

Premier Gordon Campbell
Swearing-In Ceremony for new B.C. Cabinet
Government House, Victoria, B.C.
June 16, 2005

Your Honour, it is great to be with you here today. I think you have to agree it's a beautiful day in British Columbia. It is the second time I have been given this privilege and faced this responsibility.

I note that this is the first time that you presided over the swearing in of a Premier and his full Cabinet, and I just hope that you enjoy it as much as I enjoy it, Your Honour.

I want to thank Her Honour for her grace, for welcoming us here to Government House and for showing us all how to carry on our duties and our responsibilities. We will all endeavour, Your Honour, to follow the example that you have set. Thank you very much.

Government House is the home, the traditional home of the Crown in British Columbia. Today it is open to the public in this most important ceremony of representative and responsible government.

I am grateful that we are joined by First Nations Chiefs and Leaders as we launch a new Cabinet and work toward a new relationship of reconciliation with First Nations across British Columbia.

Today, to all who voted, to everyone who cast a ballot, I say thank you.

Everyone who votes honours the sacrifice of generations who gave each of us this fundamental right of citizenship: the right to shape individual and public lives with the single civic act of choosing when you cast your ballot.

Regardless of how that vote was cast, that singular act of citizenship is to be honoured and to be celebrated, for it defines our province and our country.

This election, like all elections, calls us all now to action.

A government has been formed.

An agenda has been set.

The citizens' call is clear.

They have called for Real Leadership and Real Progress for British Columbia.

We are going to focus like a laser on the five great goals that we lay before British Columbians as we reach to create a Golden Decade for every citizen that lives in this great province.

From the structure of the ministries, to the people I have asked to lead them, our vision is clear.

We aim to make B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. Our education investments will continue to grow as we work with parents, teachers, and educational leaders across British Columbia to put our children's education in the forefront and to give them the future they deserve.

We strive to improve public health care and to lead the way in North America in physical fitness and healthy living.

We want to build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, special needs, children at risk, and seniors.

To lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and best fisheries management – bar none.

And we seek to advance all those great goals with a thriving economy that builds prosperity in the lives of every British Columbian family.

Our goal is to create more jobs per capita than any other place in Canada.

These five Great Goals cannot be achieved overnight. They may not be achieved in one term.

But they are the light that beckons us forward, that beckons us onward to a brighter future over the next decade and beyond.

Our goal is to use the next term to gain higher ground for all British Columbians.

Every member of our Cabinet knows that I expect to make significant strides on every front.

To secure our future in a changing and challenging world will require bold steps, clear vision, and concerted action in which all British Columbians play a part.

I invite and I look forward to the constructive voices that will help find new solutions and will join us in forging the path for our province and for our country in the years ahead.

It is new ideas that will bring progress.

It is the willingness to listen, to learn, and to lead that can clear new paths of opportunity.

It is the engagement of young and old alike that will stretch our imaginations to discover the full extent of our promise and the strength of our values.

Great gains are only won by those who resolve to venture forward.

British Columbia is in the vanguard of Canada's future.

We proved that in our first term, and our province is better for it.

In the next four years we will build on that progress with vigour and determination to boldly advance our vision.

The foundation for growth has never been stronger in British Columbia.

I want to thank all of the colleagues who formed the last legislature and built the foundation upon which we stand today.

We are again living within our means. Our economy is firing on all cylinders, and the new world is literally standing on our doorstep.

This is our golden decade. This is our chance to cast a future worthy for all who follow in our footsteps.

We will open new gateways to opportunity through the Asia Pacific initiative, the 2010 Olympics, and public-private partnerships.

We will redouble our efforts to make B.C. a leader in strengthening Confederation, modernizing the Canada Health Act for all Canadians so that all British Columbians receive timely, quality care regardless of their income.

We will focus on citizen-centred service, deregulation, and cross-governmental coordination. There will be a new emphasis on one-window access to government services, through the Internet, tele-help, and front-line offices.

We will devote more energy and resources to improving access to assistance in multiple languages, to expediting investment, and to breaking down barriers that separate citizens from services.

We will reach out in new ways to make government more responsive to the needs of families, women, seniors, multicultural communities, and people with special needs.

As we do that, we will forge new relations with First Nations, founded on reconciliation, recognition and respect of Aboriginal rights and title. The new Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation is responsible for this core commitment. He will lead a cross-government effort to advance this priority.

In every ministry and every sector we will foster new working partnerships with First Nations that will move us beyond the barriers of the past to new horizons of hope for every British Columbian. The future will belong to all British Columbians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, alike, as we light the way together for Canada.

In this and other areas, we are breaking new ground in British Columbia. I hope our leadership will help carry our country forward, and nowhere is that more evident than in democratic reform.

From the introduction of a set election date, free votes, a Provincial Congress, the First Citizens' Forum, and open cabinet meetings, to the referendum on treaty principles, and the Citizens' Assembly, we have been Canada's leading edge of participatory democracy.

We are going to build upon that spirit of innovation, to consolidate British Columbia's role as the nation's driving force of democratic renewal.

We will do that with new forums of direct citizen involvement, through digital democracy and other means.

I want to assure all of British Columbians who participated in the referendum on electoral reform: your strong support for the work of the Citizens' Assembly will not be discounted or ignored.

Nearly 58 per cent of the people voted in favour of STV, including a clear majority in all but two of B.C.'s 79 ridings. That was not quite enough to pass, but it does require clear recognition of the signal it sends to all of your elected representatives in the Legislature, regardless of their party.

I do not propose to rewrite the rules after the fact or to, essentially, redo the work of the Citizens' Assembly. We asked for them to look independently and to review all models of electing MLAs. The Citizens' Assembly did that thoroughly, honestly, and admirably. They spent a year studying, contemplating, and debating this issue on behalf of all British Columbians.

In the end, a substantial majority embraced the Assembly's recommended option.

In the days ahead I will outline a course of action that I believe will respond to the spirit of the work of the Assembly and the will of the people. The members of the Legislature and all British Columbians will be included in that.

Four years ago we said we would strive to create a new era of hope and prosperity for British Columbia. We've made real progress on that road in spite of many obstacles.

I said at that time that I have confidence in British Columbians.

Today, I have more confidence in British Columbians and what they can contribute. I have confidence in their strength, and I have confidence in their spirit of generosity. I have confidence in their tenacity and their imaginations and their creativity.

We can reach beyond the goals that we have each set if we listen to the stories that have shaped our province and build upon the values that are part of our history. We must now, once again, make every effort to test our hopes by action.

Four years ago I said that all members of the Legislature were an important part of government's deliberations. That will remain the case in this Legislature.

As we work on behalf of all British Columbians, it is essential that we hear all their voices and work to build new respect for our differences, confident in the fact that everyone who serves in the Legislature serves to improve the quality of life for British Columbians in each and every one of our regions.

We must strive to leave a legacy of confidence, trust, and pride in the public service of this great province. We must now show real leadership, real progress for British Columbia and for the generation that will follow.

These are exciting times for our province.

This province is Canada's future.

This truly will be our golden decade of opportunity.

This is your government.

And I couldn't feel more privileged to be your Premier and to stand side by side with my colleagues in the Executive Council and in our Government Caucus.

Together, we have come a long way. Together we will go further still for British Columbia.

On behalf of all of my new ministers, our entire Caucus, I say thank you. Thank you to all British Columbians for the trust that they have placed in us.

Today we pledge to honour the faith that has been shown in us.

Tomorrow our work begins anew.

Thank you all very much.