

Premier Gordon Campbell
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Check against delivery

It is great to be back here at the UBCM. And I have to tell you: last night as we had our reception, I met a whole group of you coming in. I don't know if you guys know this, but there are actually municipal elections this year.

A number of people I asked what they were doing, and they said they'd decided they weren't going to run again. I just want to take a second to mention three who I've had a chance to work with, over my career, both in local government and, more recently, at the provincial level.

I know Doug Drummond has been sick. He's the mayor of Burnaby. He worked with me very closely at the Regional Transit Commission, the Greater Vancouver Regional District. He's always been a strong voice for his community, as you all are for your communities, and I wanted to wish Doug the best as he moves on from municipal life in British Columbia.

I also have a very good friend named Philip Owen who has decided he's not going to run in the City of Vancouver again. I think he's done an exceptional job there, and I want to take my hat off to him.

And Ron Webber from the City of Courtenay. Just think of this: Ron has been the mayor of his community for 30 years. I can't believe you're quitting. You quitter, you, Ron.

And then, of course, there's the guys who make me feel older all the time, because they've been around so long and they've done such a great job: Charlie Lasser, Jim Ogilvie.

And listen to this: Tom Michaels from Mackenzie celebrated his eightieth birthday. He comes up to me looking strong and vibrant, and he says: "Well, Gord, I've decided I'm going to run one more time. What's wrong with going to 83?" Let's give Tom a hand.

And I can't actually stop that little list without mentioning George Ferguson. Do you remember the mayor of Prince Rupert, Pete Lester? Pete was one of the big government reformers in British Columbia. He believed in term limits: 36 years, he thought, was good. And I'm not sure that if George Ferguson feels 36 years is good, but he's been 33, and he's going for another three. So, George, congratulations to you.

It's great to be here, too. You know, I sat on the UBCM executive for a while, and I can remember when we did themes for conventions, and we'd always struggle for a new theme – like “municipalities are better than everybody else,” and things like that.

Well, this year's theme, freestyling, actually created some different pictures in my mind that maybe you would have thought of. Maybe they thought, you know, it's Whistler, it's winter sports, it's “whatever.” I thought of something totally different. I thought of Steve Wallace and Steve Thorlakson and Doug McCallum, because I've never figured out what those guys were talking about, I'll tell you.

At any rate, you have once again hosted the pre-eminent convention in the province. There is no time that any of us have as much opportunity to meet with people from the smallest communities to the largest communities in the province, from every single region, and to talk about not just the problems that we face together but the solutions that we can arrive at.

And I want to congratulate the UBCM for, year in and year out, providing this forum for discussion that's open, that's frank, that's direct and that's aimed at improving the quality of life for every single British Columbian. Congratulations to you, once again.

Now, I know that we've had a number of things over the last number of years we've tried to work on, and one of them is the Community Charter. I recognize that some people were disappointed with regard to the fact that we're not going to be dealing with that, finally, in the legislature until next spring.

But I want to talk to you briefly about how important it is that we do this right. I've met a number of you over the last couple of days, and each of you had something to say about it: something that you were a little bit worried about, that you wanted improved. We wanted to give the UBCM a chance to make sure that they had their firm and full position behind you, at your convention, as we move forward. We also wanted to be sure that everyone in British Columbia had a chance to comment.

Just think of this: We, many, many times, have said, in local government and provincial government: how do we include the public in these discussions? We laid the legislation on the table last spring, and we put it on the Web site. There have been 40,000 copies of that legislation downloaded. That's more than the number of people elected to municipal government.

So for those of us who think this is only about the provincial and municipal governments, it's actually about how we better serve the citizens of our province. And they're interested in it, and they want to have the chance – the time – to give their input.

But I want you to know that I remain committed to a Community Charter that creates the flexibility you need, the autonomy you need, the resources, so that we can make sure that we have the triple-A level of government – the affordable, accountable and accessible

level of local government in British Columbia – making decisions that work for your citizens in your communities. And we will do that well.

And, you know, what I want everyone to remember here is: when we started this journey, in 1991 in Victoria, as a UBCM, no one thought it was going to be fast. Now, none of us thought it was going to take this long, either. But this is fundamental stuff. This is fundamental to how we structure the way our government works.

And, just as we're going to create a citizens' assembly in British Columbia to let people – the public – tell us how they want to elect us as their provincial representatives, I think it's equally important that we take the time and effort to get the Community Charter right, because it's fundamental.

It's almost a generational shift. It's almost a shift that is taking into consideration how the world has changed so that it brings us up to today from what it was from when we first created provincial and municipal relationships. That long-term thinking that we have to involve ourselves in as we look at the Community Charter is the kind of thinking that each of us has to put in place as we deal with the challenges that confront us in British Columbia.

Last year I came and I talked to the UBCM about some of those challenges. Every year for eight years I've come and I've talked and I've said: "It's time that the provincial government put the financial disciplines in place that every single one of you deals with, every single year."

It's funny: when I used to say, "It's time to have balanced budget legislation in British Columbia," I normally got applause. Let me try this: I normally had a standing ovation.

Now we're facing those decisions. You know, now we're facing those tough and difficult decisions, and they're not going to be easy.

Let me ask this question: how many people in this room think we would really be better off if we could just think short-term all the time? Let's think about the day after tomorrow instead of the decade after this. How many want your government to think short-term? Put your hands up.

How many think we have to think long-term so that we actually make decisions that serve the next generation of British Columbians, as our parents made them for us? How many want us to be long-term thinkers when we look at the issues that we face in this world?

I hear that from people all the time. "What's wrong with you politicians? You never think out there. You're always thinking about this headline or that headline or this day or the next day."

I want to think further out than that. I want to raise our horizons in British Columbia. To do that, we have to face the facts, and sometimes the facts are pretty uncomfortable.

I want you all to do this: take a look around you; look at the person next to you. Come on, look at the person next to you. How's it going so far?

How many of you think the person next to you is looking a whole lot younger this year? It's funny, isn't it? I had a picture of the first time I was at UBCM. I actually had colour in my hair; I looked about 25 pounds thinner. I'm getting older too.

We are all getting older, and I think we have to remember that our generation has had it pretty good, and we now have an obligation in our generation to do for our kids what our parents did for us. That may mean that we don't get to take as much: ever think of that?

My son Nicholas is about to graduate from university. (Look: he's told me he's going to graduate; he's going to graduate.) He's 22 years old.

When I was 22 years old, I graduated from university. The total public debt in the province of British Columbia was \$2.84 billion. When my son Nicholas graduates from university – when the next generation comes along – they're picking up a total public debt of \$40 billion. That's how much more we've taken out of the system than we've been willing to give back.

And that's why I think it's critical that we all grasp the mettle of change, recognize that the status quo is not going to work – did not work – and be willing to think long-term to come up with solutions that will work for every part of this province.

I know we've made some difficult decisions in the last year that had a huge impact on lots of you and lots of the lives in your communities. But I also know that we're starting to make some headway. We've begun. We've started down that road that we set out for ourselves a year and a bit ago.

Since January of this year we've created 88,000 new jobs in the province of British Columbia. For the first time in the history of our province, there's over two million people working in our province. We now lead the nation in job creation. We had employment soaring by 4.6 per cent: that's almost double the rate for Canada.

Our key indicators are up. Housing starts are up; non-residential building permits are up; retail sales are up; export and manufacturing shipments are up. Growth in car sales is up 18 per cent over last year; that's number 1 in Canada. And British Columbia attracted 42.8 per cent of all investor immigrants to Canada in the last year. We are on the right track.

I should tell you a quick story. I was visiting Terrace, and someone showed me a headline from the Vancouver Sun and said: "Did you see this?" And it said something like "the province is doing well." I said yes. He said: "How did you like the headline?" And I said:

“Well, I like it.” He said to me, “Well, you know, I don’t really like it that much,” and I said: “Why?” He says, “Because I don’t feel that in my community.”

I want you to know that when we look at the province of British Columbia and we think about future prosperity, we are thinking about prosperity for the Northwest; for the Peace; for the Cariboo; for the Chilcotin; for the Kootenays; for the Okanagan; for Vancouver Island, both the south and the north; for the Lower Mainland; for the Fraser Valley; for the coastal communities of British Columbia. Our whole province has to prosper if our whole province is going to be strong, and I need all of us to work together to make sure that that happens – resource communities and other communities as well.

We should never be under any illusions: we have very difficult challenges ahead of us. The softwood lumber decision in itself has had a huge impact on people’s lives: on families in British Columbia, on people who were worried and wondering about their paycheques. The pine beetle epidemic continues to ravage our forests and our economic future. A hundred million cubic metres are expected to be contaminated by the end of this year, 150 million cubic metres by the end of next year.

Let there be no illusions for anyone who lives anywhere in any town or neighbourhood of British Columbia. Every single one of us depends on a forest industry that’s vital, that’s thriving – it’s attracting investment, and it’s creating jobs. There is nowhere in the province that doesn’t benefit from the economic activity that takes place in the forest industry. It is by far our largest job creator. It is going to be, as long as you and I walk the face of the earth, I think. We have to remember that as we move forward together.

At the end of this week I’m going to Washington to talk with them about open access to their markets and tell them about what British Columbia’s trying to do to make sure that our forest industry and our forest workers are respected and honoured as they create the kind of economic wealth that you deserve in this province.

I’ll be going with Mike de Jong and meeting with the chief representative of U.S. trade. I’ll be meeting with Vice-President Dick Cheney. I’m going to let them know British Columbia’s ready to be a full partner in moving forward and creating an economy here that is great for Canada, and we benefit together from open, free access to American markets – American consumers, Canadian consumers and Canadian workers alike.

We can do that; we will build that. And I can tell you this: we’re going to succeed because we are right.

So I’m asking you all today to think about opening this province up: opening up all of British Columbia. Regardless of the community you live in – whether it’s small or it’s large – I want you to think in large scale. I want you to think of where we can go, where we can be, as we open British Columbia to the world around us.

If you live in Prince Rupert, think of opening up that port as a cruise ship terminal, as an inter-modal exchange, as a critical link between our Asian customers and the North

American continent. Think of what you can do as you build that special asset that you have – that close proximity to that huge marketplace in the Asian Pacific.

If you live in the Northwest, we've started to build the foundations for a future again. As we've settled what's taking place with Skeena-Cellulose, you can now think long-term.

We just had a major mineral find in the Northwest of British Columbia: a major concentration of copper. And I can tell you this: This government is opening that up to the mining industry because we think that's going to be critical to the future of British Columbia.

If you live in the Kootenays, think of what you can do with your infrastructure that's in place there if we can just open you up to the world. Ski resort after ski resort, golf course after golf course, the mining industry, the forest industry – you have the opportunity to build the most robust and exciting economy in the province, and we want to help you do that.

And for those of us in British Columbia who don't know about what the Kootenays has to offer, think of this: The Kootenays in our province is larger than – almost two times as large as – Switzerland. They have ski resorts that are second to none – in Kimberley, in Fernie, in Golden, in Rossland.

Rossland, Red Mountain, Nancy Green-Raine, Olympic gold: remember that?

Huge opportunities there — to open our province up, to open our eyes again to the possibilities of British Columbia.

Now, you know, there are a couple of things we have to do differently if we're going to do that. We should remember: a lot of the decisions that were made in the past have led to a sense that British Columbia's closed.

One of the most critical things that we have to do is focus on the tools that are necessary for regions of this province to reach their full potential, and there's one that's been there for a long time. You've known about it and I've known about it. And if you think of the economic and social development of our province, you'll look back and you'll think, "You know, that's right; that was a key to the development of British Columbia: transportation – roads, rail, airports – connecting people, connecting them to service, connecting them to markets, connecting them to one another."

Thinking in terms of our whole province, working together, we have to move forward on improving our transportation infrastructure so people do know that they can connect to the future and to their hopes.

Now, the new transportation technology that everyone talks about is the Internet: broadband Internet access. We're going to work to make sure that you're all connected. We're going to work to make sure that all of our First Nations are connected. When we

talk about consulting and working with our First Nations, if we can connect them to broadband Internet, it facilitates the flow of information, it facilitates the decision-making that has to be done, and it allows us to build a future together.

The Premier's Technology Council has pointed out that, although we are the most successful province in connecting our citizens to the Internet, there are still literally dozens of communities who are not connected — normally, smaller communities. Here's where, if we work together, we can make a real difference.

We know now that if we aggregate our demand in the province of British Columbia, from those who already have it, from the large centres, we can actually make the economics of small-centre connection work.

I can tell you this: Over the next 12 months we'll be working with Allan Rock at the federal level. Rick Thorpe will be working from our perspective, to make sure that we do connect all of the communities of British Columbia to that broadband Internet, because we know that creates opportunities for everyone — where they live and where they want to be.

We need your help as we move forward to do that.

And there's something else we have to invest in: roads. Anyone here think we should be investing in roads?

Well, let me just talk to you a little bit about that, because, again, I've asked Judith Reid to go out and talk with all of you in your communities, and I think she'd done a very good job.

I want to say thank you to all of you in your communities for identifying what your needs are, and in some cases, where you'd like us to get to.

Now, I want to be clear. There's 79 constituencies in British Columbia. Every one has a transportation priority, and it all costs. And we know that. I am not someone who is going to come here and tell you that we can do these improvements for free, because we can't. But what we can do is think about how we create those improvements, think about how we access federal resources to make sure they're helping us build the transportation infrastructure in British Columbia, think of how we can add other resources — private-sector resources — to help us complement our transportation infrastructure in British Columbia.

But we have to start with ourselves, and we have. We're going to invest hundreds of millions of dollars just in maintaining our road system over the next 10 years. We're going to spend a lot of money just fixing things up because everyone benefits from access. Business, tourists, citizens benefit from better access. It actually makes our economy flourish when we can move goods, services and people around safely and quickly.

We can't continue to let our roads deteriorate as they have over the last decade. It's a bad way of planning. It's short-term thinking for long-term loss. We have to change that.

We know that our northern and our rural roads present particular problems: particular environments that they have to be built in. We've already established a special fund of \$30 million for improvements over the next number of years in the North, particularly.

But we have to remember: If we want to have a natural-resource-based province but we don't have roads that allow those resources to get to their markets, we don't have the jobs that we need to support the public services we need – and that's why we're investing in roads in British Columbia again.

Already, in the Northeast in the Peace River country, the oil and gas industry is working in partnership with us to make sure that they can have the access they need to that vast and enormous resource. It's that kind of co-operative effort that Dick Neufeld and others in the industry have taken that's going to make a huge difference as we access the economic opportunities of the future in British Columbia.

But we have more that we have to do. We have to build a new bridge across Lake Okanagan in Kelowna.

Okay, I have an idea here: let me finish the list, and then you can all clap — OK? This can't be a popularity contest.

We need to four-lane Highway 97 from Summerland to Armstrong. We need to four-lane part of 97A. We have to start upgrading Highway 3 and Highway 95 in the Kootenays.

I've instructed Judith Reid to work with the people of the Okanagan and the Kootenays to look and do a feasibility study and a cost-benefit analysis of a new Needles Bridge, to make sure that we're connecting the Okanagan with the Kootenays, opening that opportunity up for everyone in the province.

We also want to realize the massive tourism potential of the Kootenays, and to do that, we're going to have to do something to the airport: expand its runway. And we're going to work together with the federal government and YVR and the people in the Kootenays to make sure that happens, because there are huge, huge opportunities as we do that.

There is enormous potential across this province if we recognize what we can do by connecting ourselves to one another. There is also huge potential if we remember that we're part of a great big, marvellous country called Canada.

I've told the Prime Minister that he should understand – and the federal government should understand – that Highway No. 1 is British Columbia's gateway to Canada. If they want to benefit from British Columbia, they have to invest in Highway No. 1 through the Kicking Horse Canyon. It is our number 1 priority.

In partnership with the federal government, we have already committed \$100 million to improving the Trans-Canada Highway between Kamloops and the Alberta border: intersections in Salmon Arm, some four-laning between Sorrento and Salmon Arm and Three Valley Gap, the Victoria Road intersection at Revelstoke, \$50 million for the Yoho Bridge.

We've told the Prime Minister that we expect Canada to go fifty-fifty with us as we invest \$670 million to improve the Trans-Canada Highway – the gateway to British Columbia – through the Kicking Horse Canyon, and I am very, very optimistic that we're going to be successful.

That's \$335 million that we're looking to the federal government to commit as part of their strategic infrastructure program. It happens that as they commit that, they reinforce our economic strategy. It happens that as they commit that, they create a better transportation system for all Canadians.

It also happens that they create a safer, more secure road for all of the people who travel it, because over the last five years alone, 21 people have lost their lives through the Kicking Horse Canyon — over 700 accidents in the last five years alone.

We do think it's important for us to think about safety as we move forward in our transportation investments. That should be our first priority.

I want to talk to you about a safe road – or a road that isn't that safe, actually. That's the Sea-to-Sky Highway. I want you to hear these numbers: 3,300 accidents in the last five years, '96 to 2001; 34 people lost their lives. We believe that we have to upgrade the Sea-to-Sky Highway as well, and we intend to do that.

Now, I know that some of you will say: "But, you know, why are we doing that?" We're doing it for the same reason we have to upgrade other roads. There's also going to be economic benefits with it. The Sea-to-Sky Highway will be at capacity in 2012. It happens that we have an opportunity to win the Winter Olympic Games in 2010, so we may move that up a little bit.

But I want you to know that the numbers you've been hearing are way over-reaching. I was walking down one of the corridors last night, and one of my friends from municipal government called me over and sat me down and said: "What about this \$1.6 billion for the Sea-to-Sky Highway?" It's not \$1.6 billion. In fact, we know today that we'll be able to create those improvements for less than the cost of the improvements that I just talked to you about for the Kicking Horse Canyon.

I've instructed the Minister of Transportation to work with communities up and down the corridor to make sure that we move forward with that proposal – which is, again, less than the \$670 million that we have for Kicking Horse Canyon – to try and secure that safe and secure access for this transportation corridor.

As we look to the future, we do have to improve on the quality of our transportation infrastructure, and that improvement has got to take place across the province. It's got to take place in the North on Highway 16. It's got to take place in the South on Highway 3. We've got to think of the Trans-Canada Highway. We have to think of Highway 95. All of those things have got to be part as we look long-term, and we're looking forward to working with local governments to do that.

We also have to have an integrated rail system in this province – an integrated rail system that takes our products to the customers that we have across the continent, that takes the products of Canada to the customers that we have in Asia. Again, I think there are enormous opportunities for the northern part of the province as we start to do that.

We're going to work hard to make sure that we do have an integrated, top-quality rail service that meets the needs of our economy and the people who live here in British Columbia.

As we do all this, it's important that we remember this: There's a lot of people in the world who have just about forgotten about British Columbia, and we have to open our province up to the world, to Canada, to our competitors, and also to our customers.

We are committed to opening our roads up again and to improving the access that we have across our borders in British Columbia to our major customers in the United States: \$23.9 billion a year flows from British Columbia south of the border. As I said last year, that free flow of goods and services is a critical part of our economy.

We are working in partnership with the federal government to improve that: to make them smarter borders, to make them easier, more safe borders. The fact is we're looking at a \$300-million project, fifty-fifty shared between the province and the federal government, that should also improve our ability to meet the market needs of our customers south of the border.

This is a start, but we have to do more. And I want take a moment here today to talk to you briefly about the 2010 Winter Olympic bid because I think it's an enormous opportunity for our province. It's an opportunity for all of us. It's an opportunity for us to show the world again what British Columbia has to offer.

Let me just give you some of the information that you should know about Olympics, generally. The Salt Lake City Olympics in 2002 had two billion viewers watching the opening of their Games – two billion viewers. That's a potential two billion visitors. It's a potential hundreds of millions of investors. This is an opportunity for us to show the world what we're like in British Columbia, for virtually no cost in terms of promotional budgets.

How many people here had ever heard of Lillehammer, Norway, before they hosted the Winter Olympics? Other than Helen Sparks, anybody else?

I mean, I remember Norway was sardines: that's what it was, before the Olympics. It's much bigger now. They had a 42 per cent increase in their tourism in the three years before they hosted the Olympics.

What's happened in Salt Lake City is phenomenal. They thought they were going to see a dropoff in tourism after the Olympics. It's been going up.

In Australia they figure they had six billion Australian dollars of additional economic activity coming in for tourism following their Summer Games.

It's a huge opportunity for us, and you know, there's an economic impact study that's on the Web site. And there are people who say: "Well, we don't agree with that economic impact study."

So let's just do this for a minute. The economic impact study suggests that you could generate 10 billion additional dollars for the GDP, 220,000 new jobs and 2.5 billion additional dollars into government – federal, provincial and local. So some geniuses – and they're there; they're always there – say they don't like that study: they don't think it's right.

Okay, so it's not right. Let's cut it in half. Let's say it's just \$5 billion additional. Let's say there's just a hundred thousand new jobs. Who here wants to turn that down? Let's say it's just \$1.2 billion more money coming into government. Who's saying to themselves: "Oh, let's turn that down. We're so well off in B.C., we don't need those jobs, thanks. We don't need those resources coming in."

We do need them, folks. We need them to build up, again, the reputation that British Columbia's had for so long.

And as we do that, what will it actually cost us? Well, let's look at it for a minute. The Olympic bid's costing the province of British Columbia, one way or another, \$9 million.

There's going to be security costs that normally we wouldn't do: \$185 million. The province of British Columbia will share half of that cost; the federal government is paying half of that cost. That's how much we know so far.

There are venues that have to be built for the Olympics. Those venues are \$620 million; \$310 million has already been committed by the federal government. Now, there's things in that 620 that are actually things that we might like over the next few years – say, 10. There's ice rinks, yes. There's sporting rinks, yeah. There's \$110 million to cover operating costs for those facilities in the future. If you go to Calgary today, they'll tell you what they had left over from the Olympics: that legacy has paid for the operation of their facilities for the last almost 20 years. \$110 million, and 50 per cent of that's paid for by the feds.

There's millions of dollars available for what they call "Olympic live sites." I'm just going to take a little brief moment here.

One of the parts of the Olympic bid is the Vancouver Exhibition and Convention Centre. We want that whether there's an Olympics or not, folks. The estimates are that last year alone, we lost 50 conventions – about \$146 million – because we didn't have a large enough facility there.

Now, I know there's other communities that would like to see an expansion to their convention facilities, and I think the Olympic live sites are an excellent opportunity to do just that. In Penticton, in Prince George, in Victoria – you name it – Nanaimo.... Put up your hands if you want it.

The fact of the matter is that we can take these resources already, 50 per cent shared by the federal government, 50 per cent by the province; work with local communities; and build convention and meeting facilities that will meet your long-term needs. Would you rather we waited for three or four years until you come to the province and say, "Gee, we'd like to have a convention expansion," and we say to you: "Well, we'll have to figure out if we can share the dollars with the feds." We've got the money from the feds now; let's put it to use for British Columbia now.

We have a huge opportunity here. It's enormous: billions of dollars of promotion to match our forestry promotions around the world, to match our tourism promotions around the world, to create jobs — not just for the Lower Mainland, not just for Whistler.

Think of what we can do as we create a route that takes you up the Island Highway through Port Hardy and a ferry across to Prince Rupert and along that spectacular road along the Skeena, and down Highway 97 or down Highway 95. Think of what we can do. Think of what you can imagine we can do, because that's what British Columbians want us to do.

British Columbians want to look up there. They want to have some excitement on the horizon. And you know what? We can give it to them if we use some creativity, some federal dollars, some private dollars and some provincial investment. And that's how we're going to build the future of this province.

Just so you know: The actual operation of the Olympics costs about \$1.2 to \$1.3 billion. That is virtually all covered by outside money: by advertising, by network television – even the CBC may pay for some of that – by advertisers, by investors, by people that actually come and pay for tickets to go to the events. It's covered off.

Salt Lake City, this year, has a \$100 million surplus, after the 2002 Olympics. Do you think we're not as good as Salt Lake City? We're way better than Salt Lake City.

Three hundred and ten (million dollars) for venues, 87.5 for security, 9 million for the bid. Add in \$210 million as a contingency, and we're talking about an incremental investment over the next seven years of \$600 million.

Now, for those of you who think that we should be taking all those dollars and putting it into something today, I want to tell you that it's not there for it because we can't get it. The 310 is there for the Olympics. The 310 in the Olympic live sites is there for the Olympics. You know, let's remember that.

Let me put it in context for you. In the same period of time that we may incrementally invest in facilities that we would all benefit from as British Columbians, our kids would benefit from as British Columbians, as we build a cultural of health and sport in this province.... For those same facilities in that same period of time, we will invest over \$75 billion in health care.

And we will invest over \$50 billion in education. Does anyone think that when we get our young people excited about the Olympics – excited about thriving, excited about succeeding, excited about doing the best they can do – do we think they're not going to be healthier? Do we think they're not going to be more disciplined in how they approach their lives? This is something that we can only grasp once, and here we are in a generation that gets a chance to grasp it.

So just close your eyes and think for a minute. How did you feel when the Canadian women's hockey team won their gold medal? At the Winter Games in Williams Lake the day that that happened, I can tell you, every single one of those kids was excited. Every single one of those sponsors was excited. Every one of those municipal leaders was excited. Canadians were excited. Our women won gold.

And then we went to Sunday, to the men's hockey, and our men won gold. How did you like that?

I should just tell you quickly before I do this.... I've actually been in a couple of races in my life. One was in '96. The other was in 2001. It's really more fun coming first, I can tell you.

But just think. This is an Olympic gold medal, won by a British Columbian in the Nagano Games of 1998: Ross Rebagliati, snowboarding. Hey Ross. Ross Rebagliati, everybody. Here he is. Ross, I told you – don't dress up for me.

Right here, this is a Paralympic gold medal. It's Marnie Abbott's. She won this in wheelchair basketball – multiple gold medals. She lives in Vancouver.

This is Olympic gold. This is British Columbia, and we are going to win. Thank you very much.