

The situation in Syria continues to get worse. And the images from last week are hard to think about, much less look at.

In another world – a better world – Alan Kurdi would have grown up right here...happy and safe.

Nothing can bring him or his family back. But we can do more to help the influx of refugees from Syria expected to come.

It's not enough just to open our doors – we have to help them succeed when they get here.

That's why the Government of British Columbia is creating a one million dollar readiness fund for Syrian refugees settling here.

A lot of community groups are already doing a great job helping newcomers find training, mentoring, and counseling services.

This fund is designed to help them do more, for a greater number of people – help them feel at home – and enjoy the life we sometimes take for granted.

It will also support private sponsors navigating the process to bring refugees to BC.

Immigration and refugee settlement are controlled by the federal government.

In the coming weeks, Minister Bond will work with the federal government to coordinate efforts...
and with BC stakeholders to make sure the fund is put to the best possible use.

Syrian Refugee Fund

September 7, 2015

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

This fund will help ensure BC is ready to embrace those who come.

Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Allan Asaph – BCCE President

Susan Clovechok – Conference and AGM Chair

Karen Beaubier – Conference and AGM Host

Thank you.

Thomas Jefferson once said “the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have.”

BC’s success is like that. It’s tempting for those looking in from the outside to say we’ve lucky.

Yes, we have natural advantages.

Just take a look outside. The quality of life here is hard to match anywhere in the world.

Some of that is luck. But the reason BC competes and wins on the world isn't our scenery.

We've had luck because we've worked hard to build a growing, diverse economy with diverse markets.

You did that. You do it every day. BC remains the best place in the country to do business because of you.

This is vital, because in British Columbia small business,

- represents 98% of all our business.
- keeps more than a million people working.
- And drives more almost half of B.C. exports.

Our role in government is to listen to you...

Create the conditions you need...

And then get out of your way.

It starts with getting the foundation right.

Like our third consecutive balanced budget and AAA credit rating.

We created a new Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

Next month is Small Business Month. We're going to work with partners like Chambers across the province to identify and celebrate success stories.

And to make sure there are even more success stories to celebrate, we're going to make it even easier to do business with government.

That starts with asking the experts how we can do even better – you. Minister Coralee Oakes is going to lead a conversation, and I hope you take part.

It starts with low taxes and cutting needless regulation.

But it's also connecting small business with services and supports.

That's why we partnered with the federal government to deliver BizPal...

Created a permanent small business roundtable...

and a mobile business licence program expansion

It's also connecting small business with more resources and opportunity...

From investors to LNG proponents through LNG Buy BC.

And finally, it's making sure you have access to a deep pool of talent.

Working together with the BC Jobs Plan and the ITA...

We're connecting people with opportunity through training

and apprenticeship programs supported in the community, by small businesses, and by industry.

We want to continue to make B.C. the most business-friendly jurisdiction in Canada.

And we've made tremendous progress.
But in a competitive global economy – we need to stay the course.

We need to keep working hard – and create luck.

Let's continue to work together to build strong communities.

Thank you.

-END-

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Retired VPD Chief Constable Jim Chu and Vicki Chu
New VPD Chief Constable Adam Palmer
Vancouver Police Foundation Chair Peter M. Brown
Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson (TBC)

I'm honoured to be here to help celebrate the legacy of Jim and Vicki Chu.

Jim served the people of Vancouver for 36 years, including 8 as Chief Constable.

On top of that, Jim was president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police from 2012 to 2014.

It's not an easy calling.

Putting your name and reputation on the line – I know a little something about that.

But Jim and Vicki...you had to expose yourselves to danger, and put your lives on the line.

For that, you have more than earned our respect and our gratitude.

As a police officer, you need a thick skin, and a sixth sense for trouble. Jim, in your new role on the board of TransLink – you'll need both.

They're lucky to have you. You will rise to this challenge with all the wisdom, dignity and grace you brought to your career in policing.

I also want to welcome Adam Palmer, VPD's new Chief Constable.

There's an old joke about a retiring Soviet leader... He meets with his successor, and hands him two envelopes marked 1 and 2.

He says, during your first crisis, open #1. Open #2 during your second crisis.

Some years later, the new leader has to open the first envelope. The letter says “blame me for everything.” So he does, and the crisis passes.

A few more years pass, and he has to open the second envelope. The note says “write two letters.”

Adam – it’s not going to come to that. Yes, you have big shoes to fill. But I know you’re up to the job.

To all the members of the Vancouver Police Foundation, and to their families...

We do not thank you often enough for the hard work you do, day-in, day-out, keeping our city safe.

We are grateful – and we are proud of you.
Thank you.

- I can think of no better place to celebrate China National Day, and all the accomplishments of an ancient and great civilization, than Vancouver – the most Asian city outside Asia.
- Our ancestral and cultural connections with China played a major role in becoming the cosmopolitan city we enjoy today.
- But increasingly, when we look across the Pacific, we see our future. Almost a fifth of our exports are to China, far more than any other province. Over the course of 10 years, British Columbia's exports to China increased by over 425%. We are the gateway for businesses seeking trade in both directions.
- I can't stress enough the importance we place on trade and investment with China.
 - That's why next month, I'm leading my third international trade mission, to China, returning to our sister province of Guangdong. I know many of you will be joining me.
 - That's why 4 out of 11 BC overseas representative offices around the world are located in China.
 - That's why BC was proud to be the first foreign government to issue bonds in the RMB market.
- There are significant opportunities for us both to benefit in forestry, mining, international education, technology, and more. But as China continues to lift millions out of poverty – perhaps the biggest opportunity is LNG – the world's cleanest-burning fossil fuel.
- We'll keep working on expanding our ties, and BC will continue to be a reliable and honest trading partner for China.
- We can't quite see China from our coast – but we clearly see China as a close and long-term friend. We certainly see ourselves in your future, as we see you in ours.

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Jim Shepard (introduction)

MLA Sam Sullivan

Like a lot of kids, my son sometimes dreams about making the Hall of Fame.

It's a good goal. And as amazing as the men and women in the BC Sports Hall of Fame are...

The people honoured today can make a claim that even the greatest Canuck, Lion, or Whitecap can't:
They built BC.

From the very beginning, BC was built by entrepreneurs. It was true before we entered Confederation, and in a modern, diverse, global economy it's even more true today.

It's not just about celebrating success.

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of the Business Laureates of BC Hall of Fame initiative... the Junior Achievement program can keep doing what you do best – help develop future business leaders.

While you can't teach initiative – you can teach skills.

That's why the provincial government invested \$1 million in education programs that teach entrepreneur and business skills for elementary, middle and high school students throughout the province.

For 60 years, JABC have provided youth with the skills they need to start a company, develop a career plan – and create the wealth that we in this province rely on.

Business Laureates of BC Hall of Fame opening
Thursday, Sept. 17, 2015
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Congratulations to all of the past Business Laureates of BC's Hall of Fame winners.

This new space recognizes and celebrates not just your success – but all the hard work you've done on behalf of our province.

–END–

MLA Mike Morris
Mayor of Mackenzie Pat Crook
Keith Anderson, BC Hydro

Not so long ago, BC's forestry sector was hit hard. So hard, many thought it couldn't recover.

Mountain Pine Beetles were devastating our forests. And in 2007, the global economic slowdown hit Mackenzie as six mills began to close.

Whether you worked in the mill or not, all the citizens of Mackenzie felt the impact.

But British Columbians are resilient. Innovative. And always get back up.

So I'm very happy to help welcome a strong and stable employer back to Mackenzie...

One with the potential to help northern B.C. become an important player in the bioenergy and renewable resource sector.

In just a few short years, Conifex has taken these mills that closed back in 2008 and not just brought them back to life...

But gave them a bright future.

This state-of-the-art facility is not only processing timber for building materials...

It will also generate power for operation and sell back the excess to the BC Hydro grid.

Conifex is creating jobs, skilled, good-paying jobs you can raise a family on.

Jobs that will give kids who grow up here a possible career path close to home...

And attract ambitious people from across the province, looking to set down roots.

Whether they're new or were born and raised here, they'll buy homes, pay taxes, and revitalize the local economy.

Renewable resources and bioenergy are a big part of B.C.'s energy goals...

Not only to develop sustainable energy sources...but also to complete the recovery after the Mountain Pine Beetle disaster.

Taking an untapped resource and creating jobs and energy – that's innovation.

–END–

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Jessica McDonald

Minister Bill Bennett

Thank you.

You don't have to look too far around the world to find governments struggling with the same problem:

Not just maintaining their energy infrastructure...

But increasing capacity to meet rising demand...

And focusing on clean sources of power.

As it has since 1961, BC Hydro led the way. In the past few years, our public utility has undergone a period of renewal:

- Completion of the Northwest Transmission Line.
- Approval of the largest infrastructure project in BC history. Site C will provide BC's growing and diverse economy with reliable, affordable, and clean power for generations.
- Site C is a major part of a capital plan that will see BC Hydro invest \$2.4 billion per year for the next 10 years.
 - That's vital infrastructure to power our strong, diverse economy...
 - And it creates jobs. Site C alone will create 10,000 construction jobs. Overall, BC Hydro will create 12,000 jobs every year for the next 10 years.

I want to thank Stephen Bellringer for everything he's done – and the legacy he leaves for all of us.

It's my pleasure to introduce Brad Bennett as the next chair of BC Hydro.

As many of you know, Brad has a deep family connection to BC Hydro...

And its proud tradition of providing British Columbians with cheap, reliable power – the third lowest residential rates in North America.

But in his three years on the board of BC Hydro, Brad has brought an unmatched business acumen, and a wealth of experience in public service.

BC Hydro has long been a model for other jurisdictions to follow. I can't think of a better person to continue that legacy than Brad Bennett.

BC Hydro Event
Sep 30, 2015
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

It's good to see you, especially enjoying some precious time off the clock.

You deserve a night to meet your colleagues, and take in the experience.

You work hard to help build more prosperous communities, where people set down roots, and raise a family. That starts with finding a good, stable job.

Our jobs may not be stable – but they're crucial for laying the foundation of that prosperity.

Our job is to control spending, and grow and diversify the economy.

I see the results of that hard work throughout B.C.

We're leading Canada in economic growth.

In four years, we'll have eliminated our operating debt. And British Columbians who left for opportunities elsewhere are starting to come home.

We're building a place we can be proud of, where our kids can build an even better future.

I want to talk to you about the opportunities and challenges to making that happen in your communities.

But until then, have a great night. You've earned it.

I'd like to acknowledge the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people.

I want to congratulate incoming president Al Richmond. Al has done a great job at the Cariboo Regional District, where they had a rough summer wildfire season and led their communities through them.

And I want to thank Sav Dhaliwal, from my hometown of Burnaby, for his work over the past year.

For all of you who are new, I'd like to tell you the story of a Soviet leader.

He was meeting his predecessor, who handed him two envelopes.

Open the first in your first crisis, the second in your second crisis.

A few years pass, and he has to open the first envelope.

It says “blame me for everything.” He does, and he survives the crisis.

A few years later, he needs to open the second.

It says “write two letters.”

THE ABILITY TO RESPOND

Here’s a story about the year. You know I like to tell stories. It’s a true story. And I know it could be a story about how bad things are. How things are only going to get worse.

But if I was going to do that, I would have been here yesterday morning.

People don’t want you or me to complain and despair, or tell them how bad things are.

Citizens look to leaders – for reasons to hope, optimism in the face of adversity.

They look to us for a plan to make the future better.

- BC film had its best year ever.
- Tourism is up almost 10% since last year.
- Whistler had its best month ever in August. Parksville had 10,500 people, Tumbler Ridge, a town of 2,700, welcomed 8,000 people to the dinosaur museum.

At the same time, BC faced tough challenges.

The recent windstorm when 710,000 accounts lost power. BC Hydro crews worked around the clock in 16-hour shifts to restore it for 99 per cent of them...in just 72 hours.

Twice as quickly as Toronto, where they had half the number of accounts to re-connect.

And then there was the wildfire season.

Ron Hovanes in Oliver, Mike Richman in Pemberton, Bruce Milne in Sechelt, Mike Ruttan in Port Alberni, and Doug Findlater in West Kelowna...

You did an amazing job when your communities needed you.

And of course, there's Midway and Mayor Randy Kappes. Of the 500 residents in your village, 240 of them volunteered...and they fed 650 people.

That's the definition of why local leadership matters.

In Rock Creek and Pemberton, firefighters said to me: "Christy, the fire is behaving and moving in ways I've never seen before."

It's going to get worse according to the National Research Council in the US ...

Every degree the average temperature goes up will

quadruple the amount of land that will burn in western North America.

Hopefully they're wrong. But we can't afford to sit on our hands.

NEW MINISTRY

That's why, in Naomi Yamamoto, we have the only Minister in Canada with that sole responsibility.

She will be reaching out to work with you on wildfire preparation, windstorm response, and earthquakes.

We're better prepared already, from more resources for EMBC and over \$17 billion in seismic infrastructure upgrades...

But there's more to do.

Next June, EMBC will work with internal and external agencies in the largest disaster drill in BC history...

And to make sure we protect all 4.6 million British Columbians – we need to make sure we're working together – not at cross-purposes.

It's not acceptable that the actions of a few can cause so much damage.

The careless smoker that starts a wildfire, campers who ignore campfire bans, or drones getting in the way of firefighting...

That's why I asked Mike Morris to consider tougher penalties for starting fires or breaking campfire bans...and we are looking at ways to regulate drones.

All of this is about planning for the long-term.

That's our job. That's what leadership is.

If the worst happens, none of our citizens will be looking to us to complain about how bad it is.

They will be looking to us for reasons to hope.

They expect us to be ready.

So I have five announcements today I will be sharing with you in a moment.

They're all about looking far down the road.

Planning in good times...

Doing the work now to protect and secure our communities, our prosperity...

THE HARD WORK

British Columbians want governments that live within its means, so that when times are tough...

We can still look after them.

So here's what that means for us.

Control spending, keep government small, shave down our debt.

The first step was getting BC out of deficit. We've done that.

The next is to eliminate BC's operating debt. We'll stick to our plan, and in 4 years, we're going to eliminate BC's operating debt for the first time since 1975.

Debt-free BC starts there.

But we are not losing sight of the need to make investments in our vital infrastructure.

Right now, we have more than \$7 billion dollars' worth of projects in the field. Bridges, hospitals, transit...

And then you think about what BC Hydro is doing.

Investing \$2.4 billion dollars every year for the next ten years. Dams, transmission lines, distribution...

The federal politicians can talk about what they're going to do to create jobs by investing in infrastructure...

We are doing it.

When you combine all these projects, you're creating 150,000 jobs over 10 years. Site C alone will create 10,000 construction jobs.

I know there are some who oppose it just as passionately as I support it.

What I don't understand are those few who lack the courage to take a position.

That's not leadership.

Leadership is growing a diverse economy. Putting people to work.

Over 83,000 people visited the Come Home to BC booth at the Calgary Stampede alone.

Thank goodness you're here. Thank goodness BC is ready for us to come back.

So many of them were grateful. To be reunited with their families, and go back to the communities they love.

We're starting to see the first LNG projects starting to take shape.

Rural communities starting to thrive again.

But we can't forget – we are outliers. In Canada, the US, and Asia...deficits, debt and a fragile economy are clouding the future.

We are surrounded by uncertainty. And BC's singular achievement has not happened by accident. It's because we have a plan.

It's because of every hardworking British Columbian. And leaders like you.

In Kamloops, Peter Milobar and his council are undertaking a core review to find savings and put tax dollars to the best possible use.

In Kitimat, nobody is more proud of the new smelter than Phil Germuth – because when he looks at it, he sees 1,000 good-paying, secure jobs.

In Victoria, Lisa Helps' task force on economic development and prosperity is looking to find new ways to attract investment.

Lee Brain in Prince Rupert, where in the last year, their chamber of commerce has grown by 46 per cent – new businesses starting or moving there.

Because when those LNG workers arrive...
They're going to buy trucks in Terrace.
They're going to eat at the Cow Bay Café.
They're going to pay good money to learn how to catch salmon with Silverback Fishing Adventures.

The beginning of his vision to complete the work that Charles Hayes began but never finished...because he died on the Titanic in 1912.

TRANSLINK

It's a lot of hard work. And sometimes...
The light at the end of the tunnel is still a ways away.

And while the voters said no to more sales taxes, they said they had real concerns about Translink...but they did not say no to better transit.

They didn't say no to less congestion. They didn't say no to cleaner air.

You have come together around a vision.

We support that vision, and Peter Fassbender and the Province's new appointees to Translink, Jim Chu and Murray Dinwoody are going to help us find a different way to achieve that vision.

CRIME

The other challenge we have to tackle in our urban and growing rural centres is crime. We need to do three things.

First, we need to be tough on criminals.

Our Guns and Gangs Strategy has made headway. The number of gang-related murders has fallen, hundreds of gangsters have been put behind bars, and more and more illegal weapons and drugs are off the streets.

But crime is like weeds growing in your backyard.

We cannot stop tending to the problem just when it looks like we have it beat.

Yes, we need people to come forward – witnesses, concerned family members, and people living in fear.

I want to echo Abbotsford's Henry Braun on this: we need to end the culture of silence.

Third, we also need to be tough on the roots of crime. That means dissuading kids from joining gangs...and helping kids in gangs find their way out.

We want to do more with you.

So today, I'm announcing \$5 million over two years to build on the success of the Guns and Gangs Strategy and the WRAP program in Surrey.

To work with you to take away a gang's most vital resource: our children.

RURAL DIVIDEND

We also have work beyond urban BC.

As the global resource economy is in transition...

Some of the communities that do the heavy lifting for all the rest of us are struggling.

Tumbler Ridge, Williams Lake, Quesnel, Canal Flats.

That's why I asked Donna Barnett to set up a Rural Advisory Council...

To think hard about how we share the wealth that comes from rural BC more fairly with the communities that create it.

Donna and her Council have come up with the principles to guide the Rural Dividend.

So today I'm happy to announce we are committing up to \$75 million over the next three years to create a new Dividend for communities under 25,000...

To help find new ways to develop your economy and generate opportunities for you.

RURAL CONNECTIVITY

Look at the success we've had in tech. Companies like Amazon and Sony Digital has brought its global headquarters here – the result of the hard work of our trade offices and our tax policy.

Victoria's tech scene is thriving. In the Okanagan, it's now a billion-dollar industry.

Now is the moment to start helping tech firms look at smaller centres.

But they'll only locate in communities that have high speed access.

In this year's budget, we committed \$10 million over the next two years to expand high-speed Internet access to all British Columbians.

And I'm happy to give you this update today:

We are delivering. More than 70 communities will benefit from the first eight projects to be approved...starting with projects from the Kootenays to Gold Bridge to Port Alice.

That's a promise made, promise kept.

SMALL COMMUNITY FUND

Modern, effective infrastructure is the foundation for attracting new jobs and investment.

Peter Fassbender has met with many of you about how we can help. I'm sure he mentioned the success of the first round of the Small Communities Fund.

It covers up to two-thirds of the cost of projects like water systems, road improvements, and green infrastructure.

Over the last two years, it got 55 projects off the ground, with a total project cost of an estimated \$223 million.

So this December, it's a pleasure to announce \$90 million, provided in equal shares by the B.C. and federal governments, will be available for application.

WILDFIRE PREVENTION

And before I close, one more announcement.

Doug Findlater, I saw your resolution and I hear you.

We can and must protect interface communities like yours, and work to prevent wildfires across our province.

This year, we committed \$5 million to removing fuel from areas close to our communities.

Today, I'm announcing another \$10 million for the Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative that we co-manage with UBCM.

Applications are open right now, so get yours in to qualify for the 2016 program year.

Additionally, I've asked Steve Thomson to work with Mike de Jong to deliver a comprehensive forest enhancement program with additional funding in next year's budget.

It will focus on removing dead trees killed by the mountain pine beetle, planting new seedlings, rehabilitating impacted wildlife habitat, and reducing the fire risk everywhere.

We need a strong federal partner for wildfire prevention and that's why I've reached out for Ottawa's support.

We need a strong federal partner and federal leadership on another matter.

The Softwood Lumber Agreement expires next month, and we have one year to reach a new agreement with the US.

When a newly-elected Prime Minister takes office, that's my first call.

It matters for all of us, whether you live in Vancouver, Burns Lake, Nanaimo, or Surrey.

CONCLUSION

As leaders, it is our job to plan for the future.

It is our job to create reasons for hope.

To make sure we are as strong tomorrow as we are today...

Living within our means so that we are able to look after

each other in times of need.

Growing a strong and diverse economy.

And most important of all...between you and me...

To remember, in this room...

We are stronger together.

Stronger when we work side by side...just as we do in emergencies.

Just like our tireless firefighters and Hydro workers.

Let's keep working side by side.

Let's continue to build healthier, safer, more prosperous communities. Thank you.

Thank you very much,^{s.22} , and on a personal note,
s.22

s.22 I know
your family must be incredibly proud of you, and I wish you
the best of luck in your career as you go on.

And thank you, of course, to the Coast Salish First Nation
for hosting us on their traditional territory today, as they so
often do, very generously.

s.22

s.22 I want him to know on
behalf of all the people of British Columbia, all the cabinet
and deputies who are here – he goes home with our
thoughts and prayers with him in a very, very difficult time.

Thank you, Minister Rustad, and thank you to the First
Nations Leadership Council and all the organizers for
bringing us together at this second annual gathering, the
first of many annual gatherings that we'll have; I know the
only place in the country that does this, that all ministers,
all deputies are required to attend, with representatives of
every First Nation in the province.

I know it often feels for everyone in the room like progress
is so incredibly slow, and I have to say I often...I almost
always share your frustration, but we cannot hope to work
together in a spirit of partnership unless we decide we
want to walk together, as Chief Littlechild said.

That example that he used of walking along the railway
track, each side on either track, holding hands across the

railway, balancing one another, keeping an eye out for the train but balancing one another as we walk along.... That's what partnership is, and we can't have partnership unless we work to understand each other, and we can't understand each other unless we talk to each other, and we can't talk to each other unless we meet, and so I want to thank all of you for taking the time to come and spend this last couple of days meeting and talking about the things that we share in common, the things we disagree about, the solutions that we see where we have disagreements.

I always think that the most important part of getting to agreement about things is remembering, first of all, that we do share some pretty basic fundamental values, all of us, aboriginal and non-aboriginal.

If I had to name one value -- and I've heard a lot about this from leaders in the last couple of days -- that we all share, no matter who we are, it is our love for our children.

It's our hopes and dreams for them that animate us to always want to do better, not for ourselves but for them.

You particularly think about that as you get older. For me this last week or so since we saw the pictures of Alan Kurdi, which we all saw, I think; his three-year-old body face down on a beach, trying to find a way to safety with his family.

We were all really moved by that picture, and I think for me the most striking thing, the thing that I could not help

thinking about was he is so small and so fragile, and that ocean, that sea that he sat on, lay beside, was so big, and his odds seemed impossible, such a little body in such a big, dangerous world.

There are 10,000 stories that have come out of the Syrian tragedy, and I asked myself why it was that Alan Kurdi's picture has moved so many people all over the world the way that it has, and I know the answer to that.

It is because in seeing Alan Kurdi there, we all saw our own children, and we all saw our nieces and our nephews and our grandchildren, and we all thought about how fragile our dreams and hopes for them really are in this big world, those little people, and our sense of responsibility and our desire to want to look after them.

Every parent knows that sense of fragility. No matter who we are or where we live, we think about whether our children will survive their teenage years without drug addiction or mental illness, whether or not they'll be harmed in a car accident, victims of violence, all of those things that can and so often do affect children that seem beyond control, that you want so much to protect them from.

All of us think about that.

But the reality that Canadians need to face up to is that aboriginal parents worry about that a lot more than non-aboriginal parents most of the time, because the statistics

for aboriginal children and aboriginal communities aren't where they need to be.

We've made some real progress. I want to acknowledge that. In the last decade Dogwood completion rate are up substantially.

Post-secondary graduation rates are also up substantially. Infant mortality rates have improved.

A whole range of those measures we've seen improvement on.

But the fact is that aboriginal parents still bear that burden of worry much more heavily for your children than anybody else, on average, in our society does.

And so when you saw Alan Kurdi's picture on that beach, it may be that it seemed more real to aboriginal parents than it did to any other parents in Canada, and we should acknowledge that.

I've certainly heard a lot about the importance of families and children from every single delegate and representative who has been here over the last two days, and it is a value that we all share, because our children belong to all of us as a society -- not just to their parents, not just to their communities but to all of us as Canadians.

We need and we want to do a better job.

The number of First Nations children, for example, who find their way into government care is a problem all across the country, and governments all across the country are

struggling with ways to deal with it, and we know that that is part of the problem.

We know that children being taken out of First Nations families and communities, having their connection to that family, those roots to their community, broken, in some cases forever, is a life-altering impact.

There are too many.

Grand Chief John, I want to thank you for agreeing to help us figure out how we can resolve that issue.

I have worked across the table from you for about 15 years, when we first sat down and talked about education, and I know that you are incredibly passionate about children and making sure that they have a fair shake in their future.

I believe that you are going to be the beginning of our start in being able to address this problem, and I think that you are going to be the person that helps us show the rest of the country how we can do better in making sure that fewer aboriginal children find their way into care.

Thank you for what you're doing for us and for everybody here.

I also, in speaking to the First Nations Leadership Council yesterday, heard loud and clear from Cheryl Casimer and Grand Chief Bob Chamberlin about the need for a provincewide gathering to talk about children, bringing together child-serving agencies and individuals and

communities who are serving children, ones with delegated agreements, ones without delegated agreements, to talk about how we make sure that we have indigenous approaches, appropriate indigenous approaches, for aboriginal children in every community where there are children who need our support.

That hasn't happened, and I know, as Cheryl said to me yesterday, you have been asking for it for a long time.

And so as I told her yesterday, we are going to bring that group together, a provincewide gathering to talk about children.

Ed is going to support us in leading that so that we can make sure that this discussion that we have had here today and over the last couple of days, particularly the part about children, doesn't end and that we can always be charting a new way forward.

Thank you, Cheryl, for your help with that.

Now, the truth and reconciliation commission did a tremendous amount of work. The stories that they heard and that they have told the rest of Canadians about are ones that I know you are intimately familiar with, sadly.

I know that there are people in this room who spoke about your experiences with residential schools to the TRC, and I know there are many, many more of you who represent communities with elders who talked about their experiences, sometimes for the very first time, in graphic detail so that Canadians can understand the scope and

the depth of the tragedy, the impact that residential schools have had on so many, on First Nations, all First Nations, even today.

Giving that voice was important.

The TRC told us, though, as a result of all that work, that we need to go down -- all of Canadians need to go down -- the path of reconciliation.

We need to find new ways of building our partnership, of reaching our hands across that railway and touching each other and balancing one another as we walk along together.

I met with many of you over the last couple of days in one-on-one meetings, and I want you to know I have heard from you loud and clear that you see reconciliation in your community as something unique to your community.

I understand that.

Reconciliation does not look exactly the same for every single community. I know that.

I want you to know that we are committed to pursuing that path of a provincewide reconciliation discussion but also individually, one-on-one with different communities, so that we can shape reconciliation in a way that works for the people that you represent and that allows you to shape the vision that you choose for your community's future.

Minister Rustad and the First Nations Leadership Council worked really hard in pounding out the document that's been presented to you.

I want to ask all of you to make sure that we understand, us together, the First Nations Leadership Council and government, all of the input that you need to have to make sure that that document comes alive.

Last year I talked about doing this in partnership, and what really what I said was -- and I meant it -- we are done with approaches that include the government of British Columbia telling you in First Nations communities what's good for your communities.

The future of reconciliation is premised on the understanding that reconciliation means a shared vision of the future, one that First Nations will shape for themselves; a First Nations economy that is shaped by First Nations; First Nations communities that are shaped by First Nations; and we can't do that if our path to reconciliation isn't one that we shape together.

The TRC also told us that we need to do something about the way we educate kids in this province in public school, and I couldn't agree with that more.

In fact, the curriculum for First Nations education has been stuck so long that when my son came home with his report, it happened to be something I found in my garage in exact replica, because it was the same report that I did in grade 5 on the same subject.

It happened to be on the same First Nations issue back in 1975.

That's how long it's been stuck.

s.22

He

probably had a tougher teacher than I did.

We've got to get it unstuck, and so we talked yesterday about changing that K-to-12 curriculum.

We are ready to go to make sure that children, non-First Nations children, every one of them, grows up knowing about the history of First Nations, about the culture and traditions and the ties to the land that have shaped your communities and have, frankly, shaped so much of who we are in British Columbia and that your experiences in our province, whether that's the tragic experience of residential schools or the many other rich cultural experiences which we [confront] every day, the more positive ones.

All kids need to know about that.

They need to know about the history of the Tsimshian as much as they know about or more than know about the history of Robert the Bruce or William Wallace or the Battle of the Bulge.

What about Canada? What about the founders of Canada? What about the people who have been here for millennia?

There are a lot of generations of kids in our province who don't know about that, and we are going to change it.

We're going to change it for them, and we're going to change it for the First Nations students who go to public school, who need to go to school and see themselves in that curriculum, not to see somebody else but to know when they go to class every day that their history is a shared history and that it's not something exclusive to First Nations; it's something that matters to all of us.

And so I think we will have a different future in this small change if we can make sure that every child in British Columbia gets a different start and begins with a different understanding of who First Nations are and why First Nations matter for all of us so much.

But First Nations kids start with some other disadvantages.

One of those has been the fact that on-reserve First Nations schools don't get funded at the same level as First Nations kids who go to public schools, or that First Nations kids who require support in early childhood development, family support, preventative support before they go into care, don't get that support the way that kids who live off reserve and non-aboriginal kids do.

I know there's a federal election going on right now, so none of them are here, but I want you to know that when this election is over and we meet next year, I expect our

federal representatives to be in this room with us because we demand that Ottawa get to the table.

Chief Adam, said something interesting to me today which he has said many times and, I know, in fora like this one. He said he is tired of administering poverty.

Wilf, I told you I agree with you.

Rather than administering poverty, let's fight poverty.

Let's eradicate poverty in First Nations communities. That's going to mean the only way we can fight poverty is by growing the economy.

Now, there's an important corollary on that, because we've been pretty good at growing the economy in British Columbia for a couple of hundred years, but we haven't been good at sharing the benefits of that growing economy with the people who live on the land, the land from which we extract the resources that enrich us.

So let's grow the economy, yes, but as part of reconciliation, let's build the agreements in and the structure in that's going to ensure that First Nations are sharing in that wealth in a way that frankly hasn't happened before in the province.

That is how we will fight poverty -- by creating jobs, not just jobs for non-First Nations but jobs for First Nations people.

We know statistically, scientifically, that when we look at where wealth is created, when wealth is created off First Nations communities, very little of it radiates in.

When wealth is created on First Nations communities, much of it radiates out.

When a dividend goes to citizens at Haisla from the benefits of LNG, where do those citizens spend that money?

They spend it in Terrace. They spend it in Kitimat. They spend it travelling the province.

That money goes into the pockets of people in communities all over the province.

That's been a fact and a statistic that's been forgotten, but I want you to know we do not forget that.

It's not just a flow of revenue. It's jobs. It's actually having that employment and the dignity and the prosperity that comes with going to work every day.

It's investing in trades training for First Nations, \$30 million over the next three years so that First Nations young people and older people have the skills that they need to be able to go and get those jobs; investing in non-trades training, too, so that people like ^{s.22} could go out...if they want to get a grad degree, if they want to get a PhD, can access increased scholarships.

We're offering now a \$5,000 scholarship for First Nations people who want to go and seek graduate degrees and PhDs.

Trades training, non-trades training, making sure that First Nations people have the full scope of tools that they need to be able to participate in the economy.

I know there's been lots of talk, justifiably, about how slow sometimes the progress is.

There are also lots of examples of First Nations leadership in this room who have gone out and worked incredibly hard to make sure that we are pushing that agenda of economic growth and reconciliation forward.

In just the last year eight First Nations have reached agreements-in-principle, over 100 new economic and reconciliation agreements just in the last year.

That puts us at 350 from 2050 when we last met.

That includes 35 clean-energy revenue-sharing agreements with 27 First Nations, 44 LNG-related benefit agreements across the province.

We have worked with the Nisga'a to make sure that they are able to levy property taxes.

Those are tangible, real accomplishments that are a result of the hard work of the leadership in this room, and they are a demonstration of those leaders' certainty that the way to eliminate and eradicate poverty is to make sure

people have the dignity and the prosperity that comes with having a job.

As those jobs, though, are being created, I want you to know that we know we must honour BC's long tradition of protecting our environment, and I recognize that First Nations have a very unique connection to our environment but really to our land.

Clem Seymour described it to me this way yesterday from the Seabird First Nation.

Clem said: "What you don't understand is that our culture and our language come from the land, and therefore, without the land, we are nothing."

He then translated roughly something for me from his language which went something like:

"Our creator is only creating so much land, we'd better look after what he gave us, and if we look after it, the land will look after us."

It's a unique perspective on the connection of peoples to the land. I think it's unique in Canada, unique in British Columbia, to anywhere in the world.

We're working with 32 First Nations on environmental stewardship jobs specifically to help support what we're doing with LNG and make sure that it is done safely, in a way that is going to preserve your connection, all of our connection, to this beautiful land that we're so lucky and blessed to inhabit.

First Nations have been reaping the bounty of this province for a long time, a lot longer than any European settlers.

Whether that's through forestry, extracting minerals; whether it's through fishing; First Nations have a greater knowledge of it than anyone else in the province, and so it's natural that First Nations leaders would want to make sure that your people are put to work protecting it.

No question, poverty, jobs, environmental protection, making sure that our social services are working, are all about putting families first and making sure that families and children have the best shot at the future that they can possibly get.

There are some things that we can do that are big -- policy-changing things like the work that Ed John has taken on -- and there are other things that maybe don't seem so important on the surface, but we as parents, as families and as communities know really matter in building healthy communities and healthy children.

Chief Bobby Joseph said this. He said that we have to embrace reconciliation at home, we have to embrace it at work, and we have to embrace it at play.

The example of that, I think, is that BC has been so successful at the Indigenous Games as one example.

BC, as you know, won three consecutive medals in the National Aboriginal Hockey Championship. Now, Shane

Gottfriedson....I'm sure the last words to the team before he got them out there was: "Boys, elbows up."

I think I've heard him say that to his council on the way into meetings with me as well.

It's no wonder that they won and that they did so well, but it's an example, though, of many, many, many examples around the province of how First Nations kids are excelling in sports.

Sports are a powerful thing for young people, a powerful impact on individual lives, because sports gives young people a purpose, sometimes at periods in their life where they don't feel like they have one, and they give them a connection to other members of their communities, other kids, to other families.

They give families a chance to gather around the edge of the field or the court and get to know.

They build communities, and they give us all a chance to celebrate something that we can all get behind, and we feel like it belongs to us.

The success of the British Columbia youth in those games happened because so many First Nations communities have invested in this idea.

You know how powerful sports are for your kids. In recognition of that, we want to invest in that with you, and so we are going to create the Premier's annual award for First Nations excellence in sports, which will be awarded

for one individual in every sport across the sports for boys and for girls.

We're going to involve First Nations leaders in sport already to be a part of this, to provide that role modelling and that leadership, but behind that, behind the few that win, there are all those thousands of kids who don't win, but who get to participate and whose lives are changed.

So behind that award is an investment of time and money in helping you develop the coaching skills you need, helping make sure that we're supporting you in developing the programs that you need and bringing together the other support in terms of equipment that you may need as well, so that every child, whether they win or not, gets the chance at what could be a life-changing experience, at being engaged in sports.

I think it's something that could make a real difference for a lot of young people.

Many of you know Gordie Hogg from White Rock and the work that he has done with First Nations over the years, in particular youth and sports.

Gord is going to join me as our Parliamentary Secretary in making sure that we move this project across the finish line.

And then when we make the award, we hope to be able to dedicate part of the BC Sports Hall of Fame, which I believe is on Musqueam territory, to those First Nations achievers and to be able to celebrate them year after year

in a place where everybody can see -- not just First Nations, everybody can see -- what they've achieved.

Let me finish with this. Folks across the country...other Premiers are often surprised when I tell them there are 203 distinct and unique First Nations in British Columbia and more languages, more First Nations languages, spoken here than anywhere else in the country put together.

We are really blessed by that. We are all blessed, whether we're aboriginal or not.

Our relationship often finds its way onto the front pages of the newspaper when we have heated disagreements, which we're always going to have, but it also means that sometimes we forget to think about our successes that we have had together individually one on one as we walk together.

Those success stories are the product of meetings where we really do genuinely see one another as equals, as partners in what we're doing.

The very first Spanish and English explorers left us many writings and, in their writings when they arrived and discovered the new world for Europeans, tell us how captivated they were by the complexity and the sophistication of the First Nations societies that they'd encountered.

I think you could look back at those documents and you could fairly suggest that those initial encounters were ones

where the Spanish and the English....they might have had more fire power at the end of the day, but they saw themselves as equals.

It's a shame that over the many years that have elapsed since then that relationship of relating to one another as equals began to diminish to the extent that it did.

That's what reconciliation is about.

It's about seeing each other as partners, as equal partners in what we're doing, equal partners in building our economy, equal partners in sharing in the wealth of our province that we extract from the earth and the things that we build on it, equal partners in understanding that our children belong to all of us and we all have a responsibility to make sure that we protect them.

I think that the thing, just to finish, about the Alan Kurdi story is people looked at it, and they said: how could we have not protected that fragile little boy?

When I saw that and reflected on that, I was renewed in my sense that we have that duty not just to people around the world; we have that duty to people here, to our children.

To me, ultimately, when we change that statistics, as Chief Monk said last year, then we will have done our duty and we will have reconciled aboriginal and non-aboriginal as equals.

Thank you. See you next year.

TELUS CUP

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Hon. Shirley Bond

Mike Morris

Mayor Lyn Hall

Chief Dominic Fredrik, Lheidli T'enneh

Welcome to Hockeytown.

I know they call themselves that in Detroit. But I think Prince George has a much better claim.

Prince George has hosted the 2001 Air Canada Cup midget tournament...

the 2007 Royal Bank Cup junior A tournament...

and most recently the 2015 Canada Winter Games.

And in 2017, Prince George is once again putting itself on the hockey map, as the Cariboo Cougars will host the 2017 Telus Cup.

The Telus Cup is Canada's national midget championship, and hasn't been in BC since 2001.

Congratulations to the Cougars organization, from coach and general manager Trevor Sprague, and to the bid committee led by Shawn Rice and Jane Newman.

It's a tribute to the passion and dedication of hockey fans here that Hockey Canada has chosen Prince George.

I can't wait to congratulate the national champion Cougars in person.

CANUCKS EVENT

ACKNOWLEDGE:

Trevor Linden, president, Vancouver Canucks

Mayor Lyn Hall

Chief Dominic Fredrik, Lheidli T'enneh

Forget January. For hockey fans, the year really begins in the fall. It doesn't matter if it's the NHL, or your first year of peewee.

Like all Canucks fans, I can't wait for this season to get started.

I want to thank Trevor and the entire Canucks organization for the countless hours your players and staff devote to charities across BC...

For being role models and heroes for generations of BC kids...

And for the sweet revenge you're going to get on the Flames.

It's great to see so many eager kids here. As a hockey mom, I learned all about 5 am practices, lukewarm coffee, and the importance of bringing a cushion.

I also learned about the powerful role sports play in helping kids learn about teamwork, co-operation, and determination.

They give families a chance to gather around the rink. They build communities, and they give us something we can all get behind...

Something that belongs to us.

Did you know, last year BC went to the North American Indigenous Games in Saskatchewan and finished first? We took home the most medals – and won the Spirit Award.

Who in this province knew about that? We have to do a better job celebrating these accomplishments.

That's why we're creating the Premier's Award for Aboriginal Youth Athletic Achievement.

To bring together British Columbians, celebrate achievement, and build stronger, healthier communities.

I want to work with First Nations leaders, parents and most of all, kids, to identify achievements and achievers to celebrate – and work with the BC Sports Hall of Fame to ensure the whole province has a chance to cheer along.

Because when kids succeed in sports, it's a foundation of success that can last a lifetime.

Thank you.