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6TH SESSION, 37TH PARLIAMENT

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THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2005

The House met at 2:04 p.m.

[J. Weisbeck in the chair.]

Introductions by Members

Hon. S. Hawkins: I have several introductions to make. Today in the members' gallery I would like to acknowledge a very special visitor from Japan. Please join me in welcoming His Excellency Sadaaki Numata, the newly appointed Ambassador of Japan to Canada. I understand this is the ambassador's first official visit to British Columbia, and we are very pleased that he has travelled to B.C. to discover our beautiful province and the many opportunities it presents. He is also joined by his wife, Mrs. Kyoko Numata; Mr. Kosuke Kuroe, the consul general of Japan in Vancouver; and Ms. Shirai Tomoko. Would the House please help me make them welcome.

[1405]

I also have the pleasure to acknowledge another special guest. I would ask the House to please join me in welcoming Tian Chunyan, the newly appointed consul general of the People's Republic of China. The consul general recently assumed her post in Vancouver, and we're pleased that she's been able to make the trip here today in her official capacity. It's for courtesy calls.

As you know, the relationship between B.C. and Asia-Pacific region grows ever stronger, both economically and culturally, and we're very pleased to welcome her here today. The consul general is accompanied today by her consular officer for public relations, Qiu Weiwei. Would the House please make them feel welcome.

Hon. S. Brice: It's my pleasure to introduce two residents from Saanich South, who are visiting in the gallery today. I would ask the members to please welcome a friend and supporter, Pam Zanini, and her daughter, Dina Reaume.

Hon. B. Locke: In the gallery today with us is a friend of mine and a friend to many people in this chamber, James Bennett. He is a Benedictine monk and a dedicated community advocate in the city of Surrey. He operates South Fraser Community Services and the North Surrey health centre. He is here today representing Surrey at the Pacific AIDS Network.

J. Bray: It is a great pleasure for me to introduce three guests from the Victoria Real Estate Board. We had some meetings today talking about different solutions for affordable housing. They represent realtors in the greater Victoria area, who are all working very hard in our communities. Joining us are Gary McInnis, president of the Victoria Real Estate Board; Jim Bennett, who is a government relations individual; and Carol Geurts, who is chair of the government liaison committee. I'd ask the House to make these three guests very welcome.

Hon. P. Wong: Today in the House we have one of the largest groups of students. They are from Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School in my riding of Vancouver-Kensington. There are 76 grade 11 students accompanied by their teachers, Mr. Lum, Ms. Paraiso and Mr. Johnston. Would the House please make them very welcome.

D. Hayer: Today we have Pravin Narotam, manager of Community Savings Credit Union from Surrey, visiting the House. He's a member of the Rotary Club of Surrey as well as an executive and director of Surrey Chamber of Commerce. Would the House please make him very welcome.

Hon. S. Hawkins: In previous years, birthdays weren't something I looked forward to. But now, every chance I get, I try to acknowledge them. I understand there is a member in the House who is going to be celebrating a birthday this weekend. It'll be the last birthday she celebrates — well, I shouldn't say it that way, should I — while in session. I hope she gets a chance to celebrate many, many more. That's the Leader of the Opposition. Happy birthday.

Hon. I. Chong: I, too, would like to make an introduction from a school in my riding, Monterey Elementary School. They may not be in the gallery at the moment, but I know they are in the precinct. They're joined by their principal, Ms. Simmons, and accompanied by five adults.

What they're doing this week is hosting another school from Barrie, Ontario. There are a number of visitors, grades 6 to 12 — 22 of them. As I say, they may be touring the precinct and probably will be popping in shortly to watch either question period or the debates that occur shortly thereafter. I still would ask the House to make them all feel very welcome.

[1410]

Statements (Standing Order 25B)

POST-POLIO AWARENESS MONTH

S. Orr: March is Post-Polio Awareness Month. This is a time to remember the devastating effect that polio had in communities around the world during the 1945-to-1955 period. I have friends that had polio: Howard Petch, a very well known person in our community and former president at UVic; Rheta Davidson, a terrific lady who has been involved in health care for decades and helps me out a lot with good information; Sharon Gelling, another wonderful person who lives here, a retired social worker and the president of PPASS, which stands for Post-Polio Awareness and Support Society. These are the names and faces of polio survivors. Along with millions of others, they moved on with their lives.

Then for some survivors, including my three friends, things took a lousy turn, and they became af-

flicted again with post-polio syndrome. Nobody knows why some survivors develop PPS and some don't. Nobody knows why there is a lag time between recovery from this acute illness and then the development of symptoms severe enough to compromise the quality of life. But it is devastating.

Thank goodness for PPASS. This organization helps polio victims and their families understand what is happening to them and gives them support and help. PPASS themselves are trying to get a handle on what is happening. In fact, this week, on March 5, PPASS is having a trade show symposium in Surrey. Next year, from March 30 to April 2, they are planning a very big symposium in Richmond. They run a wonderful newsletter full of helpful information and contacts.

PPASS is there supporting polio survivors with post-polio syndrome, and we are lucky that they have taken on such a responsible role. They deserve all of our support.

NORTH SHORE DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTRE

R. Sultan: The *Vancouver Sun* recently told the story of Trisha's gift. She lives in Burnaby and was compared to Dustin Hoffman's true-life character in *Rain Man*. Dustin memorized cards and broke the bank at Las Vegas. Trisha analyzes high-tech electric cabling. Both have autism.

Children we call disabled are a fast-growing segment. In the seventies parents of five such children dreamed they might attend neighbourhood schools, play at local rec centres and make their own true friends. To fulfil these dreams, they founded the North Shore Disability Resource Centre. The centre created our first home for children with significant physical and mental disabilities. Today it offers infant development programs, works with first nations, and looks after hundreds of children with special needs and their families.

Recently I invited the Minister of Children and Family Development to have coffee with the centre's chair, Pat Boname, and executive director, Liz Barnett. I was bemused when the minister, a scarred veteran of many cabinet postings, was finally thanked for his decision of 15 years ago integrating disabled children into regular classrooms. The centre is funded by Children and Family Development, Health and private donors. Their watchword is "flexibility." Since families have different capacities, they put families first and systems second — unlike models of the past.

The issues remain: bridging for clients at age 19, wait-list data, and they could always use more money. But to me, the contrast between the reality of this successful and positive group carrying out a tough assignment in a complex setting and the image portrayed when darts are thrown at the ministry was striking. Children and families are a priority of this government, and the North Shore Disability Resource Centre is helping make it work.

PORTABLE RENT SUBSIDIES

J. Bray: Today I again wish to raise an idea that some members of my community are exploring — that of portable rent subsidies. Since the last time I raised this issue, I've had many people contact me excited about this option.

[1415]

In most cases subsidized housing consists of rental units that are built, and the rents are assessed at market rates. Then a subsidy is assessed to ensure that only a limited percentage of one's income goes to cover the rent. In this model, the subsidy rests with the housing unit, and the occupant receives the benefit. However, should the occupant move, they lose the benefit of the subsidy.

This creates several issues. First, because one must build the unit before the subsidy is available, demand for low-income housing will always outpace supply. Second, it creates the need for people needing low-income housing to move to where it's available. Third, it creates a disincentive to move once in a subsidized unit. This can deter moving to another community for employment for fear of losing the subsidy, should the employment cease, and thus having to go back on a wait-list.

I would like to see us explore a new option, which is having rent subsidies being portable — in other words, attached to eligible families as opposed to rental units. The concept I raise is where low-income families who would qualify for a subsidy if they were in a subsidized unit can qualify for the subsidy but apply it to any apartment or housing in the community.

I would like to explore if the capital currently raised by non-profits, CMHC and others that goes into building the new subsidized housing could be shifted to the subsidies themselves. Also, government makes significant payments for shelter through the Ministry of Human Resources. If leveraged, I believe it could allow many more low-income families to qualify and receive subsidies, thus relieving some of the issues identified earlier.

As cities like Victoria, Vancouver and Kelowna deal with higher and higher housing costs, we need to look outside the box for new solutions.

Oral Questions

EMERGENCY SERVICES IN INTERIOR B.C.

J. MacPhail: The health care crisis in British Columbia is starting to boil over — in Surrey, in Penticton, in Victoria and today in Kamloops where, according to emergency room doctors, there are no beds available for dozens of patients waiting in the hallways. According to Nick Rainier-Pope, the situation is: "Just a big mess. I can't see anyone. I can't put anyone in hospital." That about sums up the B.C. Liberal health care record.

Does the junior Minister of Health dare look the people of Kamloops in the eye and say health care is improving when emergency room doctors, those on the front lines, say it is a big mess?

Hon. C. Hansen: Actually, I was in Kamloops on December 2 for the opening of the new expanded emergency room there, which I can tell you was decades overdue. That expanded emergency room was one that had been committed to by the previous government, and they did nothing for ten years. We acted upon it, we got it expanded, and we went from 14 emergency room stations to 25 with an additional.... Let me find the number. It is an additional six fast-track stations in that emergency room.

We know that in all of our hospitals around British Columbia, there are days that are very unmanageable for the number of patients who are seeking care. That happens to be one of those occasions in Kamloops. The staff do a great job of trying to manage through them, but we have staff that are affected by flu and we have patients that are affected by flu, putting increased demands on that particular facility.

J. MacPhail: No matter how much the B.C. Liberals don't want to run on their record, they're going to have to. It is insulting how they ignore patient concerns day after day. The situation is so bad...

Interjection.

Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

J. MacPhail: ...at Royal Inland Hospital that in one instance a paramedic crew had to stay in a hallway with a patient for 12 hours waiting for a bed. It is causing chaos and serious clashes amongst staff. According to one paramedic, it's the worst situation he has ever seen.

To the junior Minister of Health: how can she deny that there is a crisis at the Royal Inland Hospital when health care professionals are saying every day that the situation has never, ever been worse?

Hon. C. Hansen: Four years ago we saw emergency rooms throughout this province that were totally understaffed by emergency room-trained nurses. You know why? Because that previous government had done virtually nothing to make sure there was an adequate number of nurses trained to meet the needs in those facilities.

[1420]

We have started the process of addressing those challenges. Was there a quick fix? No. Are we still seeing that there are some challenges from time to time in emergency rooms throughout the province? The answer is yes. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is not as bad as it was under that government. We are making some progress, and we will continue to make progress.

Deputy Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition has a further supplemental.

J. MacPhail: This government is in serious denial. They are about to head into an election with broken

promise after broken promise. What do they do? They try to blame anyone else except themselves. Clearly, denial isn't just a river in Egypt.

Dr. Rainier-Pope blames the crisis on a lack of long-term care beds. "There's just no room." I quote him: "There's just no room. If there was a bus accident or something, we'd be just hooped."

Here's the Liberal record in long-term care beds in the interior. The Royal Inland Hospital is in crisis. The Liberals cut 1,300 long-term care beds without replacing them. With the hospital in crisis, will the junior Minister of Health admit that the interior health authority is in a crisis because they have cut without replacing 1,300 long-term care beds? That's a betrayal of the patients in the interior.

Hon. C. Hansen: As the Minister of Health Services outlined to the member earlier this week, we have had 4,200 new or newly renovated beds in units in British Columbia in terms of intermediate and long-term care. There are plans underway today for 40 additional projects throughout the province, which will add another 1,600 beds to that. We've made a commitment that by the end of 2008, we will have had a net increase of 5,000 beds in this province.

Interjection.

Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. C. Hansen: That's a much better track record than she can point to in her administration. In the Kamloops region while she was minister and she was in government, there wasn't a single new long-term bed facility built in Kamloops.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AT ROYAL INLAND HOSPITAL

J. Brar: The crisis in health care is known to British Columbians. They experience it every day; they see it every day. Here is one example. The Royal Inland Hospital has tracked the stats, and I think these numbers will help the minister understand the situation in British Columbia.

The percentage of emergency room beds occupied by patients waiting for a bed in a ward has gone up from 25 percent two years ago to more than 40 percent today. The hospital is now considering moving patients from emergency wards into rooms that have not been cleaned, as a stop-gap measure. Can the junior Minister of Health tell us if she thinks that's a good idea? Is that what the B.C. Liberals meant by "health care where you need it, when you need it" — a dirty room in an overcrowded hospital?

Hon. C. Hansen: If the member was to do some research, he would find out that statistics show that in every single region of British Columbia today, more patients are getting access to the care they need in the region that they live. In every single region of the prov-

ince there are fewer patients being hospitalized outside of the region where they live....

Interjections.

Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Let's hear the answer.

Hon. C. Hansen: That is factual evidence that in fact people are getting the care they need when they need it, where they live.

J. Brar: We've been getting the same answer, I think, since I came here. The crisis at the Royal Inland Hospital came to a head last year, but the Liberals have done nothing to fix it — just like they did at Surrey Memorial Hospital.

[1425]

Recently a very sick patient with Crohn's disease was forced to wait so long that his family arranged a flight to Edmonton, where he was seen by a doctor in less time than it would have taken for him if he had stayed in Kamloops.

Again, to the junior Minister of Health: can she explain why the situation is so bad at the Royal Inland Hospital that patients get seen faster if they are flown out of the province?

Hon. C. Hansen: As a matter of fact, we had communication from Alberta, when I was Minister of Health Services, that actually suggested we try to ensure that patients from the Peace River and the Kootenays, for example, be referred to Vancouver hospitals instead of Alberta hospitals because of the fact that Alberta hospitals are from time to time under serious stress, just as is the case in British Columbia.

I think what that story points to is that the triage services that take place in our emergency rooms, in fact, work. Patients who have the most urgent need get dealt with the fastest. Patients who are able to wait a little bit longer on those unusual days can get care, but it may take a little bit longer on those days when they are under a lot of stress.

PREMIER'S PRESENCE IN LEGISLATURE

E. Brenzinger: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Can he please tell the House why the Premier is in Ottawa as a delegate at the federal Liberal convention and not here in this Legislature taking care of the affairs of British Columbia?

Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, you are out of order on that question. You cannot refer to a person not being present in this House.

ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

G. Halsey-Brandt: My question is to the Minister of State for Immigration and Multicultural Services. A

recent study conducted by Simon Fraser University criticized this government's record on providing language services, stating that a lack of language training could be detrimental to the province's economic growth. English-as-a-second-language training is a very important service throughout British Columbia, particularly in Richmond where many of my constituents are immigrants and are eager to learn English.

What is the minister doing to ensure that my constituents are receiving the funding they need to obtain English language skills?

Hon. P. Wong: We all know ESL is important. However, the report that you talk about does not consider our provincial investment in ESL classes in trade schools, in universities, in colleges, in our school system and even in our job-training support. This government has already committed in the throne speech to provide more support in ESL. The Premier announced the \$14.5 million Skills Connect program to help immigrants...

Interjections.

Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. P. Wong: ...including foreign-trained doctors, nurses, engineers to move quickly into jobs so that they can maximize their abilities and potentials.

EMERGENCY SERVICES AT ROYAL INLAND HOSPITAL

J. MacPhail: The Minister of Finance just wrote off the concerns of a family from Kamloops who had to go to Edmonton to get care. Let's see if he can write this off.

There was a doctor reported in the paper at Royal Inland Hospital who was working the night that 22 people from Chase arrived at Royal Inland Hospital after exposure to carbon monoxide. "Every bed was full," the doctor reports, "so we had to line up stretchers in the hallway." He got as many oxygen tanks as he could. "If there had been a bad car accident, we would have been screwed," he said.

How can this junior Minister of Health justify that they delivered on a promise of health care when you need it, where you need it, and the Royal Inland Hospital can cope with no emergency whatsoever?

Hon. C. Hansen: As I pointed out earlier today, we have significantly expanded the emergency room — a promise the previous government had made and didn't deliver on. We actually delivered on it — a \$27 million project to expand the number of emergency room stations in that hospital from 14 to 25, with six additional fast-track stations. We've actually put in a pretty first-class facility to make sure that is going to be dealt with. We opened that facility on December 2, 2004.

[1430]

PUBLIC AWARENESS OF
REFERENDUM ON ELECTORAL REFORM

J. Bray: My question is to the Attorney General. Recently the media has reported on some polling data that suggested only one in five British Columbians is aware of the results of the citizens' assembly and that there is going to be a recommendation on electoral reform in the May election. That means nearly 80 percent of British Columbians are unaware that the referendum question will be asked on the B.C. single transferable vote.

Can the Attorney General tell British Columbians what plans are in place to make sure that there is awareness for voters in advance of May 17?

Hon. G. Plant: In addition to the fact that the citizens' assembly report entitled *Making Every Vote Count* was sent to every British Columbia household, the government has established a referendum information office. The information office is up and running. There is a toll-free provincewide phone line. There either is already or will certainly be a provincewide website that will provide people with information about the issues, ideas and options that are available to British Columbians in this very important referendum.

In April the office will distribute a non-partisan information brochure to all households in the province — all part of government's campaign to make sure that British Columbians have the information they need to make the very important decision about their electoral system, which will be offered to them on May 17, 2005.

WATER AND SEWER RATES IN
RELOCATED KOOTENAY COMMUNITIES

B. Suffredine: In the 1960s people in the Arrow Lakes were uprooted, and the communities of Edgewood, Burton and Fauquier were rebuilt in new locations. B.C. Hydro built new water and sewer systems and has provided those services free since that time. Recently Hydro announced their intention to charge for water and sewer services, though. Understandably, residents of that area are concerned, particularly those who have been there since the sixties and owned their property since the sixties. Can the Minister of Energy and Mines explain this change in position by B.C. Hydro?

Interjections.

Hon. R. Neufeld: Well, Mr. Speaker, do I have to answer the question or not? She just took credit for it.

There have been discussions ongoing with those communities for quite a number of years, including the years that our administration has been in place, and with the regional district of Central Kootenay about transferring those assets to the regional district. Meetings have been held in those three communities. The agreement that has been reached is that....

Interjections.

Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Let's hear the answer.

Hon. R. Neufeld: The agreements that were reached are that the 15....

Interjections.

Hon. R. Neufeld: Mr. Speaker, I will try to speak over the member.

There are 15 original residential property owners in those three communities, who will be grandfathered. They will not have to pay any rates at all. Those that have moved in since.... It has been negotiated with them that there will be rates for water and sewer usage in those areas so that the systems can be upgraded and maintained to make sure we have good, safe, clean drinking water in those communities.

[End of question period.]

Orders of the Day

Hon. G. Bruce: I call second reading of Bill 19.

[1435]

Second Reading of Bills

MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY BASES,
2004-2005, AMENDMENT ACT, 2005

Hon. C. Hansen: I move that Bill 19 now be read a second time.

Bill 19 provides for an increase in the amount of operating expenses for the purposes of ministerial accountability under the Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act by the amounts referred to in the supplementary estimates No. 2 to No. 11, which were tabled on February 21, 22 and 28. The Ministerial Accountability Bases, 2004-2005, Amendment Act, 2005, makes provision to increase the operating expenses for ministerial accountability for the ministers identified in Bill 19.

J. MacPhail: This is such an interesting act. This is the "get the Liberal ministers off the hook act" — from being accountable. That's what it should say. What a misleading title — Ministerial Accountability Bases Act.

This government made such a big deal that ministers were going to lose part of their salaries if they went over budget. Oh, they made such a big deal of it — that if they went over the budget, they were going to lose 10 percent of their salaries. Here's what this legislation.... This legislation is giving a pass to being held accountable to 11 out of 20 ministers in this government. This government has overspent in 11 ministries. That is what they did. Now they'll say "Oh, are you objecting to the spending?" Well, here's what this government

thinks, and I can't believe that the business community supports this government, but they do — ad campaign after ad campaign after ad campaign.

If there is extra money at the end of the year, this government shovels it off the back of a truck. They then allow themselves off the hook from saying that they were overspending their own budget. They can't have it both ways. They can't say that they're accountable and that we're going to live within our budgets. The minute they have the good fortune to have oil prices skyrocket, lumber prices skyrocket, copper prices skyrocket — getting triple the amount of money from property transfer tax because of low interest rates, triple the amount of money from property transfer tax and the biggest expansion of gaming in history.... They have all this extra revenue. They want to spend it, and then they want to let themselves off the hook from being accountable on the fiscal side.

The business community says: "Oh, that's great. That's just wonderful." They give them an A for that kind of budget. Well, that's the business community's concern, but it makes a mockery of this government saying that they've got any ministerial accountability for their budget.

In fact, I think this is the third year running that they've let ministers off the hook. Here are the ministers who aren't accountable for their budget and therefore get their full salary, because that's what this budget does. This budget allows those ministers who went over budget to still get their full salary. I wonder how the Crown counsel feel about that today. I wonder how the Crown counsel feel after this government has given them zero-zero-zero — three years of zero — and has to bring in legislation to bust an arbitration award. I wonder how they will feel, the same day that that legislation will be passed, about the government letting itself off the hook for 11 ministers.

[1440]

Don't ever think for a moment that there is any fiscal responsibility on that side. The Minister of Finance will stand up and say, "Oh, we've got a gigantic surplus" — after three record deficits where children were harmed, where the Forests ministry can't even do its job because the cuts have been so deep that land use is in absolute chaos, where the cattle ranchers are on the verge of bankruptcy, where the Children and Family Development ministry has had the deepest cuts, where four out of ten people who apply for welfare can't get it. Yet they let themselves off the hook for taking accountability for their ministries.

It's an embarrassment. It's an embarrassment to any fiscal responsibility. Don't for a moment, Mr. Speaker, let this government get away with that somehow the opposition.... "Oh, does the opposition object to spending here, here and here?" What we object to is the hypocrisy of this government that somehow says that their ministers are accountable and that if they're not, we'll deduct their salaries, when not one year in their four years has one minister ever been held accountable. They always let themselves off the hook through their

own banana republic style of ramming through legislation.

Well, I say that the people who are most harmed by this government today are the Crown counsel — the Crown counsel, who have had laws foisted upon them today to break their contract to the detriment of Crown counsel on the very same day that the government rams through legislation to give the ministers their full salary, even though they don't deserve it under the real law.

Deputy Speaker: The Minister of Finance closes debate.

Hon. C. Hansen: I wasn't actually planning to speak on the closing of debate, but the comments by the Leader of the Opposition inspired me. We saw a whole decade of no accountability by ministers. We saw a decade where government ministers basically relied on special warrants to prop up their ministry budgets. What that member does not get about the accountability that is in place under this legislation is that ministers have to spend within the amounts appropriated to their ministries. They can't go over, and if they do, there are consequences.

Because we've actually had the benefit of more revenues coming into government, we can afford to do some more things, as the member outlines. That does allow us to spend in some key areas that have been discussed in the estimates debates. What is critical is that before those ministers and ministries can embark on a spending program, it has to be approved. That is why we have been in this chamber, and that is why it is the Legislature — not the special warrants, not cabinet, Mr. Speaker — that gets to approve the appropriation to those ministers.

We will do that first, before those dollars get spent. During the 1990s we saw the debt that was driven from government operations grow year after year. Why? Because we saw ministers flouting the rules, flouting accountability and overspending their budgets without any regard to consequences or accountability. This government has been acknowledged as being the most accountable and most transparent of any government in Canada. We have received awards for that. We're proud of that, and I think the public in British Columbia appreciates that kind of accountability.

With that, I move second reading.

Second reading of Bill 19 approved on division.

Hon. C. Hansen: I move the bill be referred to Committee of the Whole for consideration at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 19, Ministerial Accountability Bases, 2004-2005, Amendment Act, 2005, read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole House for consideration at the next sitting of the House after today.

Hon. C. Hansen: I call committee stage on Bill 6.

Committee of the Whole House

BUDGET MEASURES IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2005

The House in committee on Bill 6; J. Weisbeck in the chair.

The committee met at 2:45 p.m.

Sections 1 to 11 inclusive approved.

Title approved.

Hon. C. Hansen: Mr. Chair, I move that the committee rise and report the bill complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The committee rose at 2:46 p.m.

The House resumed; J. Weisbeck in the chair.

Report and Third Reading of Bills

Bill 6, Budget Measures Implementation Act, 2005, reported complete without amendment, read a third time and passed.

Hon. G. Bruce: I would suggest just a short 15-minute recess.

Deputy Speaker: The House will recess for 15 minutes.

The House recessed from 2:47 p.m. to 2:58 p.m.

[J. Weisbeck in the chair.]

Hon. G. Bruce: I call committee stage on Bill 21.

Committee of the Whole House

CROWN COUNSEL AGREEMENT CONTINUATION ACT (continued)

The House in committee on Bill 21; H. Long in the chair.

The committee met at 2:59 p.m.

On section 3.

J. MacPhail: What we're discussing here is the Crown Counsel Agreement Continuation Act, which again makes a mockery of what we're really discussing. It's the legislation to rip up and toss away not one but two arbitration awards that gave Crown counsel sev-

eral improvements in their working conditions and an increase in wages. This government is, by legislation, ripping it up and throwing it away.

Section 3 is entitled — let me just read it: "Parties may vary Crown Counsel Agreement." This section allows for the B.C. Crown Counsel Association and the government to continue to bargain and reach agreement on other non-monetary issues.

[1500]

Of course, one can't even call it ironic, this section. It's just outright foolishness, because this clause, above all else, highlights the concerns that the Crown prosecutors have about whether or not they can trust the government at all.

Section 3(1) states that the Crown counsel agreement can be varied by either party by agreement. Well, what Crown counsel would be ridiculous enough to enter into any agreement with this government when they know full well that an agreement today means legislation tomorrow to take it away?

Section 3(2) states that anything the two parties come up with that the Minister of Finance doesn't like can be overruled anyway. Oh, right. At least the government is clear this time: "Please come and negotiate with us, Crown counsel, but — oh, we're actually going to be honest with you this time — if we don't like it, the Finance minister will come in and grab it away."

My question is: what person in the B.C. Liberal government dreamt up this clause, and did they actually think the Crown counsel would come to the table, given this legislation? Have they had any evidence from any Crown prosecutor that they'll return and bargain in good faith with this government?

Hon. G. Bruce: What we're doing here in this particular piece of legislation is taking what was in an arbitration award of 13 percent in the first year, and we're giving 13 percent in the last year. We're sticking within the government mandate as had been indicated from the start of this process.

There may be other things the parties wish to discuss. We're simply rolling over the contract, the existing contract that was in effect, and extending it to 2007. We're awarding 13 percent in 2006-07 and saying to the parties that if there are other items you wish to sit and discuss, you may do so under the terms of this section, section 3.

J. MacPhail: Oh, isn't that a brilliant explanation. The Crown prosecutors have already been through that process with the government. They negotiated, and then they had an arbitration. The government took away not only their wage increase but all those terms and conditions that the government now says: "Oh, please come and negotiate with us."

Here's what the Taylor arbitration award gave in rendering Mr. Taylor's decision, page 31. He awarded mandatory dues deductions pursuant to the Rand formula. Let me see. The Rand formula. Oh my God, that's revolutionary. That's been in existence since the

1950s. Mr. Taylor gave it to the Crown counsel, and this government has now outlawed that.

On page 36 Mr. Taylor awarded a seniority provision to the Crown counsel — gone with this legislation. On page 40 of his decision he awarded conditions for vehicle safety. Crown counsel travel roads throughout this province that are at times rendered unsafe by weather conditions. They're most often alone in traveling, and Mr. Taylor awarded vehicle safety to Crown counsel — just like MLAs have.

At page 45 Mr. Taylor awarded an increase in professional development allowance. These are people that actually carry out the administration of justice on our citizens' behalf. It's in everybody's interests that they be current in their professional development. That's what Mr. Taylor said, and this government has outlawed it.

Oh, here's one. Here's how petty this government is. Crown counsel have to wear a uniform. I know that the parlance of the day is to call them robes, and that has a distinguished history, but it's a uniform required by the courts and the government. Every other public employee gets their uniform cleaned by the employer. The arbitrator said: "Oh, it's a uniform. You should have your robes dry-cleaned." This government outlawed that.

[1505]

On page 48 of the Taylor award there's a right for a grievor to be present at his arbitration hearing without loss of pay. Every other working person in the public service has had that since the 1970s. Welcome to the Dark Ages, because this government just outlawed that benefit. Of course, at pages 28, 29 and 31 of the Taylor arbitration there are changes to the classification system, and this government has outlawed that.

So, there's the Crown counsel. They went and negotiated in good faith, went to arbitration in good faith, not once but twice, and the government blew away all of the non-monetary working conditions they were awarded. Under section 3 of this legislation the government is saying: "Oh well, here's an opportunity for the Crown counsel to come back and negotiate those non-monetary items."

Given what the government has just outlawed in terms of non-monetary working conditions for Crown counsel, what's left to negotiate?

Hon. G. Bruce: Let's be clear. We haven't just abolished what the arbitrator came up with. What we said in respect to the arbitrator's award was that 13 percent in the first year was in contravention, if you like, was totally different than what the government mandate had been for all of the other public sector employees in this province — judges, nurses, docs, everybody.

What we said was that in those years of mandate it's zero-and-zero. Then we said we would place the 13 percent that had been awarded in the last year, '06-07. So the award from the arbitrator was 13 percent in the first year of three. We had made it clear that the mandate in government was zero-zero-and-zero, so this was two zeros, as it applied right across the full government spectrum.

Everybody in government has been faced with the zero-zero-and-zero. In fact, government MLAs all initially took a 5 percent reduction on this, which at this point now.... With COLA and so on, I think actually it gets to about 8 percent in respect to reduction. Nobody was left untouched in that instance.

We respected what the arbitrator had to say in that regard. The first arbitration, of course, had a process where government could reject, and we rejected that. It wasn't that the arbitration was then arbitrated again. It was a question of whether the reasons were sufficient that the arbitrator of the second piece would agree with the findings.

Our particular view on all of this was that you had to be fair and balanced to all people in government who had found themselves taken in the zero-zero, so we did that. All of the items just mentioned can be taken to the table under section 3. It's not outlawed. All we did was take the existing contract and say we will roll that contract. We'll take the 13 percent that has been determined by the arbitrator. We're not giving it in the first year. We'll give it in the third.

By virtue of this clause, clause 3, the parties can sit down and discuss those issues that have been on the table, if they like.

J. MacPhail: I wish the minister would stop saying that the Crown counsel got a raise in the third year. They had three zeros, and the fourth year is '06-07. There was a COLA increase across the government service in March of 2003. Thank God the Crown counsel weren't denied that.

Their collective agreement expired in '03. They got a zero in '03, '04 and '05, and they're getting a raise in '06, so the minister better stop saying that they got 13 percent in the third year. Once again, he is just so insulting to the Crown counsel. They took three zeros, the same way as everybody else did, and they had an arbitration.

All these non-monetary benefits I just read into the record that were awarded them by an arbitrator, have they been outlawed or not? The arbitration awarded those benefits to them. Is the minister saying now that the arbitration award stands in those non-monetary benefits, or does this legislation do away with those benefits?

[1510]

Hon. G. Bruce: Let's be clear. In 2003 the Crown counsel were given a 3.2 percent increase. Then in 2004 they're going to receive zero. In 2005 they'll receive zero. In 2006 they will receive 13 percent. All of the items that you mentioned under section 3 can be discussed under section 3 if they choose to do that. That's why section 3 is in this legislation.

Very simply, we've put it in — just as, actually, the opposition did in other certain circumstances of legislation that they've used the same type of clause in before. We have simply said: "Listen. Here were the numbers that were laid out, and we're giving you the 13 percent in the '06 year" — '06-07 is the 13 percent year —

"Those items that you wish to take back and discuss, you can discuss under section 3."

J. MacPhail: Don't ever compare the previous administration's labour record on settlements to this government's record. Don't ever do that. This government's record is abysmal — draconian, Mr. Chair. Don't ever suggest that any previous administration, including the Social Credit administration that this minister was part of, is as bad as this government's record.

By the minister's refusal to admit the truth that they've outlawed all of the non-monetary benefits awarded to Crown counsel, he makes a mockery of the intelligence of the citizenry. They've been outlawed, and what fool would go back and sit down with this government under section 3, when for the first time the government is actually honest about their agenda? They admit right in section 3: "Come to the table, but if the Minister of Finance doesn't like it, you're not going to get it." In fact, on some level, the Crown counsel are right. This legislation is worse than we've seen even to date with this government.

Hon. G. Bruce: Just as a matter of record, this type of clause, clause 3, was used in Bill 39 in 1998 under the former administration — the Public Education Collective Agreement Act, section 2(2) and 2(3); for health and education employees in Bill 21, the Education and Health Collective Bargaining Assistance Act, section 1(5); for education employees in 1993 in Bill 31, the Educational Programs Continuation Act, section 10(4).

So section 3, as we're debating here, is a relatively common piece that the former administration had used in their time dealing with different situations. We're effectively putting that in this piece of legislation. Really, I mean, I'm hard-pressed not to go here, but I will. A comparison of labour relations under this administration and the former administration....

J. MacPhail: Oh, please compare.

Hon. G. Bruce: I don't want to. There absolutely is no comparison.

J. MacPhail: Workers were treated fairly. Women were treated fairly.

Hon. G. Bruce: Yes. We've had 81 public sector, negotiated contracts at zero-zero-and-zero — 81. We've seen in the year 2000, the last year of the former administration, 88 strikes in British Columbia. In 2002 there were 18. In 2003 there were eight.

Now, let's talk about jobs actually in this province. During the course of the former administration, without even thinking about it, we lost some 30,000 jobs in British Columbia because of their policies — their very direct policies as they affected mining. They virtually chased the mining industry out of the province. We know the statistics. For every mine that opened, two closed.

Then in forestry, I remember a great announcement by the former administration of a forestry accord or something. I forget, but they were going to create some 20,000 jobs or something by legislation — by legislation. That's the fiat of government. That was how the former administration was going to work. By passing a piece of legislation, they would create.... I don't know — was it 40,000 jobs? Maybe it was 40,000 jobs in forestry. What actually happened? They lost 13,000 jobs — 13,000 jobs in the forest industry.

[1515]

Now think about this. The largest, proudest union of the province, the International Woodworkers of America, which has its roots in my constituency.... As a direct result of the former administration's policies, we saw that union gone — and it's now part of the Steelworkers — as a direct result of the loss of membership. Some 10,000 members, 13,000 members in the IWA, concerns about pensions and jobs.... Because of the flight of capital, because of the flight of investment — because of that, we saw the loss of jobs. And all through that was your administration, the former NDP administration.

All one has to do is go and look at the numbers. They're right there. What's even worse, for all that period of time, particularly in the latter part of the nineties, we had people fleeing the province. We had more people moving from British Columbia than coming to British Columbia, all as a direct result....

J. MacPhail: Talk about fast ferries.

Hon. G. Bruce: I can if I.... You know, I hate to bring up fast ferries.

Interjection.

The Chair: Order. Order.

Hon. G. Bruce: I don't like to bring up fast ferries. I don't like to.

Interjection.

The Chair: Order, member.

Interjection.

The Chair: Will the member please come to order. The minister has the floor. Would you please come to order.

J. MacPhail: I really want him to mention fast ferries.

The Chair: Order. The minister will continue.

Hon. G. Bruce: I didn't want to.

In respect of the whole issue of labour relations in this province, in fact, what we've seen is a historical piece. We have seen some 200,000 more jobs in British

Columbia. We have seen wages go up. We have seen salaries go up, and we have seen the majority of those 200,000 jobs — well over the majority, 90 percent of them — as full-time jobs in British Columbia.

Now, if I was a union person in British Columbia, if I was in a union today, I would be standing back and taking a look and thinking, now, where did I actually do the best during the course of the last 20 years? Was it under that ten-year reign of the NDP administration, supposedly a party that's supported by the B.C. Federation of Labour and the public sector unions — not only supported, actually controlled and run? Did I, as the woman or the man out there in the workplace, actually get better security from that particular administration? Or is it better that I've got prospects, not only the prospects of a job in hand — of two or three other jobs — but of increasing wages and increasing salaries and a future that's ever growing brighter and labour peace where, in fact, I'm working? I'm not on strike. I'm actually working, and I've got a great standard of living in a province that's going forward.

Where do you think, if someone was to take a moment and stand back and not listen to the rhetoric of Jim Sinclair of the B.C. Federation of Labour...? If people take a moment and are concerned about their own family, their own job, their own community and their own province... If you were actually thinking that that's what you wanted to occur, then I would think that when you come to the polls in this next election, what you'd be doing is seriously considering whether you would vote for the NDP. In fact, you would be better to vote for the B.C. Liberals if you want to make sure you've got job security going forward in the future.

On the whole aspect of talking about this particular bill and the comparison of this administration and labour to the former administration and labour, I didn't want to bring any comparison whatsoever, because there is no comparison at all. The record of the former administration was this way; the record of this administration is this way. The choice is quite simple: go back to 2001, or go forward to a much brighter future.

J. MacPhail: How insulting this government is to the Crown counsel. First of all, the minister deliberately twists information. I can't even call them facts. To somehow say that this clause was used by the previous administration.... It was used to send matters to arbitration — to send matters to arbitration from the bargaining table, from the picket line or from the lockout. And this minister has the gall to say this is identical.

[1520]

What he's done is deliberately.... I wish I could accuse him of misleading the House, but you would challenge me, Mr. Chair. What he's done is twist information to actually not tell the facts, to somehow suggest that this clause is normal and that previous administrations have used it. What previous administrations have done is use this clause to send matters to arbitration and then take a hands-off approach. Not

this government. This government goes to arbitration and then legislates what they don't like, just like spoiled babies.

This government has finally got the unemployment rate at the level it was when they took office. What a record — four years of economic policies that finally got the unemployment rate back to what they inherited. And this minister says that's good. Well, he's right. His record has barely now matched what they inherited.

In fact, it hasn't matched what they've inherited, because they've had to legislate against workers' rights after workers' rights after workers' rights. Disposable income is down in this province. The average weekly wage is down in this province, when across the country it's gone up. Sure, people work longer. That's right — because this government changed the overtime provisions. This government changed the employment standards, and this minister is responsible for all of it.

No wonder he doesn't want to answer the questions about section 3 and what possible reason there would be for the Crown counsel to re-enter into some sort of third-party process when they know full well the government doesn't even have to come back in to smash their negotiations. It's right here in the legislation that the Minister of Finance, with a stroke of the pen, can undo all of that work.

Section 3 approved on division.

On section 4.

J. MacPhail: So what was wrong with the previous arbitration?

The Chair: Shall section 4 pass?

Some Hon. Members: Aye.

The Chair: Leader of the Opposition on section 4.

J. MacPhail: Am I not going to get an answer to my question, Mr. Chair?

The minister outlawed the entire Taylor arbitration award. What was wrong with it? He has specified the wages. I have outlined several other conditions that were awarded. What was wrong with those conditions?

While the minister is thinking about that question.... We just heard from an IWA worker — very interesting. The minister is actually his own worst enemy when it comes to TV, and he's one of our good assets.

Here's what Norm Rivard, chair of the Steelworkers-IWA Council, a union the minister just referred to, said on February 18, 2005: "As a province, shouldn't we be concerned about what this deal means not only in terms of control of Crown assets but also in terms of jobs and community benefit provided from those assets? The unfortunate reality is that the Campbell gov-

ernment has gutted the Forest Act and now has very little to say over the future of our industry, even though it is public timber being sold." There's the workers' view as recently as a couple of weeks ago.

Perhaps the minister, who's putting in place a new dispute resolution mechanism under section 4, could suggest what was wrong with the previous arbitration — the process and the contents.

[1525]

Hon. G. Bruce: In historical terms in this particular sector, what we're trying to do in section 4 is provide, given either that the parties who are interested and the minister.... This is a situation where the minister may appoint — to establish a commission to look at the process that is there and see if there is a way to improve upon that process or to embark upon a whole new process.

If I've got my facts correct, the last two have required arbitration, and three have been mediated. What this section is attempting to do is say: "Look. Let's see whether or not, with some creative ability, we could sit down and try to figure out a better process to come to resolution."

J. MacPhail: First of all, particularly as the commission is set up under section 4(2), there's no provision whatsoever that the Crown counsel will be consulted on who the commissioner is. Why is that?

Hon. G. Bruce: This allows for the minister to appoint. In fact, if it was me, I would consult with the parties as to who they think would be a person of repute who would have the type of interest and knowledge to be able to work with the parties to see if there was another process to come together. It's relatively standard fare.

J. MacPhail: Relatively standard fare. Relatively standard fare for this government is to outlaw any kind of dispute resolution mechanism they don't like.

Why didn't the minister include consultation with the Crown counsel in the legislation? Why would the Crown counsel trust anything from this government? The minister stands up and says: "If it was me." This minister's reputation is ten contract-busting pieces of legislation, and now he's saying: "Oh well, trust me. I'll consult the Crown counsel."

Why isn't it in the legislation?

Hon. G. Bruce: I think that if one looked at section 4(2)(c), "the views of the BCCCA and the government on how to achieve effective and efficient structures, practices and procedures referred to in paragraph (b)," you would ask the commission.

[1530]

It states there: "The commission must consider the following factors." That would require consultation by the commission, as it was appointed to be speaking both with the Crown association and the government, on how to develop that particular process.

J. MacPhail: That section has nothing to do with the appointment of the commissioner. It's entirely within the government's arbitrariness to appoint the commissioner. That's from which everything flows — who the commissioner is. The government can't even admit to their own actions. Well, what a surprise that is. They run and hide from anything that they can't ramrod through with their draconian majority.

Let me just refer to that. Is there anything that the process requires — as was the previous legislation — to be a fair process, and requires good faith? That was the previous structure to which both the government and the Crown counsel were subjected. Show me in the legislation where those two requirements are today.

Hon. G. Bruce: Let's be clear. The commission is appointed by the minister. The minister, I think, would very much want to consult with the parties as to who that commissioner would be. Given who that commissioner is, then, they're instructed through this legislation that they must take into account the views of the association and the Crown counsel. That process is built in here. This is, like I said, fairly standard fare. This is nothing draconian. This is kind of standard fare of how you would go about a review of structures, practices and procedures.

J. MacPhail: Here's how ridiculously this minister treats Crown counsel. There's a house built — a structure — to accommodate the needs of both Crown counsel and the government, and that structure is built in legislation. Both parties use that structure not once but twice. Arbitration awards are rendered. In fact, when this government was in opposition, they upheld that structure and invoked the terms of the arbitration award all the time.

Now this government comes in, takes a piece of dynamite with 75 B.C. Liberals' names attached to it and blows the structure up. This clause comes back and says: "Oh, Crown counsel, we'd like to build another structure. Come help us. We're actually going to design the house. We're going to appoint the architect and tell you what materials we're going to use. But why don't you tell us what colour you want the bathrooms? Surely you should be happy with that, Crown counsel." When they've just had their other house blown up with a stick of dynamite by this government.... That's how this government is treating Crown counsel.

Well, I have to tell you, I've got the greatest respect for the Crown counsel that they will carry on and do their duties on my behalf and on the behalf of the citizens of the province in the administration of justice, even though they've been treated with the greatest disrespect by their own employer.

[K. Stewart in the chair.]

[1535-1540]

Section 4 approved on the following division:

YEAS — 35

Falcon	Coell	Chong
Locke	McMahon	Sahota
Bell	Roddick	Bray
Cobb	Lee	Thorpe
Hagen	Plant	Hansen
Bruce	Brice	Neufeld
Jarvis	Orr	Hogg
Nebbeling	R. Stewart	Hunter
Long	Mayencourt	Trumper
Krueger	J. Reid	Hayer
Visser	Halsey-Brandt	Bloy
Whittred		Kerr

NAYS — 3

MacPhail	Brar	Nettleton
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Section 5 approved.

On section 6.

J. MacPhail: What assurances do Crown prosecutors have that the government won't be disbanding the B.C. Crown Counsel Association?

Hon. G. Bruce: Section 6 is just the section that takes this off the books once the time frame is completed. It's the sunset provision so that when this no longer applies, it can be taken off the books.

J. MacPhail: Yes, I know. My question was: what assurances do Crown prosecutors have that any aspect of implementing this bill won't lead to the government disbanding the B.C. Crown Counsel Association itself?

[1545]

Hon. G. Bruce: I was just trying to be clear on where the Leader of the Opposition was going with this. This legislation does not impact the Crown Counsel Act in that respect. Government has no intention, but if government — whoever government was — wished to make a change, government would have to come back into the House with legislation and amend the Crown Counsel Act. It's not the intention of this government to do that.

J. MacPhail: Well, the intentions of this government mean nothing — absolutely nothing. Not surprisingly, given this government's record and the low level of trust that record has given British Columbians and now Crown counsel in particular, there are many Crown prosecutors who are concerned that even the promise the government is making to them three years late for 13 percent is not reliable.

What assurances do Crown prosecutors have that the 13 percent pay increase will actually be given and

won't be repealed if this government remains in office, God forbid, after the election?

Hon. G. Bruce: The raise is embedded in this legislation, and it's legislation we are passing. I would hope that the member opposite would be voting in favour of this legislation.

J. MacPhail: Never would I vote in favour of this legislation. I'm sure that the Crown counsel who are watching are not reassured at all by this government's commitment to any legislation. What they don't like, they just come in and bust up.

I have to say that we have come absolutely full circle in this new era. I'm doing all sorts of interviews now that I'm retiring. People are asking me what it's like having been in opposition for four years. Well, my very first session here in 2001 had to be called for the unique purpose of busting up bargaining in good faith and imposing a contract. The government couldn't even bring in a throne speech first. They had to recall us so that they could impose a contract on nurses. That was the first legislation that I had to debate as Leader of the Opposition.

Now we've had a full four years of this government calling emergency late-night sessions, weekend sessions, imposing contracts on British Columbia workers in the dead of night. I just got asked about one today, where the government took all night not only to impose a contract but to cut the wages of workers by 15 percent.

Here we are in the dying days of this parliament. It's the last pre-election session, and this is the only bill of substance that this government has brought in, aside from legislation that allows them to drop the budget and run and deny any line-by-line debate on that budget. What a surprise. It's just an absolute surprise, isn't it?

The only bill of substance in the last session is one that imposes a contract, just like their first-ever piece of legislation was. This time it's actually overturning two arbitration decisions so that the government can get its way. They have now fundamentally undermined any arbitration process in this province.

Mr. Chair, it is sad. This will be my last piece of legislation — legislation of substance — that I debate in my political career. It's about breaking the law, breaking a contract, and that is very, very sad. We have come full circle. So it's fitting, actually, that I wrap up my career as an opposition member having to defend against the draconian actions of this government. That was my first debate with the government.

[1550]

This March 2005 we're ending on exactly the same confrontational tone that was established in the summer of 2001 when this government came to power. It's discouraging. I find it very disheartening. I am actually still surprised. I'm still surprised at the actions of this government.

Of course, it didn't have to be this way. This government has promised forfeits-of-crime legislation —

oh, I don't know — a half-dozen times. The Solicitor General has had numerous photo ops promising forfeits-of-crime legislation. But oh no, we don't see that. We see this government hammering the very people who are defending us against the criminals.

Where's the Secure Care Act that would actually help children out of a life of crime? That was promised during the last election. We see nothing. We see nothing on the Community Charter, which was supposed to devolve control around matters of laws to municipalities — nothing. Oh, no. I don't even mention the tuition legislation that the government promised. No, we don't see that — promised in the throne speech.

Well, here it is, the last piece of substantive legislation. We're hurting working people. We're actually hurting the people who make our justice system run. We've completely come full circle. The new era has consisted of four years of taking away the rights of working people with the hammer of 75 docile, out-of-touch Liberal MLAs, and I'm sad.

Hon. G. Bruce: It's not quite full circle, because the first piece the Leader of the Opposition and I did debate was about the nurses. It was a difficult piece of legislation. Rights that you're taking away and the like, duntrodden.... You actually, at the end of the day, awarded them a 23 percent increase. This province didn't have that 23 percent at the time. The difference between that and today is that this piece of legislation, in an effort...

Interjection.

The Chair: Through the Chair.

Hon. G. Bruce: ...to keep balance and fairness for all people in British Columbia — the very people the Leader of the Opposition purports to represent — to make sure you're fair and you're balanced.... We're taking that arbitration, and we're giving them the 13 percent of that arbitration in '06-07. The difference between that and the first piece was the 23 percent we didn't have.

Today, after effective, good...

Interjections.

The Chair: Members, through the Chair.

Hon. G. Bruce: ...management by this government on behalf of the people of British Columbia, who have seen an absolutely miraculous turnaround.... After ten disastrous years of the former administration, we now have that 13 percent. We actually have that 13 percent on behalf of the taxpayers, from their hard work and from everybody else in this process having to tighten their budget and take that zero-zero mandate. We're able to award that 13 percent with the money that we have on behalf of the taxpayers of the province. It's not full circle.

J. MacPhail: Yeah, it is. It's full circle completely.

Hon. G. Bruce: No, it's not full circle. It's from going way, way back — going to a forward vision that sees a much brighter day in British Columbia, because of a government that was prepared to stand up, do some difficult things, do some tough things, but at the end of the day, to turn this province around and get it going in the right direction.

Sections 6 and 7 approved.

Schedule approved.

Title approved.

Hon. G. Bruce: I move that the committee rise and report completion.

Motion approved.

The committee rose at 3:55 p.m.

The House resumed; J. Weisbeck in the chair.

Report and Third Reading of Bills

Bill 21, Crown Counsel Agreement Continuation Act, reported complete without amendment, read a third time and passed on division.

Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, I understand that the Lieutenant-Governor is going to be coming into the House in a while, so we're going to call a recess till the call of the bell. We'll ring the bells when the L-G arrives.

The House recessed from 3:56 p.m. to 4:58 p.m.

[J. Weisbeck in the chair.]

Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor is in the precinct. She will be entering the chamber very shortly. If you would please take your seats, we'll carry on with the proceedings.

[1700]

Royal Assent to Bills

Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor entered the chamber and took her place in the chair.

Clerk Assistant:

Thompson Rivers University Act
Budget Measures Implementation Act, 2005
Income Tax Amendment Act, 2005
Taxation Statutes Amendment Act, 2005
Crown Counsel Agreement Continuation Act
In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth assent to these acts.
Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 2)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 3)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 4)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 5)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 6)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 7)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 8)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 9)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 10)

Supply Act, 2004-2005 (Supplementary Estimates No. 11)

In Her Majesty's name, Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth thank Her Majesty's loyal subjects, accept their benevolence and assent to these acts.

Her Honour the Lieutenant-Governor retired from the chamber.

[J. Weisbeck in the chair.]

Hon. G. Bruce moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

Deputy Speaker: The House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock Monday morning.

The House adjourned at 5:04 p.m.