



5th Session, 37th Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT OF
DEBATES OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
(HANSARD)

Monday, October 4, 2004

Morning Sitting

Volume 26, Number 1

THE HONOURABLE CLAUDE RICHMOND, SPEAKER

ISSN 0709-1281

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Entered Confederation July 20, 1871)

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR
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5TH SESSION, 37TH PARLIAMENT

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2004

The House met at 10:04 a.m.

Prayers.

[1005]

Tabling Documents

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members, I have the honour to present the following documents: office of the conflict-of-interest commissioner annual report, 2002; office of the auditor general 2004-05 report No. 2, *In Sickness and in Health: Healthy Workplaces for British Columbia's Health Care Workers*; office of the auditor general annual report, 2003-04; office of the ombudsman annual report, 2003; office of the ombudsman service plan, 2004-05 to 2006-07; office of the information and privacy commissioner annual report, 2003-04; Elections B.C. annual report, 2003-04; ombudsman special report No. 25, *Broken Glass, Broken Trust: A Report of the Investigation into the Complaint Against the City of Surrey*.

Private Members' Statements

CIBC RUN FOR THE CURE — BEATING CANCER ONE STEP AT A TIME

S. Orr: Breast cancer. Those two words send a chill down the spine of every woman, husband, partner, child — in fact, most people. This week approximately 407 women will be told by their doctor or their health worker that they have breast cancer. By the end of today — that's Monday — approximately 58 women will be with their families and friends explaining that they have breast cancer. Not only will these women be digesting the news themselves, but at the same time, their hearts will be breaking as they watch the closest to them hold back their tears as they try to comfort each other. A lot of tears will be shed by tonight. By the end of this week we will, sadly, have buried approximately 100 Canadian women from breast cancer. In 2004, 21,200 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer, and 5,200 of them will die.

Females are born with an amazing biological system. As our aboriginal elders would say, we are the life-givers. We go through body cycles that we accept, sometimes with frustration but most times not. Our bodies can be stretched and pulled to accommodate human life. We grow breasts that are equipped to feed another human being. We give everything to the future of the human race with our bodies.

With all that our wonderful bodies endure and give, it's hard to sometimes figure why we are stricken with such a terrible disease as breast cancer. Why, after so many women have given so much, do they have to go through so much, enduring treatments that make them physically sick? They lose their hair, they go through painful surgeries, and they weep in pain with both physical and emotional sadness. It just doesn't seem fair, and truthfully, Mr. Speaker, it isn't fair. All

the brave women who are presently fighting breast cancer and are getting treatment, all the loved families who have lost their loved ones, know that the race is on to try and fight this horrible disease and find the cure. These brave women and their families need to be assured that this fight is being fought by thousands of people across the country and around the world.

British Columbia is at the forefront of cancer research. In Vancouver the cancer research centre will have the largest freestanding research facility in Canada. However, researchers need money to do their work. We are blessed in this country to have corporations who understand this and step up to the plate.

[1010]

Yesterday alone we saw one of our biggest events to help support the cure for breast cancer — the CIBC Run for the Cure. CIBC has been the title sponsor for this run for the past eight years. CIBC came on board as a result of a small group of dedicated employees whose lives had been touched in some way by breast cancer. They convinced CIBC to become a title sponsor, and because of them we now have the CIBC Run for the Cure.

Thousands of people come out and run for their loved ones. They set up teams and honour our heroes. Breast cancer survivors speak with wonderful words of encouragement. Everyone gathers, strong and united, and they all run or walk for the cure. CIBC is totally committed to this run. It's organized by volunteers, and it is Canada's largest single-day national fundraising event for breast cancer. Last year alone, the CIBC Run for the Cure raised \$14.5 million. On behalf of all the women, I want to thank CIBC for showing such leadership.

This year Telus is moving through our province, city to city, with a Telus Tour for the Cure. This is an interactive touring exhibit that promotes breast health and encourages women to get mammograms. Mr. Speaker, did you know that this year only 49 percent of eligible women will get mammograms and that in some parts of this province it goes as low as 23 percent?

Until last week when I attended the opening of this tour, I was one of those stats. I am ashamed to say that I have not had a mammogram in close to eight years. The phone was right there. I was encouraged to make an appointment, and I did. I made it for October 12.

Hopefully, thousands of women through B.C. will do the same — get a mammogram. Do you realize that if we could get 70 percent of women to get a mammogram annually, we would reduce breast cancer by one-third?

There is some good news. Since 1993, incident rates for breast cancer have stabilized and death rates have declined steadily, but we still have a long way to go. Every woman who is presently living with breast cancer needs to know we will never stop the fight to find the cure. We are committed to this. We are committed to beating breast cancer.

H. Bloy: I'm very grateful that the member for Victoria-Hillside has asked me to stand up and speak

today. I echo the words that she has spoken on this terrible, terrible disease that we have. It's not only women that have breast cancer; men also get breast cancer. It may be a little-known fact, but about 1 percent of all victims with breast cancer are men. Mammograms are used when breast cancer is suspected. Also, ultrasound is very useful in detecting breast cancer. For men, it's usually a painless lump, usually discovered by the patient himself, and is by far the most common first symptom of male breast cancer. Most male breast cancers are not large. One study that has reviewed a large number of cases found that 51 percent of tumours are less than 3 centimetres.

However we describe this terrible disease and what it's taken from us.... We have a member from our House who has undergone treatment for the past year. At the present time, we have the wife of one of our members who is doing treatment. My dad just recently had two small cancer operations and is expecting a third. For me as a parent.... I have a third child at home. Her name is Candice Earle. We met her mom and dad in a prenatal class with our daughter. This young girl has come to live with us for five years now. She's 21 years of age, the same age as my daughter. She lost her father to cancer at age 12. She lost her mother to cancer at age 17. I don't believe that this should ever happen to any child. The human toll on the families, related to cancer.... It's so hard to describe, but personally, I want to see an end to this disease.

[1015]

Some of you may have noticed that since last January, I've been growing my hair. I can show it off here. It's over 12 inches long now. This October 30 I'll be cutting it for cancer, and I'll be raising money. I'll be going, like some members from the interior of British Columbia that have considerably less hair than myself....

Interjections.

H. Bloy: They're looking forward to this — to my taking the same shine upon life as they have.

I would like to thank the member for Victoria-Hillside for bringing this matter to the House. I fully support all her measures.

S. Orr: I thank the member for Burquitlam for responding so eloquently. I must say, I have watched over the year as he has taken all sorts of ribbing about his hair as it has grown and grown and grown. His commitment to cancer research is unwavering, and I thank him for that.

In my statement I spoke of the wonderful long-term work of the CIBC and the new Telus tour. But there are many other corporations who are also there to help with finding the cure, like Air Canada, Ganong Brothers, New Balance Canada, *Chatelaine* magazine and CANPAR Transport LP. This is just to name a very, very few.

This Sunday — that's the 10th — on the lawns of the Legislature the Canadian Cancer Society is sponsoring Candles on the Lawn. Come and light a candle for

someone who is surviving cancer, or a loved one lost. All proceeds for Candles on the Lawn are going to go to breast cancer.

I just want to end this on a very personal note to a couple of my dear friends who have just been diagnosed. I just want them to know that we are all there for you. I'm there for you. We are all there for all of you. You are our heroes. Breast cancer will be beaten. We will be assured of that.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

D. Hayer: I feel very privileged to be part of the opening day of this fall legislative session, especially now that the economic corner has been turned. The future looks bright, and B.C. is on track toward 2010, when the eyes of the world will be upon us.

After three weeks of prebudget consultation hearings all over the province with the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, I can firmly say that optimism is in the air. Our multiparty committee has travelled to Campbell River, Prince Rupert, Houston, Terrace, Cranbrook, Kimberley, Kamloops, Barriere, Louis Creek, Kelowna, Fort St. John, Prince George and Williams Lake. British Columbians are working, going to school and, apparently, spending their hard-earned earnings in great numbers as part of one of Canada's hottest provincial economies. Who would have thought that five years ago?

This government is improving health care and policing while investing in transportation infrastructure and education; plus, it's fostering the healthy business climate that is creating the strong economy. The B.C. government has had to make some difficult decisions, but now through consultation with British Columbians, it is developing a direction for the provincial budget. Perhaps more importantly, it is developing a plan for growth and future generations.

Nowhere is this more evident than in my home community of Surrey. Jobs, investments and growth are a major part of the landscape in what will soon be B.C.'s most populous city. Almost everyone I talk to is optimistic and talking about the good things that are happening in this province. They are talking about the proposed twinning of the Port Mann Bridge, Highway 1 expansion, expanded highway overpasses and completion of the South Fraser perimeter road — about how, finally, there is a government that is seriously addressing such obvious necessities.

We have a commitment from my colleague from Surrey-Cloverdale, the hon. Minister of Transportation, to twin the Port Mann Bridge and eliminate the worst traffic bottleneck in B.C. The Gateway project will be a huge benefit to my constituents and every other British Columbian. It will return more than \$1 billion to the B.C. economy. It will improve our air quality and the gridlock that sees vehicles idling for hours when they could be moving, when the drivers could be at work or at home with their families and children.

Widening the freeway from Vancouver to Langley will improve the flow of traffic to aid both commuters

and commercial enterprise. I'd like to thank our previous Minister of Transportation, the member for Nanaimo-Parksville, who initially planned the Gateway project, which included the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge.

[1020]

Since I was first elected in 2001, I have lobbied hard and worked with both Transportation ministers to identify Surrey infrastructure improvements that would help improve the flow of commuter and commercial traffic and enhance border access. Those labours have paid off, I am very happy to say. A new Golden Ears bridge will link the vibrant Port Kells industrial area of my riding of Surrey-Tynehead with Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows.

Plans are in the works for a new South Fraser perimeter road that will link this bridge with 176th Street, also known as the Pacific Highway, which links the commercial truck crossing at the U.S. border with the Trans-Canada Highway. The Pacific Highway is being widened to four lanes from the U.S. border to Highway 1 in my riding of Surrey-Tynehead to facilitate the international commerce flowing through Surrey, and all of B.C. will benefit from that investment in our future.

I also want to note widening projects underway on Fraser Highway in front of my Surrey-Tynehead constituency office and Highway 10 from Delta to Surrey. Both provincial and regional economies will benefit from these investments.

During the past three and a half years, our work on the economy has been excellent despite some bumpy times. Over that time our government has taken this province from the last place economically in Canada to now the second most prosperous. British Columbia has created more than 154,000 jobs in 2001 — well ahead of the national average — and leads all Canadian provinces in this regard.

There are many signs of economic turnaround, and this government has taken B.C. from a have-not province to a have province, boasting a surplus budget that is surpassing growth and investment. Our economic achievement is a tribute to this government and the hard work of all British Columbians.

I can tell you firsthand that Surrey is thriving under this government and our Premier's leadership. Not only has this government committed to investing in Surrey's economic future, but we have invested in our children's future by creating many, many more post-secondary places for our children. In March the Premier announced this government's plan to invest \$70 million into the new Surrey Simon Fraser University campus. That will add 2,500 post-secondary seats into my community by 2010, increasing access for students throughout the Fraser Valley.

In May the Premier announced this government was investing more than \$39 million into the new Cloverdale Kwantlen University College campus. That will add another 1,800 post-secondary seats for Surrey by 2010. That's on top of the recent announcement of other Fraser Valley post-secondary seats. This means that Surrey students will be able to pursue university

degrees in their hometown. Many will become business leaders, teachers, engineers and maybe even future members of this legislative chamber.

The Premier's announcement at the Union of B.C. Municipalities that 100 percent of the traffic ticket revenue will be returned to cities will similarly have a tremendous positive impact on Surrey policing, as will the national agreement on health care in which our Premier played such a pivotal role.

These are but a few reasons Surrey residents can express their appreciation of this government's good work. I would ask the Transportation minister, the MLA for Surrey-Cloverdale, to expand on this optimism for the future — the future from his perspective as a key cabinet minister, as a Surrey MLA and as a Surrey resident.

Hon. K. Falcon: I want to thank the member for Surrey-Tynehead for his recitation of some of the really, truly exciting things that are happening in Surrey in the very short period of time since our government got elected. You know, it brings to mind a story I had. When I was running for political office and I was in my campaign office, an old fellow came into my office, and he said to me: "Young fellow, I have been coming to every candidate for the last six elections, and I've asked the same question every time. The question I ask is this: will you be four-laning Highway 10?" He was asking me that question because for far too long, Surrey residents, pleased to have that corridor enlarged to four lanes, had been ignored by successive governments. It was something that I really remembered. I remember telling that old fellow: "Well, I won't make a commitment I can't keep, but I will tell you this. I will do my best to try and make sure we can bring that about."

[1025]

As the member points out, as in so many other areas, this government has kept its commitment, and this government will in fact be expanding Highway 10 from four lanes all the way from Delta right into Surrey. In addition to that, we will be investing over \$200 million in the Surrey area to improve the corridors of Highway 15 otherwise known as 176th Street, Highway 10, Highway 91 — all of that in partnership with the federal government as part of our border infrastructure improvements.

This will have a critically positive impact not just on the travelling public but also on the commercial basis and foundation of British Columbia, because anytime we can move goods to market more efficiently and more effectively, that is going to help small business people right across the province who are trying to get their goods to market more effectively.

We're widening Highway 10 to four lanes. We're widening 176th Street to four lanes. It will go four lanes all the way from Highway 1 right down to the border at the Douglas border crossing. We're widening the connection on 8th Avenue between the 99 and 176th Street, or Pacific Highway, so that we can better improve the flow of truck traffic.

We're adding an additional southbound lane for truck traffic exclusively under the FAST program, which provides the opportunity for truckers to preregister so that they've already had the criminal background checks, etc., and they can zip through that border crossing much more efficiently.

I've got to give credit to the member for Surrey-Tynehead because that member consistently has come forward with recommendations on how he could make even short-term improvements, which we're doing, to the interchanges in cooperation with the city of Surrey at 152nd and 160th and 104th as a direct result of the interventions of the member for Surrey-Tynehead. All of those improvements, with the commitment of over \$200 million from the province and the federal government, are going to have an enormous positive impact.

Let me finally say this. This member for Surrey-Tynehead, along with the members for Surrey-Newton, Surrey-Panorama Ridge and Surrey-Green Timbers, has fought very hard to ensure that we have a twinning of the Port Mann Bridge. They recognize, as do most British Columbians, that when that structure was built in 1963, there were 800,000 people in the GVRD. Today, 40 years later, we have over three times the population in the GVRD, and yet not a penny has been spent in significant improvement except for, of course, the Alex Fraser Bridge in 1986. We are a government that is making the kind of strategic investments we need to make so we can improve the life of British Columbians and the economy of British Columbia.

D. Hayer: I thank the minister for his response and his encouraging words. I appreciate his input and insight on Surrey's reasons for optimism. The members of this House and residents of Surrey duly note the minister's contribution to the success of this government and the city that we both call home.

But success isn't something which we will rest our laurels on. The successes we have achieved in getting British Columbia's and Surrey's economic house in order over the past three and a half years are just building blocks for the future. While we build on the future, we can never forget the past or the incredible contribution made by the people who brought us to this point. Those people, our seniors, created the stepping stones that were used to create the future. To them we owe an enormous debt of gratitude and a work ethic. If it was not for them, we would not have a future. But the future is bright because of those achievements.

In my constituency of Surrey-Tynehead the future is bright indeed, and many constituents see the future as being very promising. They are seeing their businesses begin to thrive. They are seeing construction and real estate sales booming. They see people flocking to this great city. They see the infrastructure improving everywhere they look. They know that this government has done what it said it would do. They know we said we would fix the economy. We have done that.

They know we said we would improve our transportation infrastructure. We are doing that.

We said we were going to improve educational opportunities for the children, and we have done that, because without an excellent education system we would have no future.

[1030]

As we move forward to coming years, I know this province is in good hands with this government. Last year we achieved enormous success in securing the 2010 Olympic Winter Games for Vancouver and Whistler. That event alone will not only have a huge impact on the construction industry, but it will boost tourism revenues for decades to come. It will truly put beautiful British Columbia on the world stage and showcase this magnificent part of Canada in hundreds of millions of living rooms across the globe, around the world. When in six years Surrey and B.C. children are exposed to some of the world's finest athletes at the 2010 Winter Olympics, B.C. truly will be the best place on Earth.

I am honoured to be able to stand up today, tomorrow and the next day and say with enormous pride that I have been a part of this government in our future. Yes, our future is very bright. The good people of Surrey see this, and I am confident that they will continue to express their pleasure with all this government has done for its residents, its children and its future.

THE GROWING COLUMBIA RIVER-REVELSTOKE ECONOMY

W. McMahon: I want to take this opportunity to do a little boasting about my riding, Columbia River-Revelstoke. I want to talk about a new attitude in places like Golden, Revelstoke, Kimberley and Invermere. I spend my time between each of these communities talking to people about the local economies. In fact, just last weekend I was at the Kimberley Fall Fair, where approximately 4,500 people went through the doors and gave me an opportunity to hear from my constituents.

Overall, the news was good. It was really encouraging to get some feedback about the kind of results we've managed to achieve in just three short years. People are optimistic about the future. Small businesses are popping up. Our resource sectors are seeing a major upswing. Our tourism numbers are up, and we're seeing our major resorts continuing to develop in one way or another.

As we all know, that means jobs for people. More importantly, it means our young people don't have to leave their homes to find work. This is very important to the working families not only in my riding but throughout British Columbia. I have some good examples of economic turnaround in our area, but before I share those, I want to tell you why it's so important to tell this House and the rest of the province how things really are.

I've heard the leader of the opposition, Carole James, tell British Columbians how there are two

economies: the thriving lower mainland economy and then the rest of British Columbia. It's interesting how out of touch Carole James is with B.C.'s interior. It's not surprising that the two candidates seeking the nomination to oppose me in the next election are out telling people the same thing. They seem to take pride in telling Columbia River-Revelstoke residents how bad things are.

Well, they should all know that the people in my riding are doing just fine. In fact, the economy in my region is better than it has been in years. As of the end of July the total amount of construction in Revelstoke topped \$8 million, four times that of the previous year. The month of July saw a number of new business licences taken out as well — significant for a small city.

By the end of August the Invermere visitor information centre had seen almost 13,000 tourists come through its doors — a significant increase over the 5,000 that came through in 2001. The Golden visitor information centre has nearly doubled its tourism numbers this year over last year. You know, this is a little visitor information centre that is off the Trans-Canada Highway. People have to make an effort to come right into the community to visit the centre. With those numbers, I think it just proves that there's a huge influx of tourism in the area. They have a new visitor information centre planned for next year. It will be on the Trans-Canada Highway. Those numbers will only increase, helping to showcase Columbia River-Revelstoke to the rest of the world.

In the Golden mining division, which includes Invermere — and this is really an interesting number — there were 363 mining claims staked between January and May this year compared to six during the same period last year and 106 during the same period in 2002. That's a 240 percent increase. The Revelstoke region saw 258 claims between January and May this year compared to 200 during the same period last year and 234 in 2002.

Near Kimberley the excitement mounts as Stikine Gold continues to drill north of the famous Sullivan minesite looking for the other half of that famous mine.

Hon. P. Bell: They found it on Wednesday.

W. McMahon: They found it on Wednesday, and this is news to me. That's great news. The city of Kimberley is going to be ecstatic, because of course in 2001, when their mine closed, it had a real effect on the community. So this is wonderful, wonderful news. Thank you.

[1035]

Now we know for a fact that there is huge potential for mining growth and job potential in that community, and they will be looking forward to that.

In every corner of my riding, people are seeing the values of their properties rise. The real estate market is stronger than it has been in years. In 2003 the Kootenay

real estate region saw more than 2,500 property sales, a marked improvement from the 1,900 sales in 2001.

One of the fastest-growing industries we have in the Kootenays is, of course, tourism. Our golf courses are world-class. People are coming from all over North America and, in fact, the world — England and Australia — to experience our skiing resorts. Those resorts are expanding and creating jobs. Panorama Mountain Village near Invermere, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort near Golden and Resorts of the Canadian Rockies in Kimberley are all building and creating construction jobs. Mount Mackenzie in Revelstoke is planning an expansion. Those projects will eventually result in more tourists spending money in our region.

However, there's no doubt that while things are looking good, we still have work left to be done and challenges that need to be met. One of those challenges is transportation. We want safe roads so that we don't have to worry as our families travel back and forth. Throughout the 1990s, under the previous government, the Trans-Canada Highway and many highways in my region were seriously neglected.

Toward the end of the 1990s we had community forums on road safety and how we could improve the Trans-Canada, as one example. The Trans-Canada through the Kicking Horse Canyon is a major gateway for trucks and cars entering and leaving B.C., but it's also one of the most dangerous stretches of road in the province. Throughout the 1990s, that highway in particular took a pounding.

Much of the wear and tear came from U-Hauls and moving vans filled with hard-working British Columbians who had to flee to Alberta to find jobs because of the previous government's policies. In fact, the attitude of that government was to wait and do nothing. They said things would get better, but you know, they didn't. Well, those people are coming back, because the jobs are returning to B.C.

They want to know what we're doing, especially in my region, to fix those highways and the transportation infrastructure, so now I'm going to ask the Minister of Transportation to tell British Columbians who are coming back to B.C. — and people who want to come back to B.C. — what we're doing to make their travel safer through my region and throughout the province.

Hon. K. Falcon: I want to thank the member for Columbia River-Revelstoke. I have been up in that member's riding several times in the last six months, and I think even the member's great statement doesn't do it justice until you are actually physically there to see all the exciting things that are happening and the sense of optimism that is growing in the Columbia River-Revelstoke area.

I can tell you that while I was up there having a look at the beautiful Kicking Horse Resort and saw all the unbelievable construction taking place there, I only wished I had time to get some mountain biking in. They also have an exceptional mountain-biking opportunity in the summer season at the Kicking Horse Resort.

Nevertheless, the member points out that we're doing some transportation improvements. You know, it was the leadership of this Premier.... Our Premier said that the Kicking Horse Pass was the number one priority of the province in terms of trying to bring federal dollars to the table. The Premier made it very clear, with the great support of the MLA for Columbia River-Revelstoke, that this was a huge priority for British Columbia, so we have been able to bring the federal government to the table as partners as we begin the very critical upgrades on that section of highway.

As some folks may know, the first phase, which was the replacement of the Yoho Bridge and approaches, is now complete. That was a \$65 million section of work. We're currently four-laning the two-kilometre section from Six Mile Hill to Rafters Pullout — plus, of course, construction of two bridges and six retaining walls. All of that started in September of this year, and we're anticipating completion by the fall of 2006.

[1040]

Phase 2 of the project that we're now moving into is \$130 million to replace the 10-Mile Bridge or the Park Bridge, and we have requests for proposals. The requests for qualifications have already gone out. Requests for proposals will be completed by the end of this month, and that will upgrade more than 5 kilometres of a very winding, dangerous stretch of highway to a modern four-lane divided highway. Of course, with the replacement of the 10-Mile Bridge that is going to have enormous benefits.

At the end of the day, those improvements in the Kicking Horse Canyon are going to go right up to almost \$700 million, and we anticipate and are hopeful that the federal government will remain partners in this very important transportation initiative. I met with the federal Minister of Transport as recently as about a month and a half ago and let the minister know how important it was that federal participation continue.

But I have to tell you this. The member for Columbia River-Revelstoke has been an exceptional advocate for getting a whole bunch of other things going on. As I was thinking about what to say in this speech, I was flipping through some of the projects that we were doing in her constituency, and it was really quite amazing when I started adding it all up. I'm thinking now, for example, of the Athalmer Road and Highway 93 and Highway 95 improvements that we were doing as a result of the input from the member. That, of course, involves the construction of a local road, Lakeview road, and intersection improvements at Highways 93 and 95 that will allow those 300 residents of that new home subdivision at Lakeview Meadows to get to Invermere without having to access the highway all the time. It will relieve a lot of the congestion on the highway and move that local traffic to its destination without interference. That was a project of just over \$2 million that I think will have some great benefits.

We're also seeing the project we did at Highway 1, the Woods Overhead replacement. That's 20 kilometres west of Revelstoke, just east of the Three Valley Gap.

We upgraded one and a half kilometres of the Trans-Canada Highway to a 100-kilometre standard. That was almost a \$12 million cost and will have, I think, important improvements.

While I was there I also managed to see the new bridges that we've installed at the Brisco and Botts junction. Brisco Road is just south of Golden, crossing the Columbia River and the Botts Channel. We replaced two of the old timber bridges that we had there with concrete structures on steel pilings for about \$1.75 million.

I could go on and on, but I think the critical thing to recognize here is that in this important section of the province, we are making these kinds of investments because we've got an MLA from Columbia River-Revelstoke that is a great advocate for the community, and we will continue to make those kinds of strategic investments for public safety and transportation.

W. McMahon: I want to thank the minister for those updates. As he was speaking today, I was thinking about 1999-2000 in that area, in that riding, and how the previous government would always say: "We're doing a little bit, but we have to wait for the federal government to give us some money, and then we'll match those funds." I think you'll see today that when the minister was saying how hard the Premier worked to ensure that the government realized that we had the money, and we wanted them to come to the table, that happened. So it's a different philosophy. It's a different way of doing business, and it's working for us. I'm extremely proud of that.

I can't tell you how important it is for the people of my region that we continue to upgrade the Trans-Canada Highway. There are many sections that need upgrading and ongoing maintenance, and I know we'll be very successful in continuing that work — whether it be through the Kicking Horse Canyon or the new avalanche technology that's just been announced for the highway close to Revelstoke to make it safer. In a region as vast and spread out as the Kootenays, and in a riding as vast and spread out as mine, transportation infrastructure is the engine that keeps our economy going. The communities trade goods and services so they need quality highways and airports to be successful.

It's also important for our overall goals as a province. The Premier wants to double the tourism industry by 2010, and the Kootenays will play a major role in that. There is still an untapped market for the Kootenays, and to some degree it is still a lost paradise for many in North America and throughout the world.

[1045]

We need to get the word out, and we are working hard to do that. Doubling the annual marketing budget for Tourism B.C. from \$25 million to \$50 million is a good step, as is the Premier's announcement that the Union of B.C. Municipalities will get \$25 million to develop a five-year marketing plan.

The Olympics, of course, are a huge opportunity for the Kootenays and Columbia River-Revelstoke. We are

going to position ourselves as a major gateway to the Olympics, and we'll be attracting tourists to stop and stay a while. Earlier this year our government and the federal government kicked in more than \$1.3 million to build a new visitor information centre in Golden. As I said earlier, that construction will start next year. The community is excited. It's a huge opportunity.

As I've been saying, the entire region is excited. We have turned the corner in British Columbia, and we've turned the corner in Columbia River-Revelstoke. Our commonsense approach to business policies and taxation is generating investment, jobs — but most importantly, confidence. We have a lot of work to do yet, many years of work, but the people in my area are stating clearly to me that they don't want to go back. We are moving forward, and we will continue to move forward.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

R. Stewart: Mental illness affects one in five people. That's more than six million Canadians. Of the ten leading causes of disability in the world, five are mental disorders. It is expected that in the next 15 years, depression and mood disorders will be the leading causes of disease burden in Canada. About 4,000 Canadians commit suicide each year, and suicide is the most common cause of death for people who are between 15 and 24.

So why am I reciting these statistics? October 4 to 10 is Mental Illness Awareness Week. The goal of this week is to raise public awareness of issues about mental illness — issues like the types of illnesses, symptoms, early intervention, diagnosis and treatment. The other goal for this week is to diminish the stigma that is attached to mental illness so that people understand it is simply a health issue and that, like all other health issues, we should be able to speak openly and honestly about it. The provincial psychiatric hospital, Riverview, is in my constituency. For many, Riverview Hospital represents the limit of their understanding of mental illness. It's a large, imposing institutional building with bars on the windows and people locked inside — people very different from you and me.

I grew up near Riverview and Essondale, and I remember that the hospital was a place you drove by. You certainly didn't stop. You certainly didn't give any thought to what was going on in Riverview Hospital. But what Riverview is, really, is a hospital, and I greatly respect the dedication and skills of the caregivers who work there. Riverview has been in operation for over 90 years. It was built when we knew very little about mental illness. Back then, locking up individuals was considered to be the only effective and humane thing to do with people who had damaged souls or mental weakness.

Today we have a far better understanding of mental illness. We know that mental illness is an illness of the brain — no more, no less. We know how to treat these illnesses. Schizophrenia, mood disorders, anxiety disorders and other illnesses are treatable either

through medications, therapy or combinations of both. Moreover, the earlier we identify and provide treatment for individuals with mental illness, the quicker the recovery and the better the long-term prognosis.

[1050]

We know now that with education and information, most people are able to self-manage their illnesses. Today recovery is the expectation rather than the exception. Unfortunately, with all of the current knowledge, stigma is still present. The majority of people living with a mental illness avoid disclosing their illness to anyone outside their immediate family. Two-thirds of people who require treatment for a mental illness don't seek help. People are treated differently when they reveal that they have a mental illness. In the workplace today, would someone reveal that they had depression if they were applying or being interviewed for a job? Would they reveal that they had an anxiety disorder if they were up for a promotion? Would a co-worker be supported if he or she revealed that they had a mental illness? I think most of us would agree that the answer is no. That, I believe, is the most important point in Mental Illness Awareness Week.

Raising awareness is also crucial because many people cannot recognize the symptoms of mental illness. For example, it is not normal to live with prolonged feelings of sadness, yet many people live for years with those devastating symptoms without knowing that help is available. There are other symptoms of mental illness of which people should also be aware: extreme highs and lows, significant personality changes, strange ideas and delusions, an inability to think clearly or to make decisions, a loss of interest in activities, irrational fears, or the abuse of alcohol or drugs. Knowing the symptoms means knowing when there could be a problem.

As a government, we have made significant strides in bringing attention to mental illness. Having a minister responsible for mental health was an important step, and another was having a Premier who speaks out publicly about how mental illness has affected his family. Our government has spent a great deal of time working with community partners to raise awareness, and I encourage our new minister responsible for this area to keep up the good work.

Last week on the Knowledge Network, there was an excellent film that focused on child and youth depression. I understand this was the first of three films developed through the Ministry of Children and Family Development that focus on child and youth mental health. Two weeks from today, on Monday, October 18, at 9 p.m. the second film will be aired on the Knowledge Network. This one will focus on anxiety in children, and I understand that it will be just as moving as last week's.

As part of Mental Illness Awareness Week, this Thursday will be Depression Anxiety Screening and Education Day. This daylong event is another opportunity to raise awareness and provide education about mental illness. There are venues being set up all over the province to provide individuals with the ability to

be screened for illness, similar to other physical conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes.

At these screening sites, people can learn about symptoms and treatment options for mood and anxiety disorders. Individuals in Coquitlam can visit a screening site at Douglas College's David Lam campus. For other screening locations, check out www.heretohelp.bc.ca. I urge as many people as possible to participate to improve their understanding of these issues and to help lift the stigma associated with mental illness.

This is an important week for mental health, and I'm pleased to be able to stand today and acknowledge it and to invite the Minister of State for Mental Health and Addiction Services to respond.

Hon. B. Locke: I would like to thank the member for Coquitlam-Maillardville for his comments on Mental Illness Awareness Week. I would also like to thank him for providing me the very first opportunity to speak in this House as the Minister of State for Mental Health and Addiction Services. I feel very honoured to be in this role, because I know B.C. is a leader in mental health and addiction services. I look forward to carrying on the good work of my predecessors.

This is an important week for mental health, because it provides an opportunity for people to learn about mental illness. I am glad that the member referenced the Knowledge Network movies on child and youth mental health that have been produced through the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The week before last, I participated in the screening of the first film, which was entitled *Beyond the Blues: Child and Youth Depression*. It was extremely moving, and I was incredibly impressed with the bravery of the youth featured in the film and the stories that they shared.

This is part of the excellent work that the ministry is undertaking to strengthen child and youth mental health. As part of Mental Illness Awareness Week, I will be attending a screening of the second movie on anxiety later this week. The third film in the series will be on the topic of early psychosis.

[1055]

I was briefed by staff from the Ministry of Children and Family Development last week on the great work they are doing in the area of child and youth mental health. Our government released Canada's first comprehensive child and youth mental health plan in 2003. When the plan is complete, we will have doubled the resources available to provide prevention, intervention, education, diagnosis and treatment services for children in the province.

Another exciting development I would like to mention is the delivery of the Friends program to grades 4 and 5 classes across the province. The Friends program originated in Australia, and it is designated to teach children how to cope with anxiety and depression both now and later in life. It is these coping skills that I think will make a huge difference to children as they grow and develop. This program is available to all school districts. Seven pilots have been completed, and 18

districts are currently participating. I plan to attend the Friends teacher training program in Surrey this Friday.

I am also glad the member spoke about Depression Anxiety Screening and Education Day, which is occurring October 7. This daylong event is being organized by B.C. Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information. The B.C. Partners are a group of provincial mental health and addiction agencies that were brought together under the former Minister of State for Mental Health.

This partnership is designed to increase mental health literacy and to create an extensive single source of reliable information on mental health and addiction issues. This group includes participation of the Anxiety Disorders Association of British Columbia, Mood Disorders Association of British Columbia, Centre for Addictions Research of B.C., Association for Awareness and Networking around Disordered Eating, FORCE Society for Kids Mental Health, B.C. Schizophrenia Society and Canadian Mental Health Association.

We have heard from many individuals across the province who are using the resources from B.C. Partners. The member for Coquitlam-Maillardville already referenced their website, and I encourage all members to bookmark their website: www.heretohelp.bc.ca.

While I am on the topic of Depression Anxiety Screening and Education Day, I would also like to mention another exciting development. During the session break, we completed Canada's first comprehensive clinical practice guidelines for depression. This work was conducted by the Ministry of Health Services and the B.C. Medical Association.

Over 5,000 physicians in B.C. received these guidelines, and we also supplied every doctor with a depression self-management toolkit from B.C. Partners. These guidelines are a huge step forward for the diagnosis, treatment and support for individuals with depression. We will be releasing anxiety disorder guidelines next.

I hope all members will participate in Mental Illness Awareness Week activities during the next seven days, and I encourage all of us to speak openly and honestly about mental health for ourselves, our families and our communities.

R. Stewart: I'd like to thank the minister for providing that update on the work of the ministries involved in mental health. I'm encouraged to hear of the efforts that are being undertaken, because they are focusing on education and awareness, which I think will go a long way to ensuring that the stigma associated with mental illness is diminished.

I'm also encouraged to know of the good work being done in the area of children's mental health, because I know that priority has never been given to this area before by any government in the past.

I would like to follow up with one final item to the minister. With the Riverview project, we are building many new mental health facilities across the province. We have dedicated \$138 million to this project. I've seen the new models, and I know they provide a vastly improved environment to support patients' recovery.

The planning and work being undertaken in creating these new sites is extremely extensive, which is a change from the past.

[1100]

The provincial health services authority has made a promise that the new facilities will provide the same or a better level of care. I would encourage the minister to have this promise as high on her agenda as it was on her predecessor's. I would also support the minister in encouraging all members to be involved in Mental Illness Awareness Week activities and to visit the website www.heretohelp.bc.ca.

Thank you very much for allowing me to raise this issue.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members, that concludes private members' statements.

Hon. R. Harris: I now call private members' motions, and we will resume debate on Motion 21.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members, pursuant to standing orders, unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with Motion 21 without disturbing the priorities of motions preceding it on the order paper.

Leave granted.

Motions on Notice

BROADBAND ACCESS IN RURAL B.C. (continued)

B. Bennett: It's my pleasure to rise this morning and speak in support of my colleague's motion. I'm going to turn the motion around a little bit because although it is important that the House recognize the importance of access to broadband technology in the rural parts of our province, I think the House actually does recognize the importance. I think this government recognizes the importance. I think the greater challenge may in fact be helping folks who live out in the rural areas of the province to understand the benefits to them — for their future, for their children and for their grandchildren — of expanding access to broadband technology.

We have the Premier's Technology Council, which has done a lot of work. The CEO of the Premier's Technology Council, Mr. Mutter, has travelled around the province and has gathered information from people about what their needs are in terms of broadband technology. We have a ministry now — a new ministry as of 2001 — the Ministry of Management Services, which has done a lot of good work in terms of developing policy around the expansion of broadband technology in rural B.C.

We've developed, I think, some really useful alliances to help move the project forward. In particular, in the Kootenay region the Kootenay caucus, made up of the four Kootenay MLAs; the Ministry of Management Services; and Telus have entered into an alliance whereby we are able to deliver access to broadband technology to several of our larger communities —

around a dozen of our larger communities — in the Kootenay region.

Back to my original comment that I think the greater challenge may in fact be helping people who live out in rural B.C. understand what an enhancement or an increase in access to broadband technology can actually do for them. Recently in my riding of East Kootenay, there were some meetings held by some of the local mayors and the regional district of East Kootenay who are in favour of expanding access to broadband technology. What they found was that there wasn't a full appreciation of what this technology can mean to us.

Let me just state very briefly some of the benefits. I won't state all the benefits, but some of the benefits. One of the benefits is that if there is broadband technology available in rural areas of the province, the folks that we call lifestyle immigrants — those folks who move from Vancouver and from the Okanagan and from the east and, in fact, from around the world who want to live in the interior of B.C. in the mountains, because of the lifestyle amenities available to them there — are much more encouraged to do so if they have broadband technology available to them.

There are folks that make their living on the Internet and can do business from New Denver or from Invermere or from Fernie just as easily as they can from Toronto or Vancouver or Berlin if they have that technology. Those folks tend to build nice houses and pay large property taxes, so there is a benefit there.

There is also a benefit in terms of health care. We're just getting started with telehealth projects in the province. We already have a couple going in the East Kootenay, and that can be expanded with more access to broadband technology. Just one really interesting example is the way that pictures, X-rays, can be taken in the small clinics in rural areas, and those pictures can be read in a regional hospital such as in Cranbrook or Kelowna or even in Vancouver with the use of this technology.

[1105]

Education — another huge potential benefit for the use of this technology. We're finding that many of our schools are losing students. Enrolment is declining. It's very difficult in a place like Elkford, for example, to teach grade 12 or even grade 11 physics. With broadband technology, the students who want to take grade 11 or grade 12 physics or chemistry can actually stay in their classroom in a small community like Elkford and be taught by a very qualified teacher from a larger centre such as Cranbrook, Kelowna, Vancouver or wherever the case may be.

[H. Long in the chair.]

Another ancillary benefit that comes with that, which was pointed out to me the other day by the Kootenay school trustees association, is that if you in fact have several small schools and a few students in each school that would like to take these high-level technical courses, you can actually keep one teacher in the school district in a rural school district to teach that group of students their grade 11 chemistry, physics or math and

do it with having the teacher right there in the region by the use of this technology.

There are many advantages to having it. I hope that as time goes by, we can help people in the rural parts of the province — including my own part in the Kootenays — to understand that this is a benefit that is going to assist everybody, including students and seniors, and has the capacity to actually increase our tax base.

W. McMahon: Hon. Speaker, actually, I would like to defer to my colleague who is wanting to speak. I was going to close debate.

H. Bloy: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I've just re-entered the House.

The technology sector is so important for rural communities so they can connect with the world. There are now so many businesses that are moving out of the large urban areas where they're working, I will say, in home-based industries and being able to carry on their business. But they need this broadband technology to make it work, so I fully support this.

W. McMahon: I am pleased to have heard previously the strong support for this motion in the House.

Technology is a wonderful commodity as we move forward, and we've heard, even today, how important it is to the province. I think that British Columbia's rural communities benefit immensely from it. We all know that in rural B.C. we have some of the best quality of life and affordable living standards anywhere in the world. My colleague from the East Kootenay was referring to that just a few minutes ago. I think we know how important it is to balance our professional careers with recreation and a comfortable place to live.

Many people prefer rural to urban centres, so it is important that they have the same tools they need to start a business or to expand their education or even their business. Having broadband Internet expand to rural and remote locations is a key element to make this happen. With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask that the motion now be passed.

Motion approved.

Hon. R. Harris: I now resume debate on Motion 67.

Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with Motion 67 without disturbing the priorities of motions preceding it on the order paper.

[1110]

Leave granted.

HIGH SCHOOL AND POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATION OF ABORIGINAL YOUTH
(continued)

G. Trumper: I rise today in support of Motion 67, which is standing in my name: "Be it resolved that this

House recognizes the need to work with aboriginal communities to improve the high school completion rate for aboriginal students and to promote the pursuit of post-secondary education amongst aboriginal youth."

I would like to thank those members who have previously spoken in support of this motion. There are several things I would like to highlight today which affect aboriginal students on the west coast of Vancouver Island, which is in my riding.

The first is transportation. Presently members of the Hesquiaht band — which is on the west coast of Vancouver Island, up where, as most of you may know, Hot Springs Cove is — are only accessible by air or water. These students must travel one hour by a boat which is open to the Pacific swells and the Pacific storms, and then it's another half-hour if they wish to attend high school in Ucluelet. They do this on a daily basis. These students want to learn. However, the long distance they must travel does deter some from completing their studies.

Members of the Ahousat band, which is also on the west coast, also travel a distance to attend school. Although they do have a school on their reserve, many prefer to go to the elementary schools in Tofino and Ucluelet.

The Dididaht band, which is accessible only by a logging road and is an hour and a half to two hours from Port Alberni.... At one time those students drove that road, a logging road to Port Alberni, every day to school and back again. I don't know how many of you would have wanted to do that when you were going to school. Fortunately, they have recently built a school on their reserve. Hopefully, that will encourage many of the students to continue with their education.

Opportunities for these students to achieve their potential and move on to post-secondary education enable them, in many cases, to go back and work in their communities and to provide the leadership that is required. Recent initiatives by our government to help these students has helped increase their chance of success and provided them with stepping stones to pursue a post-secondary education. Many rural areas now have access to broadband technology. This has opened up a whole avenue of communication for those living in these rural communities.

Bamfield is also at the end of a logging road going from Port Alberni. It's about 60 miles on a gravel road. They have a very innovative program, which they are working through with their school and the Bamfield Marine Station, and which would help provide grade 10, 11 and 12 education to the students who live down there.

The Huu-ay-aht band, which is situated just outside Bamfield, also sends its children to that school. Many of them have to come into Port Alberni for their high school education, and sometimes we lose those students. If this program, which is truly innovative and thinking outside the box, is able to be put in place, it will enable those students who live on the Huu-ay-aht reserve to complete their education and move on to post-secondary education.

The aboriginal special project fund has been set up by the Ministry of Advanced Education for programs in health, adult basic education, aboriginal governance and languages, justice, tourism, fine arts, environmental and natural resource management, and trades training throughout the province. I know that many of these particular programs are taking place at North Island College for aboriginal students.

We are giving aboriginal bands a voice in our education system. We are giving the aboriginal people a voice in the education system. This will be an important step in helping students improve their graduation completion rates and help them to achieve the very best as they move forward in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the motion be passed now.

Deputy Speaker: The member has closed debate.

Motion approved.

[1115]

Hon. R. Harris: I now call on us to resume debate on Motion 68.

Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with Motion 68 without disturbing the priorities of motions preceding it on the order paper.

Leave granted.

SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS

(continued)

R. Stewart: It's my pleasure to stand and speak about the role that volunteers can play when we enable them in our communities, when we empower them to achieve things that they can achieve. I know so many volunteer groups in my community of Coquitlam that do tremendous work, absolutely amazing and remarkable work. These volunteer groups range from PACs, the parent advisory committees in our schools and the other parents in our school system, to scouting, to coaches at soccer. This weekend I had the pleasure, of course, of being able to attend some soccer games, as my children are involved. I got to see once again the tremendous participation, the tremendous contribution and the tremendous dedication of folks who take young children and give them the sense of achievement associated with amateur sport.

There are so many other ways in which volunteers make such a collective contribution to our society, and they encourage the establishment of collective responsibility in our society. Volunteers achieve all of those things. We know, for example, that one of the largest determinants of a child's success in school is the involvement of a parent or parents. We know that from a great many studies, and that involvement range is from actual involvement in the school system — involvement as a parent on the PAC or as a parent involved in volunteer activities as well as, of course, the role that

parents play in the home in helping their children once school is over for the day.

We as a government have taken steps to enshrine in law the right of parents, the role that parents play, in volunteering in their children's school. I'm very encouraged and satisfied that parents will continue to fulfil an enormously large role in our school system as volunteers.

For example, last week I was at Glen Elementary School in Coquitlam. Glen Elementary School had just introduced a remarkable program supported by Vancouver, in which the students were going to establish a bank to encourage student savings. The president of the PAC at Glen Elementary, Darlene Liboirion, had brought this, with other members of the PAC, to the school. On opening day 147 children — it was a record number for the first day of banking — were there as bank customers when this thing started up. Fifty-two of the children were trained by volunteers as tellers, and they were learning an incredibly important aspect of our society — the ability to save money, the role of a bank in our society.

It was because of volunteers that that program made it into Glen Elementary, and I want to congratulate the parents at Glen for their work. I know that they of course had to find a sponsor teacher, and among the dedicated teachers at Glen Elementary and throughout my district, there is no difficulty at all finding a sponsor teacher to support such a worthwhile project. I congratulate them.

This weekend my neighbourhood was visited by scouts on a bottle drive, and I saw the parents, the drivers and the other volunteers that were doing the work of scouting. One of the important works of scouting is to raise money for the other work of scouting. I was encouraged by that.

[1120]

Yesterday I was among the guests at the annual inspection of the lower mainland divisions of St. John Ambulance brigade at Seaforth Armoury in Vancouver. Hundreds of members of the St. John Ambulance brigade gathered to recognize the special achievements among their ranks. Among those special achievements were brigade teams that had contributed collectively 300 hours a year, on average, of volunteer time in the important work of the brigade.

Certainly, across the brigade there are hundreds of thousands of hours of volunteerism that take place. That volunteerism really does push forward the collective responsibility, the taking on of responsibility in our society. It tells the individual that by embracing the responsibility society has, we can move society forward. I applaud all of the volunteers at the St. John Ambulance brigade, for example, for their tremendous work, and I applaud volunteers across all of our communities.

It is one of the most important things one can do with one's time. I had the pleasure of making a presentation to a group in Richmond on Friday on the very topic of volunteerism. This was a group of non-profit societies that had gathered to discuss the financial issues of non-profit societies. Among them were tre-

mendous volunteers from every walk of life, and I got to talk with several of them after the fact.

I realized that volunteerism is alive and well in British Columbia. It is an important part of our society. It is perhaps one of the most important benefits we have as a society in the western world — the volunteerism we can bring. That volunteerism, and encouraging it, is something I support, and I hope the House will support it as well.

M. Hunter: It's good to be back in Victoria and in the Legislature and to have a chance to talk about a subject that is near and dear to my heart. I thank the member for Vancouver-Langara for raising this motion on the order paper. I have said in this House before and now have the opportunity to say it again: in my community of Nanaimo and in the mid-Island area I represent, we have one of the highest rates of participation in volunteerism in the province.

Whether this is a function of the demographics of my area, I don't know, but the fact is that in my community there are literally thousands of volunteers spending thousands and thousands of hours to improve the lives of people in our community. Like other members, like the member for Coquitlam-Maillardville, I want again to use this opportunity to say thank you to all those people and all the organizations out there doing those very important pieces of work in our communities.

If you look at the community events page in your local newspaper, you don't have to read very far to get the message that volunteers are everywhere in our society. Thanks to this government, they're in our schools again. They're in seniors homes, helping professional staff care for our seniors. They're in hospitals, and I want to say a little more about that later on. They're at sporting events.

My colleague from Coquitlam-Maillardville referred specifically to St. John Ambulance. In my city, in Nanaimo, the St. John Ambulance society is in the process of erecting a brand-new facility that will afford a training house for people who are interested in volunteering with St. John in providing medical assistance at volunteer events.

You know, the St. John Ambulance society is one organization we tend to take for granted. We see them at every event we go to. They become part of the fabric of community events, of sporting events, of theatrical events, but these people are all volunteers. They're taking time to train themselves. They're taking time to spend time away from their family, making sure that when we go to events, we are safe. I don't think enough can be said about that organization.

Volunteers assist people in need in every respect, in every fabric of our lives. This past weekend I was fortunate to attend a fundraising dinner for an organization called Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity in Nanaimo is one of a large number of similar organizations that exist across North America whose function is to build houses. They like to say that they are able to give people a hand up, not a handout. Habi-

tat for Humanity provides the ability for people who would not normally be able to enter the housing market to do just that.

[1125]

The candidates for housing provide sweat equity. They provide volunteer time. There are many, many people across this province and around our country who have benefited from the work of that particular organization. I don't want to necessarily single out or leave out, and that's always the risk when you single out organizations — that you leave something out. I don't want anybody who's watching or listening to think that we don't respect their organization, but out of the thousands of volunteers and their organizations it's hard to list them all.

I'm saying volunteers go everywhere. They're everywhere in our community. In Nanaimo the Port Theatre, which is an icon of the arts and culture in our community.... The staff there are volunteers. Of course, as we all know in this House as politicians, we could probably not exist without the volunteer help that we get to support what we do.

Lastly, I want to cite another example of how volunteers act in our community in a way that we often don't take notice of. The Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, after 18 years of promises of expansion, is now undergoing that expansion to provide a significant improvement in surgical availability and the availability of operating rooms. But that could not have happened without the work of the Nanaimo Hospital Foundation. I want to use that organization as another example of how our lives are made better.

The Nanaimo Hospital Foundation has undertaken to raise \$4 million that will go towards the provision of brand-new world-class equipment in these new operating rooms that are being built. Without that contribution, it is quite possible that the 18-year wait for residents of the mid-Island for a truly regional general hospital might have gone on a few years more. Last week the Nanaimo Hospital Foundation held its annual general meeting. I was able to be there along with my colleague the member for Nanaimo-Parksville.

It is extremely valuable, and I think we need to recognize the kind of contribution that organizations like that, and the Nanaimo Hospital Foundation in particular, are doing. Without their contribution, without their hard work, without those hundreds of hours of volunteer time and the expertise that's brought to the table for free, we could not have the kind of improvements in health care in my region that we are starting to see.

I want to again thank the member for Vancouver-Langara for bringing forward this motion, and I am very pleased to endorse it.

G. Trumper: I'm pleased to rise in support of this motion.

In my riding, which is fairly widespread, we have a large number of situations where there are always volunteers. Not a weekend goes by when there isn't something happening in which volunteers are giving up

their time and their energy to support a particular event. Just this weekend, as a matter of fact, I attended a show at our new refurbished Capitol Theatre. Through a huge amount of work by volunteers, we now have a magnificent little theatre in Port Alberni, which is putting on very special plays and special events. Even though there has been money that has gone into it from various sources, it wouldn't happen if it weren't for volunteers. They are part of our arts community in the valley — all volunteers who work so hard to make sure that the arts are part of our community.

We also in the last ten years have had all four B.C. Games in the Alberni Valley, and we have never, ever had a shortage of volunteers who have given up not just a weekend but a year or two years of their lives to make sure that these games would be a success not only for those coming in but also for the community so that we could have a sense of pride.

[1130]

We have volunteers in the service clubs that work ceaselessly, giving of their free time to provide extra funds for various events and societies in the valley. We also had — and I attended on the weekend — the West Coast General Hospital auxiliary's tea and fundraiser on Saturday. They have raised many funds for our local hospital. Those women — and they are women; I don't think, to my knowledge, there has ever been a male who has been a member of the auxiliary — have worked tirelessly over the years to provide care and support in the hospital and to provide funds for particular pieces of equipment that are needed.

I want to talk briefly about an association in the Oceanside area, which is Parksville-Qualicum — the SOS group, which is Sharing Our Services. It is a group which is based in Parksville but covers the Parksville-Qualicum area and which, over the years.... It started off as a small thrift shop and actually provided some services for women in trouble. They do have a small staff, but it has grown to providing many, many services in the community, such as safe houses for women. It provides rides for seniors who have to go to medical appointments. It has just opened a new family and child centre. It has a huge thrift store, through which over a million dollars go each year. They provide these services in that area. They also support some of the programs for the school district, for outlying areas. Although there is a small support staff, there are 300 volunteers who keep that particular sharing of services going in that area.

I want to add that not only are the volunteers and the money they raise.... They do have some contracts with some particular ministries, but they don't have any bingos or direct grants. It is all done through raising funds through their thrift shop and with some of the programs they have run for the betterment of the community. This would just not have happened without those 300 people who each year go through, helping with putting the services in place — for providing help at Christmas for families in need, for doing the driving for the various people who are unable to, for

making visitations to people who are lonely in their homes, and for all the myriad of services that sometimes go unnoticed but that bring a great deal of comfort and strength to people who are in need.

We should never, ever forget the value of volunteers. Society would be a very, very sad place if there were not people who felt that they could give a little of themselves — be it a small amount every week or something that you do on a regular basis. That is what enriches not only the lives of the people they are serving but also the lives of those volunteers. I'm very pleased to support this motion.

Deputy Speaker: The member for Vancouver-Langara closes debate on Motion 68.

V. Anderson: I would read the motion again, Motion 68, to refresh in our minds the significance of this particular undertaking. "Be it resolved that this House recognizes that support for volunteers encourages both individual and collective responsibility in our society."

We know full well that Canada, and its creative relationships of the people who live together, was founded by the volunteer activities of men and women of every background and every age, right across Canada. Also here in British Columbia from the beginning of time until the present time, volunteers have been the lifeblood and the soul and the undergirding of our social responsibility to each other. Sometimes when we reflect upon the work that volunteers do, we must shake our heads in consternation that so much is done on a regular basis by people who ask nothing in return except the satisfaction of being able to contribute their time and talents to their neighbours.

[1135]

We might ask, though: what is the relationship between the thousands of volunteers — indeed, the thousands of volunteer organizations — in our community and the relationship with government itself? A week ago I had the opportunity to attend a session held by the B.C. coalition of volunteer organizations — organizations which have come together to ask how they can cooperate with each other and with the government of British Columbia and with the municipal governments in serving their community in the most effective and upstanding way.

Volunteer B.C., under the presence of David Kimp-ton, is the kind of supportive group for this coalition. Volunteer B.C., which is made up of representatives from across British Columbia, and the many local volunteer units in each community are working together so that they might ask: what is the place of what some people have come to call the third sector within our community — one sector being the private sector, one sector being the public sector recognized through the government and its functions, and the third sector being the non-profit sector which is so much a part of our community life?

One of the things that our government has said is that we do not run the private businesses of the province, but we do undertake to provide an environment

and support for those businesses so that they may succeed in their particular interests and development. Likewise, our government can say that we are here to provide an environment. We are not here to run the non-profit societies of British Columbia; we are not here to take from them the credit and the validity of the work that they do. We are here to provide, as a government, an environment that supports individuals and groups as they undertake services in their societies and in their communities.

We're very much aware that the people who know best how to serve their neighbour are the neighbours who live next door. I was very much aware of this when I had the opportunity to work with the Vancouver Food Bank in its beginning, in which they accepted the motto "Neighbour working with neighbour," as the opportunity for them to share with one another their gifts and their talents and their concerns.

In passing, I want to point out that we have organized non-profit societies which are recognized as charitable bodies under various government legislation. We also have many organizations and groups who, though not registered as a society, come together to raise money, to collect services, to train leaders and to share in the work that they do. It is my experience to say that there are those who are the volunteers in formal organizations, some of which have already been mentioned today by my colleagues, and then there are those volunteers — many more in number — who work as informal volunteers with their neighbours, with their community and with members of the families sharing with one another.

Another phrase we've heard very recently that I'd like to highlight is that of public-private partnerships. Now, governments through the ages have always had partnerships — partnerships between the public formal organizations of government and the non-profit voluntary organizations. In the international scene we call them NGOs, non-governmental organizations. They have been extremely important in international work and are recognized formally as a significant part of the work of the United Nations. In Canada the federal government has recognized the non-profit societies of Canada as a third order and is working collectively to work with them in cooperation as we serve one another.

[1140]

This is an opportunity within our government. I'd like to suggest that not only are there P3s, public-private partnerships, but there is a fourth "p" there: public-private-people partnerships — the people being the volunteers who collectively and individually serve. One of our opportunities as a government is to recognize these people-volunteers and organize ourselves as a government to give them more effective support than we have sometimes done in the past.

I think it's something that we forget — that there is not a single ministry of government that does not relate with, be supported by and sometimes challenged by the volunteers in our community. There is no single ministry of government that does not deal with volun-

teers. We have yet to develop a system where we work collectively with the volunteers in the community, apart from the grants and funding that come through individual undertakings in our ministries.

I would like to express through this motion our concern as a government supporting volunteers; our pledge to provide them an environment in which they can continue their work; and our move towards a more formal support for them in the undertakings, in the consistency, so that each of them will know they have an opportunity to come and work with us in serving the people of British Columbia.

Hon. Speaker, I would move we end debate and vote on the motion.

Motion approved.

Hon. R. Harris: I move we continue debate on Motion 104.

Deputy Speaker: Unanimous consent of the House is required to proceed with the Motion 104 without disturbing the priorities of the motions preceding it on the order paper.

ANNUAL ALLOWABLE CUT IN BEETLE-INFESTED FOREST DISTRICTS

D. MacKay: Motion 104, in my name, reads as follows:

[Be it resolved that this House identifies the need to increase Annual Allowable Cuts in order that damaged wood may be salvaged in forest districts decimated by the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic.]

Before I get into that, I just want to say how nice it is to be back in Victoria with a sense of optimism — a sense of optimism that I have had expressed to me by people in Bulkley Valley-Stikine. I'm starting to hear, finally, that the businesses are turning around — albeit not all of them are turning around, but several have turned around — and the people are starting to express a great deal of gratitude for the changes this government has undertaken over the last three years.

Motion 104 deals with the pine beetle epidemic that is taking place in the central interior of our province, and I have to say that was one of the first motions I put forward in our House as a private member's statement shortly after the election in 2001. I talked about the forest health that we had facing us in the interior of our province, and more specifically related to the mountain pine beetle that was chewing its way through our lodgepole pine.

[1145]

In order to address the problem with the lodgepole pine and the mountain pine beetle, the chief forester has a difficult task. Once every five years he must look at the province's 37 timber supply areas and the 34 tree farm licences that he is responsible for to set the annual allowable cut to make sure that the forest industry will be sustainable for the people who live in our province. That is getting to be a problem.

I travel once a week, when the House is in session, to and from Victoria, and I travel over the central interior by aircraft. At 23,000 feet I can watch the spread of the mountain pine beetle as it chews through the lodgepole pine in the Lakes District, which is part of the area I represent. I can actually see the spread. Year after year over the past three years, I have watched this red tide move across the area below me, and I have mentioned before how strange it is when you look out the window and expect to see green forest below you, and all you see are red and grey trees. The colour scheme of Mother Nature has gone askew when you are travelling back and forth like I do. When that is happening, what's happening to the value of the wood standing on the stump is that the value to the people of the province is being eroded year after year.

The first year of the attack we can get good stumpage, which means revenue for the province to pay for the many social programs we all enjoy. The second year the value starts to drop. By year three, after the needles have started to drop, the wood becomes 25 cents a metre to the people of the province. The value of the wood is dropping dramatically year after year, so it's critical that we do in fact realize the best value from those trees before the beetle gets the value out of the trees and we get nothing from it.

It's critical that we continue to harvest those trees. As an example, just in the Lakes District alone the lodgepole pine standing timber is estimated at about 79 million cubic metres in the timber supply area. I was talking to the district manager in Burns Lake before I came down on Friday. He advises me that a very conservative estimate would put the stand at roughly 35 million metres of wood that has now been infected by the mountain pine beetle, and it's moving with a devastating effect. It is moving because we don't have any cold winters anymore to curb the movement of the pest.

It's expected that over the next eight to ten years, about 80 percent of the lodgepole pine in the province will have been affected and destroyed. It's critical that we get at the lodgepole pine and those trees that have in fact been affected already, and realize the most value from those trees.

There are some interesting things happening in the Lakes District having to do with the dead forests. What's happening now in the forest industry is that they're starting to experience this. They're trying to harvest those trees that are still on the stump, but because those trees are dead, they're not absorbing any water. The water is being retained in the ground, and the machinery, as it tries to harvest these trees, is now breaking through the outer surface of the ground because underneath the surface of the ground the forest is so wet. That water, which normally was absorbed by the trees, is now being left in the ground. That's going to have some unknown consequences to us in years ahead in the watershed tables and wildlife management. There are a number of consequences that we are not aware of yet as this mountain pine beetle continues to work its way through our forest lands. We do have to address it.

I was fortunate enough to look at some of the annual allowable cuts that have been taking place throughout the province and, more particularly, the parts of the province that have been affected by the mountain pine beetle. I was pleased when I saw the recent announcement of 200,000-metre uplift for the Lakes District timber supply area, which now puts the annual allowable cut at 3.2 million cubic metres of wood a year. As I have mentioned before, with 79 million cubic metres of wood in that timber supply area, I suspect that as the chief forester looks at the cut down the road, we're going to have to see an increase in that cut just to remove the trees to get a second forest going there.

[1150]

Last week I was in Burns Lake with the Minister for Forestry Operations from Skeena to make an announcement at Burns Lake. In that announcement we awarded a 25-year community forest licence to the community of Burns Lake with an annual allowable cut of 59,000 cubic metres over the 25-year period of that community forest licence. This was another attempt to make sure that the forest growing around Burns Lake that is being devastated by the mountain pine beetle is in fact controlled by the people who live in the Lakes District to manage and look after the forest and try to do what it can to stop the devastation that's taking place there.

We are doing a number of things. We have done a number of things in the past three years to try to curb the onslaught of this pest. It's going to be an ongoing challenge years down the road as the forest slowly dies. There's not going to be any new forest coming up for a couple of generations, so we do have some long-term problems that we're going to have to address. The main problem right now, and the main thrust of my motion, was to make sure that the annual allowable cut keeps pace or tries to keep pace with the pine beetle.

Motion 104 speaks to the idea of increasing the annual allowable cut to make sure that we do maximize the return to the people of the province from the wood that is still on the stump.

With that comment, I would yield the floor.

K. Krueger: I rise to support the motion.

I got an e-mail from one of my supporters here in the Legislature last week getting ready for the session. He asked me if I'd like to speak to the motion concerning the mountain pine beetles. He spelled it b-e-a-t-l-e-s. I e-mailed back and asked if those were the hungry little guys with long hair and fast guitars bringing a whole new rhythm to the forests. He responded that he heard they came from a yellow submarine, but even money can't buy their love.

I don't want to stretch this too far, but I do think it's a long and winding road to deal with this problem. But we just can't let it be. The thing is, they used to get Eleanor Rigby mortis, but it's been a long time since we had a long and cold, lonely winter.

We are facing something of a natural disaster. At the same time, it's a tremendous economic opportunity

for a lot of people in British Columbia, including constituents of mine. These little bugs have decided to make a savoury snack of our pine forests. I know it's no laughing matter, but it's something that is completely beyond control of government that they have been so voracious and that we no longer have the weather to deal with them, which used to hold them in check in the past.

In five years in opposition I and my colleagues raised this issue many times, as the pine beetle kill started to take off from Tweedsmuir Park. We had little success in focusing the attention of government on the problem. Now, of course, it's absolutely huge.

We had an MLA committee that toured the province and encouraged the government to widen the scope of salvage logging in this province. We were very pleased that the government responded, and that has been done. Of course, small-scale salvage logging alone is nowhere near adequate to deal with the scope of this problem.

I was very gratified when the chief forester began to move on increasing the AAC to allow communities and all British Columbians a chance to take advantage of this problem while the wood is still salvageable. Kamloops TSA was one of the first to receive an uplift — 1.67 million cubic metres of wood a year. I have been working very hard to make sure that communities in the North Thompson Valley get an opportunity to have a piece of that economic action.

The chief forester, Larry Pedersen, said at the time of that uplift that reluctantly he had to concede that he now believes the beetles will kill every mature pine tree in the southern interior of British Columbia. While that's a natural catastrophe, again, it is an opportunity for people who can surely use that economic opportunity.

Logging has been underway in our valley, the North Thompson Valley, at a tremendous pace. The uplift I just mentioned also dealt with the trees which were killed in the disastrous forest fires of 2003. We're eager to see some of this wood awarded to community groups that have been working hard to qualify for that opportunity in both the northern end and the southern end of the North Thompson River valley.

There's a group of community-minded people in the lower North Thompson who refer to themselves as the lower North Thompson community forest society. There's another group from the Clearwater-Vavenby area which even earlier started working on qualifying for a community forest designation and is keenly interested in an allocation from this uplift.

[1155]

I'm pleased to report that the Minister of Forests met with those two groups on September 20 and has certainly been encouraging. We hope to very soon be able to provide an economic boost to that valley as a result of this problem in our province.

There is a silver lining, they say, to every cloud. The beetle-kill certainly has looked like a major cloud. I was interested to hear the member for Bulkley Valley-Stikine talking about the problems with the water table. I had never thought of that particular consequence, but we're obviously facing many consequences as a result of this bug infestation. With the beetle-kill comes the cut uplift, and with the uplift comes new opportunities to empower communities in British Columbia — many of whom throughout the heartlands of B.C. suffered economic devastation in the sad decade of the nineties as many of our industries were brought almost to a grinding halt. It's a mixed blessing. There is a silver lining to this cloud, so as the Beatles said: "Here comes the sun."

I note the hour, Mr. Speaker. I move that we adjourn debate.

K. Krueger moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. R. Harris moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

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

The House adjourned at 11:57 a.m.