise, our fire departments. I spoke with Chief Gordon Buchanan of the Coquitlam fire department and with personnel at other fire departments, and they are all concerned about the risks to the public and to their firefighters who stumble upon a grow op.

We must stand up for our front-line police forces in their difficult battle against grow ops, and society must take the issue seriously. This issue can destroy neighbourhoods, and we must do everything we can to protect our neighbourhoods and our citizens. It's time we give our court system the imperative to tackle this issue as well.

Finally, as the minister says, addictions and drug use must be dealt with responsibly. Sure we need to tackle drug ops and the production and trafficking of drugs, but only an irresponsible government would stop there. We must go further and, as well, deal responsibly with addictions and the demand side of the equation so that at the end of the day, our society is better off, drug use is reduced in our society and the effects of it don't damage our children for generations to come.

FUTURE OF THE DOWNTOWN EAST SIDE

R. Nijjar: I have been graced by the people of Vancouver-Kingsway in British Columbia to represent them, especially on issues most profound. I would be remiss, then, to allow this opportunity to pass without carrying out my moral duty to address the issues of the downtown east side. Within the healthy and vibrant community of the downtown east side are those who, while being a small percentage of the population, garner most or all of the attention. So it should be, because they are our society's most needy.

I must stress that what we see in the downtown east side is our own creation. All of us in our society are responsible for the eventual outcomes of our social interactions, and it is easy for us to blame other organizations or people, including governments, for the situation. However, we are collectively to blame, and the solution will not lie within government alone. All lev-

els of governments, societies, organizations and individual citizens must play their role in saving the lives of our fellow community members who are so troubled and gathered in that neighbourhood in Vancouver.

Yes, this is about saving lives — nothing less. I do not accept that this is anything but a crisis. Each day we are losing lives — if not in body, then in soul. A truly compassionate people would not let those lesser minds amongst us, who do not have the courage to make fundamental changes, stand in their way. There will always be people trying to stop change as they lose sight of the lives and quibble about processes, details, the degree of individual rights and personal territory.

I ask British Columbians to look at what we have created. You judge whether this is right or wrong. In our society a child prostitute who is being pimped and is drug-addicted cannot be taken off the streets by her family or authorities and put into a caring, healthy program long enough to ensure rehabilitation and the safety of that child's life and protection from pimps. Why? Because of the right of the child for free will afforded under the Charter of Rights. What about their rights under the Charter for security and protection, shelter and food, and the right to be protected from abuse?

I do not consider this compassionate or acceptable. We have — all of us — a moral duty to save their lives, and sometimes that means taking steps outside of our own comfort zone, not overthinking our own intellect with self-gratifying interpretations of human rights and our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Of course, one of the difficulties is the cost of these social programs and figuring who should be providing funding for them. All the governments and society must come together and meet this financial challenge. This does not mean we necessarily need to spend more money. I came into politics for a reason. I will not allow my community to make a decision about the lives of my neighbours based on money when we are not even sure if there isn't enough money available. We could not possibly know, because we do not even know how much money we are spending in the downtown east side. Society will and must collectively find the resources to provide life-saving services when they are needed, and one of those ways is to rationalize the many service providers and public dollars in the downtown east side.

[1050]

I must state honestly that there is a culture of dependency perpetuated by the societies in the downtown east side for their own benefit and existence. Ultimately all governments, as the major funders of these societies, are responsible for the plethora of societies — many of which are doing overlapping work side by side without being held accountable for the spending of public dollars and for reporting outcomes. The three levels of government must work together to account for the dollars being fed into the downtown east side — account for the societies being funded and the purposes and outcomes, and create an overall funding strategy focusing on improving lives and measurable

outcomes — thus forcing the rationalization of these societies.

We all know that we cannot say how many societies there are in the downtown east side. We cannot say collectively how many taxpayer dollars go in there. Under former Premier Ujjal Dosanjh's reign, he had estimated there was \$300 million to \$400 million going there. It is impossible to say, because no assessment has ever been done. The audits of the societies are generally done and arbitrary, to a point where one is not sure of the outcomes of any one society or the overall outcomes.

Clearly, there are programs that are necessary, and we have to have governments come together collectively to do that rationalization. There are societies that will not like to hear that, but we cannot continue to try to appease societies and work in individual societies' interests. Many of them are doing good work, but the work has to be done with a collective vision, and that is what I'm asking for. Only then will we begin to find the money necessary for the programs that are much needed — coupled with the many other necessary steps, some which are being taken and some which must still be initiated — and see an improvement in our situation in the downtown east side.

V. Anderson: It's a privilege to rise and join with the member for Vancouver-Kingsway as we reflect upon the downtown east side of Vancouver.

On Thursday night of this week there is a different kind of play available to the public put on by the people of the downtown east side. It's called *In the Heart of the City*, and it will be reflecting the years of history of the heart of the city of Vancouver put on by the citizens who live in the heart of the city.

As I reflected upon the concerns we have about this particular community, I'm very much aware it's similar to those in the heart of every city across our province or across our country. We need to reflect that the heart might be in trouble, that there might be a new exercise regime that is needed for it or a new set of planning in its lifestyle. When we talk about the heart of the city, we need to reflect how, in our own particular circumstance in Vancouver, the heart of the city became the privileged place where people could go when they had nowhere else to go, where people could be accepted when they were not accepted in any other place within the community.

Initially, a good percentage of those who came into the heart of the city came out of the bush of our province. They were the men and the women who were damaged and crippled as they worked in the forest industry. When they had no place else to go, they went to the heart of the city, because there they were acknowledged, there they were respected, there they were appreciated and there they cared for each other. The caring for each other in the heart of the city is probably greater than any other part of the city in which we live.

Because of that caring, those who are having struggles with their economic life, their physical life, their

social life or their spiritual life tend to gravitate there from across the province and indeed from around the world. We have, in the women that have been lost in the heart of this city, all of the provinces touched, because they're the daughters, the wives, the grandchildren of those from across British Columbia. Looking at the heart of the city is a reflection of where we are as a total population.

[1055]

After the many years I've been involved there, one of the realities I find is a conflict between us trying to cure a problem after it has arisen or preventing a problem so it does not arise. Usually we try to cure it rather than try to prevent it.

I think that's what the member for Vancouver-Kingsway is raising. Are we going to plan cooperatively, working together to deal with the situations which caused the problems that are placed upon that particular community? Their problems come not from within the community. Their problems come from outside the community, and they're brought in. The children he talks about who are in prostitution initially, for the most part, were not residents of that community. They came there when they were fleeing some other family or community undertaking.

We must remember that for many years, we have reminded ourselves that it takes a community to raise a child. I hear the member for Vancouver-Kingsway saying: "When are we as a community going to come together and take responsibility for our children, take responsibility for those who have been damaged in their workplaces, in their homes, and have come here because it's a place of refuge?"

We must work together because no one group individually can satisfy the needs that are there. We must come together and plan not only as all levels of government but more particularly with all levels of the community, for it's important that we work not for the community but with the community. The community has many aspects. It has many concerns. But we realize that it is a place where many people are proud to live because it is the heart of the community, and it's the heart that needs our care.

R. Nijjar: I'd like to thank the member for Vancouver-Langara for his supporting comments.

I know what I say may be construed as overly aggressive and blunt. However, my comments are not born of ignorance or naïvety. Society is looking for leadership from our elected officials, and they're looking for clear, concise visions — not much of what we have seen in the past, which are softened comments with open-ended visions leaving political outlets.

My comments may offend some, especially the executives of the societies in the downtown east side, and so it may be. My goal is not to offend anyone. My goal is to speak what I see as a truth. If others agree with my comments, then we must act on the necessary steps against the pressures of the interest groups and protectionists.

I have little time for those who do not have an overriding vision for the downtown east side and those

who do not put the interests of the needy foremost in the vision and actions. Rationalization of the societies is necessary in order to ensure that taxpayers' dollars create the results the public expects. Rationalization is necessary to ensure that collectively we are doing our utmost to save the lives of our fellow citizens in the downtown east side. This will take plenty of political will and cooperation between the three levels of government. I have begun discussions with the appropriate people to see how we can account for the public dollars delivered by the three levels of government in this neighbourhood. I hope to continue on this front until we have accountability for public dollars.

Deputy Speaker: That concludes members' statements.

Hon. members, pursuant to standing orders, unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with motions 3, 57, 49 and 104 without disturbing the priorities of motions preceding them on the order paper.

Leave granted.

Hon. M. de Jong: Mr. Speaker, I call Motion 3.

Motions on Notice

ROLE OF AQUACULTURE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST NATIONS

(continued)

Deputy Speaker: Seeing no speakers on Motion 3, the question is: "Be it resolved that this House recognize the important role that an environmentally responsible aquaculture industry can play in economic development for First Nations."

Motion approved.

Hon. M. de Jong: I call Motion 57 and then 49 and 104.

[1100]

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY

(continued)

Deputy Speaker: The question is: "Be it resolved that this government actively supports alternative energy sources and that the provincial and federal government work towards developing renewable energy technology."

Motion approved.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

(continued)

Deputy Speaker: The question is: "Be it resolved that this House recognize the importance of improving

transportation infrastructure for the benefit of the economy."

Motion approved.

Hon. M. de Jong: I call Motion 104, Mr. Speaker.

B. Penner: One moment, Mr. Speaker.

Deputy Speaker: We'll take a short recess.

The House recessed from 11:01 a.m. to 11:02 a.m.

[H. Long in the chair.]

BOYCOTT OF B.C. WOOD IN CHINA

B. Penner: I appreciate the House Leader's clarification with respect to the motion.

I stand in support of the motion and move:

["Be it resolved that this House condemns the boycott of BC wood in China, and further that this House continues to support the efforts of British Columbia's forest industry, its workers, and their families."]

Mr. Speaker, what gives rise to this motion? Well, a few weeks ago, much to my concern and to the concern of mayors and communities around this province, a number of environmental groups organized a news conference in Vancouver on November 7. The purpose of that news conference was to announce a boycott campaign calling upon people in China, including industry, to refuse to purchase any wood products of any type from British Columbia.

Quite deliberately, that news conference and new boycott campaign were timed to coincide with a visit by Premier Campbell in China, where he was attempting to negotiate agreements with the Chinese government, universities and industry to start using North American and particularly British Columbia wood products.

In particular, the Premier was working on an agreement where the Chinese would consider using wood that was damaged by pine beetle infestation and by forest fire. British Columbians are all too familiar with the damage that swept through our forests this past summer in the form of forest fires. But of even greater long-term damage to our forests — both in the length of the impact and in the size of the impact, the amount of land affected — is the pine beetle infestation — an order of magnitude greater, in fact, than this summer's forest fires.

The long-term damage to British Columbia's forest industry by the pine beetle cannot be overstated, and that's why it was so important that the Premier be in China attempting to work out protocols to get a new market for this pine beetle-damaged wood. The wood is still structurally sound, at least for a period of time after the tree has died. The trick is in getting it utilized in a timely fashion.

A number of these environmental groups would have it that even those types of wood products not be

purchased by people in China and probably elsewhere. I took it upon myself on 45 minutes' notice to attend that news conference, organized and attended by the likes of the David Suzuki Foundation, Forest Action Network, Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Western Canada Wilderness Committee and perhaps others. I have to tell you I was absolutely shocked and appalled and somewhat disheartened to know that people who call themselves British Columbians are actually trying to hurt our province, hurt communities, hurt workers and their families, and, frankly, hurt our social fabric and undermine our ability to pay for social services by destroying our tax base.

[1105]

When called upon by media to comment on this campaign, I pointed out at the news conference that it was extremely ironic that so-called environmental groups would take this action when in fact we have some of the highest standards in the world when it comes to forest practices. Through these extreme actions of these extreme environmental groups, it would effectively be opening the door to Russia and other countries in Asia to fill the Chinese market for forest products. In effect, what they are doing is condoning poor environmental practices by giving a leg up to our competitors, who have virtually no environmental standards. That is extremely ironic. It's frankly disloyal, and I have heard a number of mayors and other members of this Legislature call it treasonous for these often foreign-funded groups to take this action to hurt British Columbia.

The Forest Action Network was quite prominent at this particular news conference on November 7 in Vancouver. I spent some time looking at their website in the days that followed and found out that if you want to make a donation through the Forest Action Network's website — a group that purports to be based in Bella Coola, I believe — they only accept donations in U.S. dollars. Furthermore, if you look at the bottom of their website, you'll see that certain services are only available to U.S. residents.

These groups are foreign-funded. These groups are responding to marching orders from outside of British Columbia and outside of Canada. These groups are disloyal. These groups, in large measure, are trying to put British Columbians out of work. I call upon all members of this Legislature to stand firm and denounce these actions, which are completely oblivious to the incredible advances we have made in our forest practices management in the last 15 years. Frankly, all of their campaigns have a certain fill-in-the-blank component that is: just grab onto whatever valley's name or area's name that they want, fill it in the blank and say that this is the last area of its type and we have to stop any kind of use of the land base as a result of that.

There is an old expression: give someone a side-walk, and they'll soon want the roadway. That's certainly what has been happening here. There is nothing we can do in British Columbia that will ever satisfy these extremists, except turn the entire province into a park, which would necessitate closing down all of our

schools, hospitals, roadways and policing services because we would not have the ability to fund those things through taxes.

I noted with some interest that almost a week after this news conference, where it was widely reported about which environmental groups were involved, the David Suzuki Foundation sent letters to the editor of the Vancouver *Province* newspaper as well as the Prince George *Citizen* and, I believe, other newspapers. In the letter to the newspaper, a statement was made: "A mistake was made when the boycott was announced that indicated we did participate in these actions. The Suzuki Foundation has not been involved whatsoever in this campaign." I found that to be a rather strange comment, considering that there was a person at the news conference who identified herself as being involved with the David Suzuki Foundation.

Upon doing some checking with reporters and media personnel who were present at that news conference, I found out the name of the person from the Suzuki Foundation — a certain Cheri Burda. Well, imagine my amazement when I went back to look at those letters to the Vancouver *Province* and Prince George *Citizen* and other newspapers and found that the person writing to say that the Suzuki Foundation had nothing to do with this boycott in China — the person who authored that letter and signed it — was Cheri Burda, the very person who was at the news conference defending the boycott of all wood products from B.C. in China.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask this question of you. How can British Columbians take seriously anything the David Suzuki Foundation has to say when they can't be forthright about something as simple as: were they at that news conference or weren't they? They were, and I was there when the person from the Suzuki Foundation spoke strongly about why all wood products, including pine beetle-infested wood and fire-damaged wood should be included in the total boycott campaign. Now they're turning around and trying to mislead British Columbians by saying that they had nothing to do with the boycott campaign.

I find that rather disingenuous, and frankly, it causes me to doubt other statements made by the David Suzuki Foundation — dressed up as science but really posing as nothing more than foreign-funded political propaganda.

[1110]

I do hope that all members of this House, including the NDP, can bring themselves to support this motion, standing up for B.C. forest-dependent communities. I note parenthetically that Vancouver is certainly a forest-dependent community, when you consider — I think I've seen studies — that upwards of 160,000 jobs in the lower mainland are dependent in one way or another, either directly or indirectly, on the forest industry through the shipping, the processing and the activity at our ports, etc., that takes place.

I was very disappointed, as other members were, when all NDP leadership hopefuls sought the support of some of these very extreme environmental groups that are now supporting this boycott campaign in

China. I certainly hope that the new leader of the NDP, who won the leadership on Sunday in Vancouver, will come out and denounce these economic terror tactics employed by these extreme environmental groups. So far her track record would indicate otherwise, given that she attended a leadership debate organized by some of these very same groups on October 7 in Vancouver, attempting to seek their favour.

So with that, I look forward to hearing what other members have to say.

P. Bell: You know, it's not often that I get angry. But boy, I'll tell you, when I saw what occurred with that group of environmental organizations a week and a half or so ago, I did get angry, and I was proud of the member for Chilliwack-Kent for the action that he took. My only wish was that I had been there beside him to assist him in his endeavours there.

This is, in my view, just absolutely treasonous in terms of what some of these environmental groups are doing. You know, they speak passionately about the need to expand the heartlands and help the economies of small-town B.C. on one hand. Then on the other hand, their actions display that they really don't care about small-town B.C., they really don't care about our forest industry, and they really don't care about our mining industry. What they do care about is the donations that they get from their American friends to pad their pockets, to run their businesses. Make no mistake about it; that's exactly what this is.

Does it make any sense at all for China to boycott our beetle wood products? Let's just think about that for a second. These are the same folks — Joe Foy and all of his friends there — who believe in Kyoto and believe we should do whatever we can to ensure that global warming doesn't expand and we actually reverse the trends of global warming.

I ask you: how is oxygen produced in our atmosphere? It's produced through a formula called carbon sequestration, where the trees in our forests take the carbon dioxide, retain the carbon inside the tree and release the oxygen. You know what? When a tree dies of the pine beetle infestation, carbon sequestration actually ends at that point.

What Joe and all of his buddies are saying is: "You know what? We actually don't care about global warming. We actually don't care that the atmosphere is getting warmer. We actually don't care about all the consequences of the potential meltdown of our atmosphere as a result of global warming. What we do care about is lining our pockets." When they make statements about boycotting beetle wood into China, it makes no sense because what will eventually happen is that those trees will fall down and they'll rot. When they rot, the carbon is released back into the atmosphere, and you have more global warming.

The absolute smartest thing we could do in this instance is to harvest all of that beetle wood, retain that fibre, sequester that fibre, put it into buildings and help growing economies like China — which builds ten million homes a year — to learn how to craft with

wood, learn how to build environmentally friendly buildings and learn about appropriate building envelopes. There's lots of good work that has gone on there. This is absolutely critical, because what is the option? China is going to continue to build ten million homes a year one way or another.

[1115]

What is the option? They are going to go to that other community that has a large amount of fibre — the community of Russia. We all know what the environmental practices are like in Russia — the environmental mecca of the world. They don't care how they harvest their trees. They don't care about soil degradation. They don't care about replanting trees and carbon sequestration and actually intensive silviculture. What they do care about is getting as much money into their economy as fast as they can.

If we don't provide them with environmentally friendly wood, remove those beetle-killed trees from our the forests, replant in the areas where we've removed those trees and continue the process of carbon sequestration, then really we will not have done what the right thing is for the environment and, generally, for our economy as well.

One thing that really burns me is that groups like the Suzuki Foundation make statements like this, and then when they get caught, they think, "Oh, I'm sorry," is the answer. "I'm sorry, I didn't really mean it." You know what? Someone needs to hold those people accountable. It's people like the member for Chilliwack-Kent that are holding these individuals accountable for these irresponsible actions, these treasonous actions.

With that, I want to close by offering a challenge. There was an NDP leadership vote on the weekend, and an individual from Prince George, Carole James, was elected as the new leader of the NDP. So far the stuff I've seen is not very encouraging in terms of her approach and her policies around dealing with things like the mountain pine beetle, especially as they relate to harvesting in parks where the beetle infestation started in the first place.

In fact, she said in her environmental policy statement that she will never allow logging in provincial parks, whatever the reason. It doesn't matter what the reason is. If there's a line and there's a tree on one side of the line that's infested with mountain pine beetle, and on the other side of the line there's another one that's infested with mountain pine beetle, they will not move the extra foot to remove that tree. They'll allow the beetles to fly. They'll allow them to infest the forest. She won't do it under any circumstances.

She goes on further than that, actually, and says she will eliminate the working forest, the very forest that ensures the opportunities for my children, my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren to earn their incomes as we move forward in society over the coming years. She wants to eliminate that assurance to the people of the central interior. These are the people that complain and tell us we don't care about small, rural British Columbia. Yet an action like that would be absolutely devastating, in my view.

She goes on and on. She wants to eliminate fish farming. She wants to eliminate any option for offshore oil and gas. Well, that makes a tremendous amount of sense for a community like Prince Rupert, and I'm pretty sure the member for North Coast will be speaking to that issue a little later on. My challenge to Carole James is to come clean, admit that what the Suzuki Foundation and WC² and all those other groups did was dead wrong and condemn them for their actions. Ultimately, this is not about politics. This is about the economy of British Columbia, and that would be the right thing to do.

R. Visser: I want to spend a few minutes talking about this issue, about market campaigns, the forest industry, where we're going and some of the impacts these folks are having on the people I represent. It is, as both members have said, very frustrating to watch this unfold. It is very frustrating to have taken two years in government — and for me it's much longer than that — to try and rebuild an industry that has been brought to its knees.

Currently today, the bulk of the workers in this industry are on strike. Currently today, we have one of the lowest allowable annual cuts that we've seen on the coast of British Columbia for decades and decades. We have communities that aren't working. We have families and people that aren't working. We have folks that want to get back to work. We have an economy where many of those in our part of the world are in trouble.

[1120]

Government's response has been pretty sound. We have wanted to rebuild this industry. We've wanted to take some regulation out of it. We've wanted to engage with the professionals inside the industry and unleash the potential they have to manage this in a way that is creative, forthright and productive.

We wanted to look for new markets. We wanted to engage with first nations. We wanted to revitalize the forest industry that includes first nations, that includes communities and that includes small operators and new entrants into this industry, so they have a secure supply of fibre through the auction system. We also think and know that pieces of legislation like the working forest initiative and the land use planning initiatives are going to provide the context for all of us to move forward in.

So what's going on? Well, we have a Premier that went to China. We're part of a consortium that's building roughly 260 new wood-frame homes there. The last I heard, they've built something like ten million. They have ten million housing units started this year. In my opinion, the distance between 300 and ten million is considerable. In my opinion, there's a bit of room for growth for the people of British Columbia and for this industry. That's the place we need to be, and we had a Premier that went there.

We had a Premier that went there and signed some deals. We had a Premier that went there and used his office to open up some doors and to find us some successes, to take the initiative and bring some results

home for British Columbia. So when the member from Chilliwack went to the announcement of this campaign that wants to initiate a boycott in China, many of us were flabbergasted. I don't understand it. When is enough? How hard do we have to work before these people actually understand? How much more do we have to do before the people from the radical environmental community are actually going to put an oar in the water and pull for a change?

I was a veteran of the Vancouver Island land use plan, the CORE tables that worked there. We made a plan for Vancouver Island. We know where the parks are. We know where the special places are. We know where industrial forestry can take place. We know the places where we're going to fine-tune our land use planning. We have a road map, and we're executing that road map. It was a painful process. A couple of weeks ago, and this is all tying together, the member for North Coast and I went down to a local Safeway store to confront the same environmental group — and I'll tell you why it's the same environmental group — about fish farming and the things that we're doing as a government to create sustainable economies on the coast of British Columbia. We went down to talk to them about what they were doing, the impacts they were going to have on our constituents and the families that they're trying to raise.

One of the folks there was Ingmar Lee. Ingmar Lee was right in our face about this: "How dare you?" And to my surprise a week or so later, there he is on *CBC Morning Show*. He's off to Europe to initiate more boycotts in Europe. He has a six-month Eurail pass, and he's going to travel from university to university and environmental group to environmental group decrying the forest practices on Vancouver Island. "We don't have enough parks," he says.

That's shameful. It's the same people who are going to China to say: "We don't want you to buy the products from British Columbia because it is a terrible place for the forests." This has got to stop. It's time that British Columbians stood up for their industries. It's time that all of British Columbia stood up for those resource communities out there and supported those people trying to raise families in those communities.

[1125]

I get frustrated by this. I get frustrated because we do our best. We do our planning. We created a results-based Forest Practices Code that will come into implementation this spring, which is going to engage with the professionals in this province in a way they have never been engaged with before. We have set forward a framework in which they can operate, in which they can make decisions, in which they can empower themselves to grow trees. They're going to be sensitive to the environment, they're going to be sensitive to the economy and to those communities, and they're going to make this industry work.

Government doesn't always need to be there telling people how to do it. We've taken 14 feet of regulation and reduced it to something smaller, something just a few inches thick. But in that few inches is power. It's

the power of the government to audit and the power to enforce but, more importantly, the power to unleash creativity.

I will put British Columbia's forest practices up against any jurisdiction in this world. We operate in one of the most profoundly beautiful places on this planet, and this industry respects that. This industry understands that, and this industry goes to great lengths to make sure that will be preserved for all time. It also goes to great lengths to make sure we can generate an economy and we can enjoy some of the things we've grown accustomed to: health care, education and social services.

I don't know.... Oh, I do know this. I know that people like Ingmar Lee, the Suzuki Foundation, Forest Action Network and Western Canada Wilderness Committee don't understand the link. They just don't understand the link between the economy, the forest economy of British Columbia and the government's ability to provide services to its people.

I want to close by saying we are on the cusp of reorganizing this coastal forest industry in a way that should have been done 25 years ago. We are going to unleash the power of the private sector and its investment. We are going to reallocate wood and put it in the hands of communities and in the hands of first nations and engage them with this forest economy so they can bring success to their people. We're going to engage with the value-added industry, and we're going to engage with the commodity lumber industry, and we're going to open up new markets for them. We're going to provide them with opportunity and success. That success in all of those areas is going to breed more success. It's going to breed success in forest practices; it's going to breed success in our communities.

We have a plan, and we're going to execute that plan because it's a good plan. I am sick and tired of these people getting in the way. I am sick and tired of British Columbians not standing up against these folks. It's time. I'm proud of our Premier, I'm proud of the Forests minister, and I'm proud of this caucus for standing up. We're going to China, we're going to Europe, we're going to India, we're going to the States, and we're going to open up some markets and create some jobs and put people back to work.

B. Locke: I rise today to speak to my colleague from Chilliwack-Kent's motion which asked me to condemn the boycott on B.C. wood products in China. The facts speak for themselves, and the organizations that are undertaking this campaign do not have the facts. According to their webpages, these organizations are concerned about logging in old-growth forests. Well, so is the government of British Columbia. That is why we log only one-third of 1 percent of B.C.'s forests each year. This is why companies face fines of up to \$1 million or jail time if they don't comply with the measures outlined in the forest stewardship plan.

I am proud that 43 percent of B.C.'s forests are old-growth, equivalent to the size of the U.K. This is not what we should be focusing on environmentally. In

B.C. we now have a pine beetle epidemic that has affected about 160 million cubic metres of lodgepole pine, some in protected provincial parks. The current situation has the potential of causing an economic crisis in over 30 forest-dependent communities in the north and in the central interior, where the infestation is at its worst.

[1130]

Why, when we try to sell this wood to China, which will help partially cure this epidemic, do the environmental groups attack us in the press for not taking care of our basic problems back home? The so-called Great Bear rain forest, for all its beauty, is not our biggest problem. Perhaps the Forest Action Network or David Suzuki didn't watch TV or visit the interior this summer. We had forest fires that affected more than 260,000 hectares of wood. Where were they then? Where were they? Helping to fight the fires or supplying the sandwiches to the firefighters? Where were these environmentalists at that time?

When government tries to sell some of this damaged timber to China, a country that requires shelter for its people, government is criticized again by extreme environmentalists for not listening to alternate ecological arguments that suggest leaving the fire-damaged wood alone and allowing some beetle-infested trees to remain. We are listening to science, not just to theory. All you have to do is fly in a helicopter up north to see that we have more than enough pine beetle-infected trees to spare.

This government is concerned about the longevity of our forests. We understand that a healthy, sustainable environment involves a balance between industry, jobs and a healthy province. We are beyond the old ideological argument of growth versus the environment. We are looking for solutions to some of the biggest threats yet to our environment and our economy. Sadly, many of the environmental websites I visited don't even acknowledge these problems.

I find it appalling that these extreme environmental groups are attempting to kill B.C. jobs by stopping B.C. wood products from being sold to China. What do they have against the working folks of this province? And what are they doing to open the floodgates to wood from Russia and other countries that have substandard forest practices? It is suggested that 50 percent of all the export trade in Russia and the Far East is illegal. If they did their homework, they would find that the top five trading partners in wood — Russia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the U.S. and Germany — are comparably below our environmental standards.

Look at China. I am proud to contribute to the country's growth and development, to increase per-capita living space for the poor and the middle class, and to set higher standards for living conditions by helping, as an exporter, to make sure that China's middle class is ever growing. This initiative is a good one not just for rural communities but for all of B.C.'s communities.

In closing, I would just like to say that we all rely on a strong forest industry in this province. The forest

industry is the backbone. Even the environmentalists rely on that strong forest industry.

With that, I will yield the floor.

J. Nuraney: I, too, rise in support of the motion.

The recent call for a boycott of British Columbia wood products in China is an irresponsible act perpetrated by five extreme environmental special interest groups. As the government of this province, it is our responsibility to make decisions based upon the best interest of the entire province and its population, not the narrow agenda of a few special interest groups whose agenda is on the fringe of public opinion.

The forest industry here in British Columbia is our most valuable and important resource. We are committed, as a government, to ensuring the economic viability and environmental responsibility of this industry for the long term. The forest industry in this province accounts for one in seven jobs and is responsible for \$14.2 billion annually in exports.

[1135]

However, in recent years pressures on this vital industry, such as the softwood lumber dispute with the United States, have affected this industry's long-term economic viability. That is why the opening of such large and lucrative markets in places like China is of paramount importance to our province. Last week the Premier stood in this House and told us that ten million new homes are built every year in China, making this the largest new market in the world. There is a vast untapped market that could ensure the longevity and economic stability that our most valuable industry so desperately needs.

These five groups that drastically called for a boycott of British Columbia wood products in China seem to have forgotten or just don't care to recognize that British Columbia has an environmental and sustainable forest plan that is second to none. British Columbia has more protected forests than any other western country. Every year less than one-third of 1 percent of our forest is harvested.

British Columbia is also known for its sustainable forest practices, and we as a government must remain committed to building on and moving forward on these practices. For every tree that is harvested in this province, we ensure that one is planted to replace and replenish our forests. We plant over 200 million trees a year in this province. In May 2002 the Premier planted the five-billionth tree in our reforestation efforts. This is a remarkable achievement.

By doing this and showing responsibility to our forests, we make no compromise. To ensure that our policy of sustainable forest management practices is carried out, we had a new Forest and Range Practices Act brought forward by our esteemed Minister of Forests not too long ago. Companies must achieve measurable and enforceable results set out in the forest stewardship plans or face fines of up to \$1 million or jail time. We in this province are one of the world leaders in forest management and sustainability, and we are doing everything possible to ensure that we have

both a thriving forest and a thriving forest industry for generations to come.

The groups that call themselves the protectors of the environment must approach their ideology with a good balance between human development and natural heritage. Nature wants us to thrive on its resources. My colleague seated to my left here, the member for Coquitlam-Maillardville, is very appropriately sporting a tie today that speaks about this living of humans and forestry and the harmony that nature so wants us to depict.

Our society has evolved in the past decades to one of responsible stewardship, and there is no room for any extremism or political vested interests. Let us then decry the destructive methods adopted by a small group of so-called environmentalists who are, in my opinion, wolves in sheep's clothes. Beware, I say.

[1140]

R. Stewart: I rise today in absolute outrage. When I first heard the news that these groups were going to get together and do such an irresponsible thing as what they are doing, I was outraged. I believe, Mr. Speaker — as I believe every member of the House does, including the opposition — that our forests are extremely well managed and that we have outstanding environmental protection in place for our forests and their ecosystems. I have lived in my community, in this province, all my life. Until very recently my community had a lumber mill and thrived because of the forest sector in this province.

Years and years ago, of course, forestry was done a lot differently than it is today. Today we have every reason and every right to be very proud of our forest sector and the environmental protections we have in place. For a supposedly responsible environmental group to stand up and lie, to stand up and misrepresent, to stand up and fearmonger, in a way they know is dishonest, about the practices of this forest sector, the practices of the workers across this province and the companies, small and large, across this province that work in our forests, that help create jobs, that help create the lumber that builds the housing we live in.... For them to decry and to lie about those environmental practices is shameful.

I am outraged that a group would stand up knowing that what they're saying is false and nonetheless say it — that British Columbia forest practices are non-sustainable, that British Columbia in some way destroys our forests, which is about as far as you can be from the truth. To do that when preaching to other countries, some of which don't have environmental protections anywhere near as strong as we have, to argue that we should.... It's essentially to hold us to ransom. That's essentially what it is.

I get an e-mail every now and then from a person who is asking our government for money. If we don't give them money, that person will continue to try to arrange a boycott of our tourism sector. I think all the members get the same e-mail. I'm as disgusted by that absolutely shameless piece of manipulation and

blackmail as I am by this, and this is done by groups who stand up and get their money from the public and who pretend to the public that they are environmentally responsible, that they are responsible and worthy causes.

I absolutely am ashamed. These are groups — some of which I have supported in the past because I believed they were doing right and proper things; now I have come to know them a whole lot better by their actions, not by their words but by their actions — that have stood up and told us all that they can't be trusted and that they are going to manipulate and lie and fearmonger in order to get what they want.

They believe it's a good aim. But I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. This is the most shameful thing I've ever seen, and I stand up and decry it today.

R. Lee: I would like to speak in support of Motion 104, moved by the hon. member for Chilliwack-Kent: "Be it resolved that this House condemns the boycott of BC wood in China, and further that this House continues to support the efforts of British Columbia's forest industry, its workers, and their families."

I believe the movement to boycott our B.C. wood in China was not initiated by people in China. I believe the movement to boycott our B.C. wood in China was launched by five environmental groups based in our province which have taken out advertising in a Chinese newspaper, *China Daily*, urging a boycott of British Columbia lumber.

The forest industry has a long history, being an important economic driver for this province. Forestry product exports each year generate \$14.2 billion, and this sector accounts for one in seven jobs. The province is blessed with this natural renewable resource. The revenue created by the forest sector is helping to pay for the expense of our health care, education and social services.

[1145]

When I heard about this boycott, I was in China with the Premier creating more favourable conditions for forest products from this province and asking the Chinese builders and consumers to use more lumber, which is environmentally friendlier than concrete and bricks.

British Columbia is world renowned for its practices in sustainable forest management. Less than one-third of 1 percent of our forest is logged each year, and we plant two million trees a year — six trees every second.

China currently imports a lot of wood from Russia, South Asia and Australia. Its demand for lumber of all grades is huge. While we were in China earlier this month, the Premier signed a letter of intent with the Chinese Academy of Forestry to find new uses for fire- and beetle-affected wood. Our delegation also met the Chinese Ministry of Construction to discuss a wood-frame structure building code. China builds ten million housing units each year, and currently only 1 percent is of wood-frame construction.

I can see a lot of potential for exporting forest products to China, especially for surplus of fibre which the market in North America cannot absorb. Pine beetle infestation has now affected about 160 million cubic metres of pine. Harvesting the leading edge of the pine infestation is an effective way of mitigating its spread. Harvesting fire-killed timber in some areas supports ecosystem rehabilitation.

I am pleased to hear that China just published the design code for wood-frame structure after our delegation returned from China. I support more export of wood to China to generate more jobs for our workers and families in British Columbia.

B. Belsey: I will be quick, because I know a number of my colleagues want to say a few words regarding this issue. I come from a community and a riding that have been hard hit by the downturn in the lumber industry. We have pulp mills closed. We have sawmills closed. We have communities that have been devastated. We have a number of workers out of work. We have families that are struggling, and here we have an environmental group that thinks we are not doing the right thing — that we should not ship logs, that we should not ship our lumber, that we should not cut in our forests. That is absolutely wrong — absolutely wrong. The gall of this group, to say the least, is vexing.

I want to just have a quick look and try to understand why these groups do what they do. What is their real goal? Is it really to save the forest, or is it to send money? If you take a look at their websites, if you take a look at the literature that they publish.... I receive literature here on a regular basis from many of those that participated — the Forest Action Network, the Wilderness Society, the David Suzuki society. Take a look at their brochures, and in there some place you're going to find the "send the money " — the thing to clip out, to fill it in, to tell them how much you'll send every month, every week or every year to support that organization. Is it the Kermode bear, or is it to send money? The Kermode bear is alive and well. They're a black bear with a recessive gene. If all the Kermode bears were to disappear today, all we need is two black bears, and we'd probably have another white Kermode bear.

Interjection.

B. Belsey: I'll tell you how it works in a bit. I don't have enough time.

I'll tell you that this group is lying. Think of it. They're eco-lies. Eco-lies — that's what they are. E. coli — the bacteria, the worst of society. I'll not go on because I know my colleagues need an opportunity.

[1150]

D. MacKay: I also will be very brief, and I'm not going to touch on our Forest Practices Code. I believe that's already been mentioned by several of the members that preceded me.

I was just recently in Quesnel on Friday of this past week, where over 100 elected officials — including mayors and regional district chairs, people involved in the forest industry and native people involved in the woods industry — were sitting in Quesnel trying to decide what we're going to do with all that damaged beetle wood that's sitting in our forest lands today.

I travel once a week to Victoria. I fly down here, and every time I fly over that Burns Lake district and look down below me, I think there's something wrong with the glass in the window of the aircraft because the trees are red below me. It is such a massive catastrophe that's taking place below that aircraft, and the volume of trees that have been affected is unbelievable.

As I'm travelling over those areas, I also understand that there are communities down there such as Smithers, Houston and Burns Lake. They log those trees. They're industry. The people who live in those communities depend on the forest industry. They actually cut down trees and make dollars from them, and the dollars go into the provincial coffers. We actually provide funds to some of these different organizations that have recently decided they want to boycott what we do in this province.

I'm going to be really short. I have a commitment on behalf of the people I represent in the northwest part of this province that rely on the woods industry for their livelihoods. The commitment I'm going to make to those people is this. I am going to have a look at the ministries of this government, our own government, to see which of those organizations that boycotted us in China are receiving grants from this government.

I am going to do what I can to make sure that if any of those groups — the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, the Forest Action Network, Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Valhalla Wilderness Society or the David Suzuki Foundation — are receiving moneys from our government... I'm going to do what I can, and I'm going to ask other members to do what they can, to make sure those funds stop going from the government. I support Motion 104.

H. Bloy: I'm proud to stand up here today and support our government and our Premier and the member for Chilliwack-Kent. I just want to read it again: "Be it resolved that this House condemns the boycott of BC wood in China, and further that this House continues to support the efforts of British Columbia's forest industry, its workers, and their families."

Many members have spoken, but I want to talk. It will be different now that we have a new leader of the NDP who is against the forest industry. She's against the mining industry. She's against the oil and gas industry. That will be her legacy to British Columbia. She is against these industries for many reasons, but she's against families. She must be, because why would she be trying to stop well-paid jobs for families in northern British Columbia and all of British Columbia?

I want it to be known in this House that we have some of the highest sustainable forest management practices anywhere in the world available in British

Columbia. This message has to continue to go out to the world, not the message of the boycott that's being spread and the lies that are being spread.

The rural mayors of British Columbia, as my colleague has just mentioned, were looking to provide solutions to a problem — not working against something but actually working together to provide solutions — so that families and jobs, which are the same, can happen in northern British Columbia, where they've been hurt badly over the last number of months with all the things going on in the forest industry. I just wanted to say I'm in support of this motion.

R. Harris: Time is really crowding me, so I'll just be really brief. Over the last almost hour, we've listened to a lot of members comment on the actions taken by the so-called Forest Action Network. We've heard it referred to as immoral, foolish, appalling, bizarre, irresponsible, wolves in sheep's clothing, outrage, shameless blackmail, economic treason. People who know me will know that those words are about as polite a phrase I could ever make about what happened and the actions that the Forest Action Network took to the people of my riding.

[1155]

As the member for North Coast said earlier, and we heard from north Vancouver Island, the forest industry is in trouble in this province. In the northwest the major licensees are operating at about 12 percent of their normal harvest rate. What we have done as a government is actually start to restructure this industry and put fibre in the hands of smaller, community-based operators, people who actually are going to revitalize this industry and start to create the reinvestment we all want to see. A big part of their desired outcome to be successful is that they need markets.

We have a Premier that's in China selling this industry and our products to that country. We've got Chinese Canadian businessmen through the Gateway project up in the north, and we're introducing people in our communities to those folks so they can in fact engage and create some connections so they can actually start to find new markets for this wood. It is absolutely irresponsible — and what I'd like to say, I can't say in this House about those groups — that at a time when people are trying to reach out and find new opportunities, you have a group like this that just crushes it.

As the member for North Island put it so well, it is incredibly difficult. After two years of restructuring this industry and after the hard work that we in this building have done, the hard work the people in our communities have done to actually create an industry that I think is going to take us into the future... You have people like this — and I use that word rather loosely; "vultures" comes to mind and something a lot harsher — who go out there to try and bring this process to an end, who just continue to push down rural communities and inflict the kind of pain that the previous government did to us.

I do agree with the member for Prince George North, and my challenge is to the two members of the

opposition in this House who claim to represent, I assume, the northern reaches of Mount Pleasant and the northern reaches of Vancouver-Hastings — that they stand up in this House, condemn that action once and for all, say what has to be said and actually show that they do support northern communities.

G. Trumper: I will speak briefly to support this motion. As you are well aware, I come from a resource-based community which has had an incredibly difficult time over the last 15 years with changes in markets in the world and with some of the restrictions on forestry that were put on forest companies by the previous government. We've been working incredibly hard to restructure the coastal community, particularly in the forest industry, as it has had tough times.

I know that my mayor has just come back from Japan, where there are Russian logs going into Japan. We have a difficult time in those markets. We have some of the best environmental standards in forestry, and to see a boycott such as this proposed in China by these groups I think is absolutely unacceptable. It's unacceptable to me; it's unacceptable to my constitu-

ents and to those people who work in the forest industry. I urge everybody to support this motion.

Deputy Speaker: Seeing no other speakers on Motion 104, the question is: "Be it resolved that this House condemns the boycott of BC wood in China, and further that this House continues to support the efforts of British Columbia's forest industry, its workers, and their families."

An Hon. Member: Division.

Deputy Speaker: Division is called. Pursuant to standing order 25, the division will be delayed until 5:30 today.

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

Motion approved.

Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned until 2 p.m. today.

The House adjourned at 11:59 a.m.