



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Second Session, 43rd Parliament

**OFFICIAL REPORT
OF DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

**Thursday, May 28, 2026
Afternoon Sitting
Issue No. 188**

THE HONOURABLE RAJ CHOUHAN, SPEAKER

ISSN 1499-2175

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Entered Confederation July 20, 1871)

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

Her Honour the Honourable Wendy Cocchia, CM, OBC

Second Session, 43rd Parliament

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Honourable Raj Chouhan

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Premier and President of the Executive Council	Hon. David Eby, KC
Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities.....	Hon. Brittney Anderson
Minister of Agriculture and Food	Hon. Lana Popham
Attorney General and Deputy Premier	Hon. Niki Sharma, KC
Minister of Children and Family Development	Hon. Jodie Wickens
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Minister of Education and Child Care	Hon. Lisa Beare
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Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole	George Anderson
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.....	Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel.....	Seunghee Suzie Seo
Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.....	Artour Sogomonian
Clerk of Committees.....	Jennifer Arril
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Committee Clerk	Darryl Hol
Senior Legal Counsel	Hayley Hill
Sergeant-at-Arms	Ray Robitaille
Director of Hansard Services.....	D'Arcy McPherson
Legislative Librarian.....	Peter Gourlay

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS BY PARTY

BC NDP

Anderson, Hon. Brittny	Kootenay Central	Kahlon, Hon. Ravi	Delta North
Anderson, George	Nanaimo-Lantzville	Kang, Hon. Anne	Burnaby Centre
Arora, Rohini	Burnaby East	Krieger, Hon. Nina	Victoria-Swan Lake
Bailey, Hon. Brenda	Vancouver-South Granville	Lajeunesse, Dana	Juan de Fuca-Malahat
Beare, Hon. Lisa	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	Lore, Hon. Grace	Victoria-Beacon Hill
Begg, Garry	Surrey-Guildford	Ma, Hon. Bowinn	North Vancouver-Lonsdale
Blatherwick, Jennifer	Coquitlam-Maillardville	Malcolmson, Hon. Sheila	Nanaimo-Gabriola Island
Boyle, Hon. Christine	Vancouver-Little Mountain	Morissette, Steve	Kootenay Monashee
Brar, Hon. Jagrup	Surrey-Fleetwood	Neill, Hon. Randene	Powell River-Sunshine Coast
Chandra Herbert, Hon. Spencer	Vancouver-West End	Osborne, Hon. Josie	Mid Island-Pacific Rim
Chant, Susie	North Vancouver-Seymour	Parmar, Hon. Ravi	Langford-Highlands
Choi, Paul	Burnaby South-Metrotown	Phillip, Joan / Amshen	Vancouver-Strathcona
Chouhan, Hon. Raj	Burnaby-New Westminster	Popham, Hon. Lana	Saanich South
Chow, George	Vancouver-Fraserview	Rotchford, Darlene	Esquimalt-Colwood
Davidson, Hon. Tamara / Laanas	North Coast-Haida Gwaii	Routledge, Janet	Burnaby North
Dhir, Sunita	Vancouver-Langara	Sandhu, Harwinder	Vernon-Lumby
Dix, Hon. Adrian	Vancouver-Renfrew	Shah, Amna	Surrey City Centre
Eby, Hon. David, KC	Vancouver-Point Grey	Sharma, Hon. Niki, KC	Vancouver-Hastings
Elmore, Mable	Vancouver-Kensington	Sunner, Hon. Jessie	Surrey-Newton
Farnworth, Hon. Mike	Port Coquitlam	Toporowski, Debra / Qwulti'stunaat	Cowichan Valley
Gibson, Hon. Diana	Oak Bay-Gordon Head	Whiteside, Hon. Jennifer	New Westminster-Coquitlam
Glumac, Hon. Rick	Port Moody-Burquitlam	Wickens, Hon. Jodie	Coquitlam-Burke Mountain
Greene, Hon. Kelly	Richmond-Steveston	Yung, Hon. Terry	Vancouver-Yaletown
Higginson, Stephanie	Ladysmith-Oceanside		

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF BC

Banman, Bruce	Abbotsford South	Luck, Tony	Fraser-Nicola
Bhangu, Harman	Langley-Abbotsford	Maahs, Heather	Chilliwack North
Bird, Rosalyn	Prince George-Valemount	McCall, Macklin	West Kelowna-Peachland
Block, Lynne	West Vancouver-Capilano	McInnis, Scott	Columbia River-Revelstoke
Chapman, Brent	Surrey South	Milobar, Peter	Kamloops Centre
Clare, Sheldon	Prince George-North Cariboo	Mok, Lawrence	Maple Ridge East
Davis, Pete	Kootenay Rockies	Neufeld, Korky	Abbotsford West
Day, Brennan	Courtenay-Comox	Neufeld, Larry	Peace River South
Dew, Gavin	Kelowna-Mission	Paton, Ian	Delta South
Dhaliwal, Mandeep	Surrey North	Rattée, Claire	Skeena
Doerkson, Lorne	Cariboo-Chilcotin	Rustad, John	Nechako Lakes
Gasper, Reann	Abbotsford-Mission	Stamer, Ward	Kamloops-North Thompson
Giddens, Kiel	Prince George-Mackenzie	Tepper, Bryan	Surrey-Panorama
Halford, Trevor	Surrey-White Rock	Toor, Jody	Langley-Willowbrook
Hartwell, Sharon	Bulkley Valley-Stikine	Van Popta, Misty	Langley-Walnut Grove
Hepner, Linda	Surrey-Serpentine River	Warbus, Á'a:liya	Chilliwack-Cultus Lake
Kindy, Anna	North Island	Wat, Teresa	Richmond-Bridgeport
Kooner, Steve	Richmond-Queensborough	Williams, David	Salmon Arm-Shuswap
Loewen, Kristina	Kelowna Centre	Wilson, Donegal	Boundary-Similkameen

BC GREEN PARTY

Botterell, Rob	Saanich North and the Islands	Valeriote, Jeremy	West Vancouver-Sea to Sky
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INDEPENDENT

Armstrong, Tara	Kelowna-Lake Country-Coldstream	Chan, Hon.	Richmond Centre
Boulton, Amelia	Penticton-Summerland	Kealy, Jordan	Peace River North
Brodie, Dallas	Vancouver-Quilchena	Sturko, Elenore	Surrey-Cloverdale

PARTY STANDINGS

Total seats – 93

BC NDP – 47 | Conservative Party of BC – 38 | BC Green Party – 2 | Independent – 6

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF RIDINGS

A

Abbotsford-MissionReann Gasper
 Abbotsford South..... Bruce Banman
 Abbotsford WestKorky Neufeld

B

Boundary-SimilkameenDonegal Wilson
 Bulkley Valley–Stikine..... Sharon Hartwell
 Burnaby CentreHon. Anne Kang
 Burnaby East..... Rohini Arora
 Burnaby–New Westminster..... Hon. Raj Chouhan
 Burnaby North.....Janet Routledge
 Burnaby South–Metrotown Paul Choi

C

Cariboo–ChilcotinLorne Doerkson
 Chilliwack–Cultus Lake Á'a:líya Warbus
 Chilliwack North Heather Maahs
 Columbia River–Revelstoke.....Scott McInnis
 Coquitlam–Burke Mountain Hon. Jodie Wickens
 Coquitlam–Maillardville Jennifer Blatherwick
 Courtenay–Comox..... Brennan Day
 Cowichan Valley Debra Toporowski / Qwulti'stunaat

D

Delta NorthHon. Ravi Kahlon
 Delta South Ian Paton

E

Esquimalt–ColwoodDarlene Rotchford

F

Fraser–Nicola Tony Luck

J

Juan de Fuca–Malahat Dana Lajeunesse

K

Kamloops Centre Peter Milobar
 Kamloops–North Thompson Ward Stamer
 Kelowna Centre..... Kristina Loewen
 Kelowna–Lake Country–Coldstream Tara Armstrong
 Kelowna–MissionGavin Dew
 Kootenay Central..... Hon. Brittny Anderson
 Kootenay MonasheeSteve Morissette
 Kootenay Rockies..... Pete Davis

L

Ladysmith–Oceanside Stephanie Higginson
 Langford–Highlands..... Hon. Ravi Parmar
 Langley–Abbotsford.....Harman Bhangu
 Langley–Walnut Grove Misty Van Popta
 Langley–Willowbrook Jody Toor

M

Maple Ridge EastLawrence Mok
 Maple Ridge–Pitt MeadowsHon. Lisa Beare
 Mid Island–Pacific Rim..... Hon. Josie Osborne

N

Nanaimo–Gabriola IslandHon. Sheila Malcolmson
 Nanaimo–Lantzville George Anderson
 Nechako Lakes John Rustad
 New Westminster–Coquitlam..... Hon. Jennifer Whiteside
 North Coast–Haida Gwaii Hon. Laanas / Tamara Davidson

North IslandAnna Kindy
 North Vancouver–Lonsdale..... Hon. Bowinn Ma
 North Vancouver–Seymour.....Susie Chant

O

Oak Bay–Gordon Head..... Hon. Diana Gibson

P

Peace River North.....Jordan Kealy
 Peace River SouthLarry Neufeld
 Penticton–Summerland..... Amelia Boulton
 Port Coquitlam Hon. Mike Farnworth
 Port Moody–Burquitlam Hon. Rick Glumac
 Powell River–Sunshine Coast..... Hon. Randene Neill
 Prince George–MackenzieKiel Giddens
 Prince George–North Cariboo.....Sheldon Clare
 Prince George–ValemountRosalyn Bird

R

Richmond–Bridgeport..... Teresa Wat
 Richmond Centre Hon. Chan
 Richmond–Queensborough Steve Kooner
 Richmond–Steveston Hon. Kelly Greene

S

Saanich North and the Islands Rob Botterell
 Saanich South..... Hon. Lana Popham
 Salmon Arm–ShuswapDavid Williams
 SkeenaClaire Rattée
 Surrey City Centre..... Amna Shah
 Surrey–Cloverdale..... Elenore Sturko
 Surrey–Fleetwood..... Hon. Jagrup Brar
 Surrey–Guildford Garry Begg
 Surrey–Newton..... Hon. Jessie Sunner
 Surrey North.....Mandeep Dhaliwal
 Surrey–Panorama.....Bryan Tepper
 Surrey–Serpentine River Linda Hepner
 Surrey SouthBrent Chapman
 Surrey–White Rock Trevor Halford

V

Vancouver–FraserviewGeorge Chow
 Vancouver–Hastings..... Hon. Niki Sharma, KC
 Vancouver–KensingtonMable Elmore
 Vancouver–LangaraSunita Dhir
 Vancouver–Little Mountain Hon. Christine Boyle
 Vancouver–Point Grey..... Hon. David Eby, KC
 Vancouver–Quilchena.....Dallas Brodie
 Vancouver–Renfrew..... Hon. Adrian Dix
 Vancouver–South Granville Hon. Brenda Bailey
 Vancouver–Strathcona Amshen / Joan Phillip
 Vancouver–West End.....Hon. Spencer Chandra Herbert
 Vancouver–YaletownHon. Terry Yung
 Vernon–Lumby..... Harwinder Sandhu
 Victoria–Beacon Hill Hon. Grace Lore
 Victoria–Swan LakeHon. Nina Krieger

W

West Kelowna–PeachlandMacklin McCall
 West Vancouver–Capilano.....Lynne Block
 West Vancouver–Sea to Sky Jeremy Valeriotte

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THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026

The House met at 1:01 p.m.

[The Speaker in the chair.]

Routine Business

Tributes

LOYD SHERRY

George Anderson: I rise with sadness and gratitude to honour Loyd Sherry, a son of Nanaimo and our city's longest-serving councillor.

Born on March 19, 1938, Loyd was one of three sons of Evelyn and Jack Sherry.

For 31 consecutive years, Loyd gave Nanaimo one of life's most precious gifts — his time. Meeting after meeting, year after year, he showed up prepared, principled and determined to protect the public trust and Nanaimo's fiscal integrity.

He was known as Mr. No, but that nickname never captured the deeper truth. Loyd's life was one long yes — yes to accountability, yes to community and yes to the city he loved. His service is woven into Nanaimo's history, whether through Nanaimo Amateur Radio club, the Loyal Order of the Moose, the Fraternal Order of Eagles. He and his wife of 56 years, Beverley, volunteered for the Salvation Army and were members of the Travelling Squares dance club.

I was proud to be part of the council in 2012 that dedicated Harewood Centennial Park fields to be named Sherry Fields.

To his entire family — his children, Jennifer, Ellen, Gwendda; his five grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren: thank you for sharing him with us.

He was a true champion of Nanaimo, and the history books will reflect a man and family who emulate the best of British Columbia and Canada. May his memory be a blessing.

JOHN "EARTHQUAKE" TENTA

Trevor Halford: I want to thank my colleague for those kind words of remembrance.

I think it was 1989, and I was sitting in the living room with my brother, and we were watching as Hulk Hogan was getting devastated and taking chair shot after chair shot. We were completely upset and dismayed.

What made it worse is that my dad walked into the living room as this was happening and said: "What is my buddy John doing on TV?" We all froze. What he meant was that.... We know him as the man they call Earthquake. He was ending the career and, I thought, life of Hulk Hogan as we saw it. That was my dad's childhood

friend from Lord Tweedsmuir, John Tenta, who he played rugby with and grew up with.

[1:05 p.m.]

John has since passed away a number of years ago, but he will be taking his rightful place in the Surrey Sports Hall of Fame on June 2. He was a standout rugby player in Lord Tweedsmuir Secondary School in Cloverdale. A remarkable life. He actually went then to LSU for wrestling — not that wrestling, a different wrestling — and then they cut the program. Then he went into football. After that, he actually became a sumo champion in Japan, and then he went into wrestling as Earthquake and had many standout matches.

I had the opportunity to meet John "Earthquake" Tenta on a few occasions. My dad took me to a wrestling match, where he lost because, I think, Mr. Fuji threw something in his eyes and he was disqualified.

He was a good man. He was a proud British Columbian. He was a proud resident of Surrey. We lost him at a young age. I believe it was bladder cancer.

I just want to congratulate him and his family on this well-deserved recognition.

He'll be taking his rightful place as an inaugural member of the Surrey Sports Hall of Fame on June 2, so congratulations to the Tenta family.

ROBERT "BOB" SUTHERLAND
AND JAMES LYN BANNISTER

Gavin Dew: I rise today to commemorate the lives and legacies of two men I did not have the privilege of knowing personally but whose impact I have come to understand through the sons who carry their names, their values and their examples forward.

In this place, we often speak about legacy in public terms. We speak about buildings, institutions, companies and communities, but the truest measure of a life is often found much closer to home. It is found in the families people build, the character they pass on, the work ethic they instil and the quiet standards they set for the next generation.

Bob Sutherland lived a life of quiet strength, steady love and deep devotion to family. He married the love of his life, Faye, in 1972, and together they built a family rooted in loyalty, laughter and respect. Bob was the proud father of Jim, Chris and Doug. To his sons, he was not only a father but a best friend, a teacher, a helper and an example. He showed his love by showing up, often with tools in hand, ready to fix what needed fixing, build what needed building and help however he could.

Bob helped build Sutco Transportation Specialists. He drove trucks, put in long hours and led not with speeches but by example. In doing so, he helped build more than a company. He helped build a family legacy of integrity, grit and values.

James Lyn Bannister's legacy is also one of family, enterprise and people. Born in Saskatoon, educated in sport and teaching, Lyn began his career as an educator and hockey coach before finding his way into the automotive business. He and his wife, Joanne, built a life; a family; and, eventually, a business that became one of the largest retail dealer groups in western Canada. The Bannister Automotive Group grew from its roots in Vernon into a major presence across British Columbia and Alberta.

By all accounts, Lyn's greatest gift was not simply building dealerships; it was building people. He loved the car business, but he loved the people in it even more. He brought energy, optimism, humour and high standards to those around him. He reminded people to enjoy the moment, and he lived that way himself.

Bob Sutherland and Lyn Bannister built businesses. Most importantly, they built families, cultures and standards that continue through the people who loved them and learned from them. So many people and families have benefited from their legacies, not only in business but in life. Their work created jobs, opened doors, built opportunities, supported communities and gave others the chance to build futures of their own. The next generation of both families can be proud, not only of the legacies they inherited but of the ways they have carried those legacies forward.

[1:10 p.m.]

To the Sutherland and Bannister families and especially to my friends: I offer my sincere condolences and all our gratitude for the legacy of lives well lived.

RHONDA LARRABEE

Hon. Jennifer Whiteside: It is an honour to rise in this House on the traditional territory of the *lək'wəḡən*-speaking People of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations to pay tribute to Chief Rhonda Larrabee of the *qíqéyt* First Nation, who passed over on April 4.

Rhonda was my friend. She was a beloved mentor and a leader in our community in New Westminster. She was an incredibly strong woman, rooted in her family, her ancestors and her nation.

It is hard to lose our Matriarchs, and Rhonda was a Matriarch in every sense of the word. She was a force of nature. She brought the wisdom of a Matriarch and incredible generosity to her work of bringing reconciliation to life in New Westminster. She led this important work with compassion, resilience, patience, courage and grace. She had an extraordinary and an innate sense of justice.

She was in her 20s when she learned her family history. Her mother said to her: "I will tell you once, but never ask me again." With those words, her mother told her for the first time that she was a survivor of the Kamloops Residential School, and for the first time, Rhonda learned of

her Indigenous heritage. We can only imagine the life-altering impact of learning that history as an adult.

It wasn't until 1985, after her mother had passed over, that she was able to begin to explore her heritage. Her journey and her advocacy for that heritage led her to the federal government, who had placed the *qíqéyt* Nation on the list of inactive Indian bands. Rhonda applied for her Status card, and she began the work of rebuilding her nation. The New Westminster Indian Band was reinstated and became one of the smallest and only landless First Nations in the country.

Her courage and her determination to tell her mother's story, to restore her family history and connection, both past and present, to this land are awe-inspiring. This story has been told many times, but in 2005, the National Film Board documentary pulled all of those threads together in a compelling documentary called *A Tribe of One*, which I highly recommend for viewing.

She gave frequently and generously of her time and knowledge. Whether speaking to school kids or welcoming us all at community events, she was always there. She particularly championed Indigenous youth, and her work with the New Westminster school board was invaluable in advancing reconciliation in education. It is a testament to her positive influence that the *Qayqayt* Elementary School bears the name of her nation.

For decades she provided advice, counsel and extended friendship to Members of the Legislative Assembly from our community. My predecessors Chuck Puchmayr, Dawn Black, Judy Darcy; myself; and, of course, my colleague the Speaker, the MLA for Burnaby-New Westminster, all have learned so much from her and have deeply valued that relationship.

In our community, it was a very moving day when, supported by the Rotary club, the grave of her ancestors finally received respect and recognition with the placement of proper markers at the grave of her grandparents in St. Peter's Cemetery in New Westminster, overlooking the Fraser River.

She, of course, was not alone in this work. Her loving and supportive family have been there every step of the way with her. Our community has benefited greatly from their contributions, as well, and that relationship, and these will continue.

To her family — to her husband, Bryan; to her children, Sharel, Stacey and Shelly; her grandchildren; her large and beautiful extended family: I offer my deepest condolences. I know you grieve profoundly her indescribable loss, and our community grieves with you.

It is hard to lose our Matriarchs. I will miss my friend and teacher. I will always be searching for the cedar hat and the blue shawl that signalled Rhonda's presence. But we need only to go to the river to feel her essence, to look to the sun and the moon to find her, gently urging

us along the path to create a stronger and more inclusive community.

[1:15 p.m.]

On behalf of the province of British Columbia, we are deeply grateful for Chief Larrabee's guidance, her work, her commitment to helping build reconciliation in our community and to helping us learn.

You will be deeply missed.

Hon. Niki Sharma: I seek leave to table two reports.

Leave granted.

The Speaker: Proceed.

Tabling Documents

Hon. Niki Sharma: The first one is the 2025 annual report of the Forest Appeals Commission.

The second one is the annual report of the Labour Relations Board for the year ending December 31, 2025.

Orders of the Day

Hon. Mike Farnworth: I call third reading of Bill 20.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 20 — K'OMOKS TREATY ACT

Hon. Spencer Chandra Herbert: I move third reading of Bill 20.

The Speaker: Members, you heard the motion. It's the third reading of Bill 20.

Division has been called.

[1:20 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.]

Hon. Members, the question is third reading of Bill 20, K'omoks Treaty Act.

Madam Clerk will connect with people remotely. Please make sure your cameras and your mics are on.

[1:30 p.m.]

Motion approved on the following division:

YEAS — 53

Lore	Blatherwick	Dhir
Routledge	Chant	Toporowski
B. Anderson	Neill	Osborne
Brar	Krieger	Davidson
Parmar	Sunner	Beare
Greene	Wickens	Kang
Begg	Arora	Higginson
Sandhu	Lajeunesse	Choi
Rotchford	Elmore	Phillip

Popham	Dix	Sharma
Farnworth	Eby	Bailey
Kahlon	Chandra Herbert	Whiteside
Boyle	Ma	Yung
Malcolmson	Gibson	Glumac
Shah	G. Anderson	Chow
Morissette	Warbus	Rustad
Valeriotte	Botterell	Paton
Day		Mok

NAYS — 39

Loewen	Kindy	Milobar
Halford	Rattée	Wat
Kooner	Banman	Hartwell
L. Neufeld	Van Popta	Dew
Clare	K. Neufeld	Wilson
McInnis	Bhangu	Toor
Hepner	Giddens	Dhaliwal
McCall	Maahs	Block
Stamer	Gasper	Davis
Chan	Boulton	Sturko
Brodie	Armstrong	Kealy
Williams	Chapman	Bird
Doerkson	Luck	Tepper

The Speaker: Bill 20, K'omoks Treaty Act, has been read a third time and has passed.

Hon. Mike Farnworth: Before I call the next order of business, I would like to inform the House that Bill 9 is considered a confidence measure.

With that, I call third reading of Bill 9, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act.

BILL 9 — FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AMENDMENT ACT, 2026

Hon. Diana Gibson: I move third reading of Bill 9.

The Speaker: Members, the question is third reading of Bill 9, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2026.

Division has been called.

[1:35 p.m.]

Member for Bulkley Valley–Stikine, could you please confirm that you are in a private place?

[1:40 p.m.]

Sharon Hartwell: Yes, I am.

The Speaker: Indoor private place, right? Indoor?

Sharon Hartwell: Yes, I am.

The Speaker: Thank you so much.

Members, the question is the third reading of Bill 9, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2026.

[1:45 p.m.]

Motion approved on the following division:

YEAS — 46		
Lore	Blatherwick	Dhir
Routledge	Chant	Toporowski
B. Anderson	Neill	Osborne
Brar	Krieger	Davidson
Parmar	Sunner	Beare
Greene	Wickens	Kang
Begg	Arora	Higginson
Sandhu	Lajeunesse	Choi
Rotchford	Elmore	Phillip
Popham	Dix	Sharma
Farnworth	Eby	Bailey
Kahlon	Chandra Herbert	Whiteside
Boyle	Ma	Yung
Malcolmson	Gibson	Glumac
Shah	G. Anderson	Chow
	Morissette	
NAYS — 46		
Loewen	Kindy	Milobar
Warbus	Halford	Rattée
Wat	Kooner	Banman
Hartwell	L. Neufeld	Van Popta
Dew	Clare	K. Neufeld
Rustad	Wilson	Valeriote
Botterell	McInnis	Paton
Day	Bhangu	Toor
Hepner	Giddens	Dhaliwal
McCall	Maahs	Block
Stamer	Gasper	Mok
Davis	Chan	Boulton
Sturko	Brodie	Armstrong
Kealy	Williams	Chapman
Bird	Doerkson	Luck
	Tepper	

The Speaker: Members, there being an equal number of votes, the Chair must make a casting vote.

Bill 9 having been declared a confidence matter, in order to uphold the principle that the confidence of the House should not be decided at the sole vote of the Chair, the Chair votes in favour of the motion for third reading of the bill.

Therefore, Bill 9 has been read a third time and has passed.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Shhh, Member.

Hon. Adrian Dix: I seek leave to make an introduction.

Leave granted.

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Introductions by Members

Hon. Adrian Dix: A great school in my constituency of Vancouver-Renfrew, Vancouver Christian School students are visiting here today. It's a remarkable school, particularly on Remembrance Day. Because of the nature of the neighbourhood they're in, which is a neighbourhood where all the streets are named after war, they find a special way for themselves in the neighbourhood to recognize Remembrance Day every year and so many other things.

I ask everyone in the House to wish Vancouver Christian School a welcome to our Legislature.

Point of Order

Hon. Mike Farnworth: I actually rise on a point of order, and it has to do with the votes that have taken place.

In the first vote that was taking place.... For the second vote, the member from Bulkley Valley clearly had to move from where she was in the first vote — which was a public place, not a private space — to a place that becomes a private space.

I would ask you to review that matter and then to provide clear guidance to members of the assembly in terms of that, because it was pretty clear. We watched the member walk from where she was, which was public, to where you asked her to be, which was private.

The Speaker: House Leader of the official opposition.

Á'a:liya Warbus: I'm just looking for a little bit of clarity on this matter, since you did clearly ask the member, and then you made your ruling already. How we handle a point of order to go against that ruling, Chair — I'm just wondering if we can get clarity on the process.

The Speaker: Members, the Chair is always guided by the standing orders. Based on that, I take that under advisement.

Hon. Mike Farnworth: In this chamber, I call continued estimates for the Office of the Premier.

[1:50 p.m.]

The House in Committee, Section B.

The committee met at 1:51 p.m.

[Mable Elmore in the chair.]

Committee of Supply

ESTIMATES: OFFICE OF THE PREMIER
(continued)

The Chair: I call the committee to order.

On Vote 11: Office of the Premier, \$15,334,000
(continued).

Claire Rattée: I want to go back a little bit. Yesterday, at the end of the day, there was a question around rising anti-semitism in our province, and I really appreciated that the Premier recognized that antisemitism is on the rise in B.C.

Given that the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement increases and encourages antisemitism by seeking to delegitimize and isolate Israel, promotes the false narrative that Israel is solely responsible for the conflict in the Middle East and demands self-determination for Palestinians while denying that same right to the Jewish people, I'm wondering what the government's position is on the fact that the B.C. Teachers Federation is supporting and endorsing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

Peter Milobar: I seek leave to make an introduction.

Leave granted.

The Chair: Please proceed.

Introductions by Members

Peter Milobar: I take it as a bit of an omen, maybe for the government, because the last time she was in attendance for a confidence vote was during the infamous throne speech. But my wife is back here watching today, so I guess we'll see what happens on the budget vote later this afternoon.

Will the House please make her welcome.

Debate Continued

Hon. David Eby: In estimates, we canvass all matters of government policy with the Office of the Premier, not just the matters related to the budget. I understand that. I think I do my best to provide answers to the members.

But to ask for this time to be for the Premier to comment on the positions of other organizations.... It's just hard to see what the end of that would be, so I'll respectfully decline to answer, given the total disconnect from what we're doing here.

Trevor Halford: Has the Premier or any members of

his caucus or cabinet taken any training when it comes to antisemitism?

[1:55 p.m. - 2:05 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: Every member of our caucus receives anti-racism training as part of our respectful workplace training program, which includes elements related to antisemitism.

Recognizing that antisemitism has unique elements and that life in British Columbia as a Jewish person brings particular challenges that it would benefit caucus to understand, we invited CIJA to come and give a presentation to caucus on the Jewish experience in British Columbia. That's on the caucus side.

On the public service side, the senior members of the public service in the Premier's office along with senior political staff in the Premier's office regularly meet with CIJA. There is a working group on the public service side that developed an action plan across government, resulting in the implementation of a number of different initiatives to address antisemitism in the province, which I have addressed in previous questions. Happy to canvass them again if members wish.

In addition, the public service offers an anti-racism training for public service members that includes a core element on antisemitism training.

In addition, as recently as three days ago, for continuing professional development, there was an article in the public service *Compass* newsletter on anti-racism that included a component on Jewish Heritage Month.

Trevor Halford: In the Premier's answer there, he talked about.... I think, in terms of knowledge in terms of the Jewish community, they had a member of their caucus, a member at one time of the Premier's cabinet, Selina Robinson, that I think was pushing for changes in terms of the behaviour coming out of that caucus.

I struggle.... We ask a basic question, and it takes the Premier 15 minutes to figure out if their caucus has engaged in that training or not. So maybe we can go to something a little bit easier since he has got the staff in this room with him.

Can the Premier please outline the total compensation levels over the last three years for the Deputy Premier, Ms. Salter?

[2:10 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: First, the Leader of the Opposition made some passing remarks about antisemitism. I would just encourage him to canvass with his caucus whether they have had antisemitism training. I note that the member for Surrey South compared harm reduction to the Nazi Holocaust, for example, so it may be a worthwhile exercise.

The deputy minister, Office of the Premier, had a

2025-26 budget of \$3.9 million, and for Budget '26-27, it's \$2.552 million, which is a decrease of 34.56 percent for this year. The deputy to the Premier, Shannon Salter — her salary in 2024-25 was \$357,155. In 2025-26, it was \$357,300. And in 2026-27, it is \$357,300. Her salary has been flat for three years.

Trevor Halford: Does Ms. Salter take advantage of a car allowance?

[2:20 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: The compensation number I've provided to the member is all-inclusive of any benefits, including any car allowance. There's no....

Pardon me. I'm going to take a second here and get the full number.

Interjections.

Hon. David Eby: Hon. Chair, with respect, this is estimates.

The Chair: Members.

Member, the Premier has got the floor.

Hon. David Eby: The head of the public service does receive a car allowance. She leases a car. She doesn't receive it. She leases the car.

I want to note the comments of the former leader of the Conservative Party, where he said: "If you want professionals with the experience to enter into the business, you need to be able to compensate them accordingly."

I wouldn't want the opportunity to pass with respect to Ms. Salter and her work and the importance of her being part of the public service. She has, in the last year alone, received the UBC distinguished alumni award as well as a YWCA Woman of Distinction Award. She is internationally recognized for her work around integration of law, policy and technology.

Prior to accepting this position, she was Deputy Attorney General and, previously, head of the Civil Resolution Tribunal, where her innovative work has saved government hundreds of millions of dollars in the justice system, ensuring prompt delivery of justice for British Columbians. She, in that role, attended and spoke around the world, and she is bringing that experience and knowledge to this role in assisting government in improving delivery of services for British Columbians.

I'm very grateful that she's here, and she's worth every penny.

Trevor Halford: Thank you for that. I'm just curious about the Premier's perspective here, and it takes multiple minutes to try and figure out what his position is.

British Columbians are struggling right now. It's no se-

cret. If the Premier doesn't know that, I've got other concerns. But does the Premier think it's adequate that somebody earning over \$350,000 worth of compensation...? I know he's saying that some of that includes a car allowance, so let me rephrase this. Somebody that's earning over \$300,000 in compensation should be entitled to a car allowance right now while the government says they're trying to find efficiencies, which, by the way, I'm sure the Deputy Premier is trying to do as well....

Does the Premier believe that British Columbians would support somebody earning six figures, over \$300,000, while there is a deficit of \$13.3 billion, and that we then give that person, at the taxpayers' expense, a car allowance? My question is directly to the Premier. Does the Premier think that British Columbians would find that acceptable?

[2:25 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: The member refers to British Columbians struggling with the cost of living. Certainly, the impact of the war in Iran on gas prices has been significant for many families.

That is why it makes it so puzzling that the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues so enthusiastically support policies that they know will increase car insurance costs for British Columbians — bring in the private sector, like Alberta has; it has much higher rates, much lower benefits — and why it's surprising that they would welcome speculators back into the housing market and disappointing that they would put renters at the mercy of an unregulated short-term-rental system.

[2:30 p.m.]

When he says that he understands that British Columbians are struggling, I wonder if that is actually true. Because he and his colleagues are standing up for the wealthiest people who are and have been profiting from people struggling for housing.

Interjection.

Hon. David Eby: I understand it's uncomfortable for the member, but heckling during estimates is a lot, hon. Chair. It may be uncomfortable to hear these things.

I want the members to understand that Ms. Salter, as head of the public service, is delivering significant savings, cost reductions, across the public service, as part of this budget that we'll be voting on, including a significant reduction in the size of the public service in British Columbia and doing it in a way....

Interjections.

The Chair: Members.

Just a minute, Premier.

Hon. David Eby: We've got 15 minutes.

The Chair: Just a minute.

Member for Kelowna-Mission, allow the Premier to have the floor.

Continue.

Hon. David Eby: And is doing it in a way that mitigates impacts on British Columbians, reducing management positions while protecting front-line service delivery and using technology to improve efficiency.

In my opinion, she would earn a lot more in the private sector. I note that the member for Surrey-Serpentine River when she was the mayor received a car allowance. I note that members in this place, when they drive, receive mileage. I note that federal deputies receive car allowances. Ms. Salter receives a car allowance.

We continue....

Interjection.

Hon. David Eby: The member says “and mileage.” It’s not true.

It’s important, I think, that we have highly qualified people doing these jobs, doing a good job of it. Ms. Salter’s salary has been flat for three years, and I appreciate her recognizing the fiscal situation of the government and bringing down the cost of the operations of her office by more than 30 percent as well.

We’re going to continue to work as a government to drive down costs for British Columbians. If the member wishes, I can go through the tax reductions that have taken place even in the last three years in this province to support families. We know there’s more to do. We know there are lots of people struggling. It’s not just in British Columbia. It’s across the country and around the world right now.

Our government is committed to doing this work, and the one thing that I know, for certain, is that the policies that are being advocated by the other side would not make their lives cheaper or easier. That is very clear.

Trevor Halford: That was a bit of a stretch when we were talking about car allowances.

I know we’re talking about the estimates of the Premier and budget estimates. I actually, based on that answer, don’t even think the Premier has read his own budget. I don’t.

I’ll tell the Premier this. A local business in my riding suffers from a lot of shoplifting. It’s actually a fairly small business, open five days a week, nine to five, in White Rock itself.

This is a pretty easy question. They had to hire private security. What’s the Premier’s rationale for now charging them additional taxation on that private security cost?

[2:35 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: We have heard, from small business, concerns about chronic property offending, repeat shoplifters, vandalism, arson — issues like that.

The member will know that we initiated a program around repeat violent offenders, the ReVOII program. We’re continuing to support that program. Because of the success of that program either deterring people from offending or ensuring that they are behind bars, we have, in this budget, expanded to the new chronic property offending intervention initiative. This is \$16 million over the next two years.

What police are telling us is that there are a small number of people creating an outsized amount of harm and that if they have the resources, combined with social services and connections with Crown counsel, they can either steer people into supports to stop or into jail to stay. This is an important initiative. It is part of a larger set of law enforcement initiatives.

I want to recognize that private security, while helpful on occasion for businesses, is not the long-term solution to safety in communities. The long-term solution is either arresting and detaining those involved in this activity or getting them into a better place so that they no longer commit offences.

The PST on security, along with other services — recognizing the shift in our economy towards services — enables us to be able to put resources like \$16 million into the chronic property offending initiative; \$26 million into the repeat violent offending initiative; \$14 million over two years to support the special investigation and targeted enforcement programs; \$10 million over two years for community safety and targeted enforcement, the CSTEP program, which has included shoplifting crackdowns in different communities. The goal here is to reduce offences and improve community safety.

We see that our crime numbers are coming down across the province, which is positive. They’re not where we want them. We want them even lower. There are street disorder issues that are not recorded in the crime statistics and that we also need to address, and we have involuntary care initiatives to support those who are really struggling in our streets on this.

[2:40 p.m.]

I do want to note, overall, taxes for small business are 25 percent lower than they were when the other side of the House sat on this side of the House. We know that small businesses are important, and they need that support. We will continue to find ways to support them however we can.

Peter Milobar: Well, this Premier has completely skated by the question in terms of the impact to small businesses of the actual tax that this Premier has layered on by charging PST on security services. It’s not just small

businesses. It'll be festivals. It'll be the Jewish community. It'll be everybody.

Conveniently, the government is not having it take effect until after FIFA, so the government won't have to pay an extra 7 percent for all the security that they will need to provide for FIFA, because they've made sure the implementation date is October 1. This is kind of out of line with a lot of other implementation dates of taxation in this budget.

The Premier can chuckle about that all he wants, but this is \$563 million a year of taxation. That's what the changes to the PST to small businesses represent in this budget.

I don't know if the Premier really understands that. If he does, to downplay the small businesses' concerns is shocking to me. The Premier talks about the fact that this budget is lowering taxes. The Premier seems to not be aware that there are 11 new or increased taxes in his budget that will increase taxes by \$2.3 billion a year, not because of economic growth but because of new and increased taxes — 11 of them in this budget alone. That will generate \$2.3 billion a year for government.

The Premier points to a \$16 million policing fund. Does the Premier really think that that means stores will no longer need security to keep their staff safe, to keep their customers safe, to provide a level of security for people? Festivals, especially post Lapu-Lapu, that are required to have higher and higher levels of security, festivals that are already feeling the strain and have seen this government take away their community grants to try to have festivals happen this summer....

I wonder what other event that money might be going to. I guess we can find out tomorrow — certainly not while this Legislature is in session.

Does the Premier consider 11 new and increased taxes, generating \$2.3 billion a year of tax revenue, a lowering of taxation?

Hon. Adrian Dix: I seek leave to make an introduction.

Leave granted.

The Chair: Please proceed.

Introductions by Members

Hon. Adrian Dix: We've got a second class here from Vancouver Christian School in my constituency of Vancouver-Renfrew.

Hi, everybody. You're watching, today, the budget debate of the Office of the Premier, and that's a big day in our Legislature. It's great to have you here. So many friends at Vancouver Christian School, good friends of mine, including former principals and everything else. But it's wonder-

ful to have you here learning about the Legislature, about Victoria.

We wish everybody in the House to give a great welcome to Vancouver Christian School.

[2:45 p.m.]

Debate Continued

Hon. David Eby: Supporting British Columbians with affordability and businesses with competitiveness when it comes to taxes is an important consideration in this and every budget for government.

For individuals, I'm proud that British Columbia has the lowest taxes in Canada for individuals who earn up to \$149,000 annually. In my time as Premier, '22 to '26.... In 2022, a family with \$30,000 in net family income would have received \$1,400 back from government. Now they get \$1,600 back. The member who asked me that question — when his party was in power, they paid \$189. That's a family with \$30,000 of family income.

A family with \$60,000 of family income. When I became Premier in '22, families were paying \$1,663 in provincial tax. For '26, that'll be \$643. That's \$1,000 for that family. The member who asked me that question — when his government sat on this side of the House, that family paid \$4,198 in tax.

Families that earn \$80,000. When I came in as Premier, that family would have paid \$3,385 in provincial tax. Now that number is \$2,663. The member who asked me that question — when his party sat on this side of the House, those families paid \$5,602 in taxes.

For a family that earns \$100,000. That family in 2022, when I came in as Premier, paid \$5,623 in tax. In 2026, it will be \$4,601. The member who asked me that question — when his party sat on this side of the House, they would have paid \$7,444 in provincial tax.

I take the member's question under advisement. It's a little bit more "do what I say, not what my party did."

We have increased some taxes. If you are buying property in British Columbia and you do not pay income tax here, we are increasing the property tax rate for you from 3 percent to 4 percent.

[2:50 p.m.]

This is the speculation and vacancy tax that the member opposes, because he opposes our government's work to ensure that homes are lived in and that people who benefit from the public services of British Columbia contribute to those public services.

I don't know why that is, but that is the inevitable conclusion of the member and his colleagues' opposition to the speculation and vacancy tax and now his, again, opposition to increasing it by 25 percent.

For homes worth \$3 million and more, we have increased the B.C. school tax. People who own \$3 million to \$4 million homes and then \$4 million and higher.... Two

different tranches. That's true, we have increased those taxes. We ask those who have a little bit more to contribute a little bit more to ensure that we're able to deliver public services for people.

For businesses, generally low corporate income tax rates. At 2 percent, our small business corporate income tax rate is lower than Ontario and Quebec, and we're tied with Alberta. For the general corporate income tax rate, we're tied with Saskatchewan and Manitoba for the fourth-lowest general corporate income tax rate.

Business competitiveness is about more than just taxes, of course, which is why this budget also supports businesses. For example, of course, we eliminated the consumer carbon tax, which was a very significant tax cut for business. We reduced the employer health tax by increasing the exemption threshold for businesses with payrolls up to \$1 million, saving businesses an estimated \$100 million. We eliminated the provincial sales tax on electricity for businesses — which was on top of existing PST exemptions, such as for machinery and equipment for oil and gas, logging, mining, manufacturing and software development.

Now, in this budget, we also have a new manufacturing and processing investment tax credit to encourage manufacturers to invest in buildings, machinery and equipment. We have changes to make it easier for businesses to claim the Film Incentive B.C. and production services tax credit by providing more time to file a claim and reducing administrative requirements.

We've aligned with federal enhancements to the scientific research and experimental development tax credit, such as increasing the expenditure limit from \$3 million to \$6 million and allowing capital expenditures to be eligible for the tax credit. We made the book publishing tax credit permanent. We extended the shipbuilding and ship repair industry tax credit to support that industry in our province and help them hire more apprentices.

There is a point-of-sale PST exemption for goods shipped outside of B.C. by a purchaser for business use, which will enhance competitiveness and reduce administrative burden for businesses.

Now, obviously, we'll continue to monitor changes in other provinces to ensure that we're competitive. But the impact that we're seeing is that we are leading Canada in private sector investment — \$88 billion in major projects, many of which, and the majority of the value, are reaching final investment decision within the next year, reflecting thousands and thousands of jobs for British Columbians.

And in this budget — money for them to be able to take the training to be able to benefit from those jobs and increase their wages, something the members will be voting against.

I understand that the member has important questions, but to ignore the history of when his party was on this side of the House — when people paid more in taxes, more in

car insurance, when they increased hydro rates by 54 percent above the rate of inflation — is to deny what they would do if they had the opportunity again. They talk a great game, but the reality for families was quite different.

Peter Milobar: Well, I must say, between the Premier and the Finance Minister, it appears I had a very, very record-setting, productive 18 days when I was in government. That's how long I was in government for — 18 days — but I sure get blamed for a lot. I must've been very proficient in those 18 days, that's for sure.

It's interesting. The Premier.... A lot of what he's talking about was brought in by his predecessor, John Horgan, in the first year or year and a half, and his Finance Minister, Carole James. Then the costs started to get added on.

[2:55 p.m.]

Just, maybe, to correct the Premier's math. He inherited as government a 2½ percent small business tax rate that got dropped to 2 percent — 0.5 percent. Basic math would say it's a 20 percent reduction not a 25 percent reduction, but I guess if the government wants to be flexible with their numbers, they're going to be flexible with their numbers.

The other problem is that the Premier didn't talk about.... He says: "Well, we lowered EHT rates by changing the thresholds." After several years of businesses asking for the thresholds to be changed, after the government ignoring their own economic advisory group that said, "Do not bring the EHT in at all and add that cost to businesses," as well as the added burden of extra costs of sick days, extra WCB changes.... The list goes on and on.

In fact, there are a half a dozen or so costs that small businesses routinely cite to this government about death by a thousand cuts. This government's response to that was to add 7 percent PST to professional services and security services to pull an extra \$563 million a year off of small businesses.

Now, for those that are wondering, corporate tax in British Columbia, complete corporate tax, is about \$7 billion a year. So the 0.5 percent change to just small businesses, not the larger corporations, was not going to cover anywhere near what this Premier is doing in this budget, to be clear about that. But remember, 0.5 is what they changed ten long years ago.

Well, what's in this year's budget? They're actually increasing everybody's personal income tax by 0.54 percent. Why is that significant? Well, that's on \$20 billion of personal income tax that they decided that they needed to change the tax rate on, to go up for everybody on their first \$51,000 of income.

They're not content with that. This Premier decided to freeze the income tax brackets as well for three years, so they can collect more tax off of every single British Columbian for the next three years as people get more income. If they have wage settlements or wage growth, they have

frozen the basic personal tax exemption for the next three years.

This means the lowest-income people in B.C., if they earn a little bit more money on minimum wage, will actually start paying more tax because they're not even letting the \$13,000 go up by the rate of inflation every year. They've frozen that. That's this Premier and this government's budget.

The Premier can try to deflect away from budgets from ten, 25 years ago. We could go on about fudge-it budgets, which created a whole different change of budgeting in this province, moving forward, for accountability. We could go on about how there used to be balanced budget legislation whereby a cabinet would actually see a reduction in their salaries with holdbacks, which this government overrides every single year that this Premier has been the Premier. We could go on about those accountability measures too.

But the question was about why the need and why the Premier, despite avoiding the question completely in his 7½-minute non-answer, chooses to characterize a budget that has 11 new and increased taxes generating an extra \$2.3 billion in revenue....

Why he chooses to characterize that to the public when it's impacting people on their first \$50,000, when it's impacting people on their basic personal exemptions, when it's impacting small businesses with their security costs, when it's impacting the construction industry, when it comes to professional services around engineers and geoscience and everyone else, when it's impacting the whole economy to the tune of \$2.3 billion a year....

Seniors are now going to pay PST on yarn when they go to the store. Seniors will pay it on basic cable. And low-income people — that's who generally has basic cable packages. I didn't hear the Premier talk — go on and on at length — about that tax change.

[3:00 p.m.]

How about land lines? I get that the Premier lives in an urban centre, and he probably wonders who even has a land line anymore. Well, seniors do, and people in rural B.C. do because they can't count on cell service. But they can all pay 7 percent more for their land lines now. The Premier hasn't acknowledged that in this budget and the impact that will have on their monthly budget.

When the Premier wants to talk about property, why will the Premier not talk about the change to the deferment for seniors on property taxes? It used to be prime less 2 percent with the interest calculated yearly. It's now prime plus 2 percent with interest calculated monthly. It will take somebody's equity in their home from potentially having 17 percent set aside on property tax deferment, by the time they go to sell over the course of several years, to 70 — 7-0. That is the difference that that tax change has made.

The Premier and the Finance Minister can try to make

it out that it's about people that were using it as an investment vehicle, but they refuse to even make it income-tested. Instead of still enabling low-income seniors to be able to stay in their homes, they're using gouging interest rates to chew away at their equity.

There are no long-term-care facilities for these seniors to move into, by the way, because the Premier has cut six or seven long-term-care facilities out of this budget as well. So we don't have that. We don't have long-term-care homes for them to move to. We're going to erode their equity down to a point where they can't afford it, so they'll have to get subsidized at some point by the government anyways.

This government chose to tax their yarn, their basic cable, their land line and now make property tax deferment something that they can't afford to do. They're not sure how they're going to pay their property taxes and be able to stay in their homes, which is a lower cost to the taxpayer overall, the more the seniors can do that.

Again, with all of those taxes being layered on to seniors, to small businesses, to every individual taxpayer in the province right now to the tune of \$2.3 billion a year of extra taxation spread over 11 new and increased taxes, how can the Premier honestly stand up in this place and tell us that this budget delivers lower taxes?

Hon. David Eby: I guess it is up to the member in his leadership run, but I would suggest that advocating for the return of the MSP is probably not a great strategy. The member loathes the EHT, the employer health tax. That is the tax that offset getting rid....

Interjection.

Hon. David Eby: The member had 15 minutes, hon. Chair. He's still talking.

Interjections.

The Chair: Members. Members.

Interjections.

The Chair: Members, can we allow the Premier to reply? Thank you.

Hon. David Eby: The member feigns surprise, but he knows very well that the EHT, the one that he just finished speaking against.... He knows he spoke against.... Now he's saying: "I wasn't speaking against it. I was just quoting somebody else." Give me a break.

[3:05 p.m.]

The EHT offset eliminating the MSP. Now, there are people who.... The MSP has been gone long enough that they don't know what the member and his party did. He said: "I was only there for 18 days." Well, he knew what

they stood for. He knew what they did. He stood and ran with them and defended their record.

On MSP, when he ran, a family with basically any income paid \$1,800 a year for MSP. Our government got rid of that. We got rid of that, and we transitioned a part of that to the employer health tax that the member is speaking against.

Interjections.

Hon. David Eby: Oh, now he's saying he's in favour of the EHT. It's hard to figure out what the member stands for.

Now, the member stood and said that we increased income tax on everybody — everybody in the province — especially people on minimum wage.

It's in the budget. There's literally a table in the budget — \$30,000 of net family income; item 2, provincial income tax, zero. What was it last year? It was also zero. In fact, there was an increase in the amount of money, since I've been Premier, going back to those families. No increase in personal income tax, \$30,000 of family net income.

So \$60,000 of family net income. Last year that family would've paid \$730 in provincial income tax; this year, \$565 in provincial income tax.

Interjection.

Hon. David Eby: There's this sound, hon. Chair.

The member had a very long question. I sat and listened to him. He said that we increased provincial income tax for everybody. How could I say that we had lowered taxes for people? I'm running through the numbers to explain it to the member, and he won't listen.

A family with \$60,000 of net income — \$730 last year; \$565 this year in provincial income tax. A family with \$80,000 in net income last year would've paid \$2,370 in provincial income tax; this year, \$2,305. That's how I can say that we have lowered taxes for people in this budget.

Now, the member says: "Oh gosh, I was only with the B.C. Liberals for 18 days. How could you ever think that I had a history of challenges in government?" The member does have a history in government. He was the chair of the Thompson-Nicola regional district.

He may remember his leadership there when he hired somebody named Sukh Gill as the chief administrative officer at the TNRD. "We're excited to have Mr. Gill take the organization to the next level," said the now Finance critic, then chair. Directly involved.

What was his first action?

Interjection.

Hon. David Eby: Oh, the investigation. The member raises the investigation. His first action after proudly announcing the hiring of Mr. Gill was he attended the hospital district board.

Interjection.

Hon. David Eby: The member says it's about Saturday night. No, it's about the member saying that he had no history, that he just arrived in this place for 18 days and then found himself in opposition. Well, he does have a history. Let's just quickly review that.

Minutes from a closed-door meeting on July 17, 2014, state that board chair, then-Kamloops mayor, the now critic for Finance, advised the board that most hospital districts provide an annual compensation for an administrator and advocated that the hospital board provide \$38,000 to his friend Mr. Gill and successfully managed to deliver that additional pay.

Well, then what happened? Not good things. *Kamloops This Week* showed that spending at the TNRD under Gill was high, with the current chair describing that time period as "somewhat distressing" and "excessive spending that went unchecked for years on big parties, high-end restaurants, regular coffee shop visits, luxury hotels and expensive gifts."

[3:10 p.m.]

Let's see a line from the article: "Politicians responsible for his employment were presented with fine dining, luxury hotels and fancy gifts. Creative budgeting split up expenses among different line items and utilized general accounts. None of it, apparently, broke policy, although whistleblowers told *Kamloops This Week* they felt it was wrong."

The former Kamloops mayor — the Finance critic, who was here for just 18 days before he found himself in opposition — was tied to bills worth \$4,400, and meetings to Kelowna to meet Interior Health officials "often included a meal at the Keg." On one April night in 2015, Robert Harpens, Erwin Malzer, the Finance critic and Gill dined, with the bill at \$525.

Interjection.

Hon. David Eby: Oh, I know this is uncomfortable.

Interjections.

Hon. David Eby: Asked what policy would have allowed Gill to spend taxpayer money on restaurants and coffee shops, Diehl said there was "an absence of policy" from the chair and the board. That was the new CAO.

Then what happened? Clearwater's mayor said that the review of what had happened "brought to light a previous lack of accountability and board oversight of TNRD leadership" — specifically, I would assume, the Finance critic.

Interjections.

Hon. David Eby: Now, I understand that the member

is uncomfortable with his history at the TNRD and Mr. Gill, and he should be. He should be uncomfortable with his repeated errors, despite being the Finance critic, about the impact on income tax of this budget on families earning \$80,000 or less.

We're asking speculators to pay more. We're asking people with \$3 million homes and more to pay more. For families earning \$80,000 or less, they are seeing a reduction in their provincial income tax.

Peter Milobar: I'd have a point of order or point of privilege, but what's the point in this place?

It's shocking to me, and I guess it becomes very clear why, when the Premier was the Attorney General, I think he was zero for whenever he went to court on behalf of the province of B.C. He certainly lost everything to do with TMX, when they were going to use every tool in the toolbox. I think he lost pretty much everything.

If that is his level of legal drive-by smear, it makes sense why he helped commission the Asian surnames realty report and then tried scurrying away from that when it might be a politically harmful tool, among other things.

The Premier, if he had actually done his proper research, if he wanted to go over my time at the TNRD.... I was chair for five years. I was the hospital chair for five years. I managed to lobby and get a half-billion-dollar hospital built in Kamloops as a result of some of those dinners.

It has all been public record and well known, and no policies were broken. In fact, if the Premier had actually done his research, he would realize that when I became the chair, there were 14 committees that we reduced down to five, that we actually brought down the cost of administration. But of course, the reports the Premier is talking about were not happening when I was the chair of the regional district. In fact, I was gone for most of the time frame that the Premier is talking about, except for the very tail end.

So it's a little disingenuous for the Premier, given his track record, between the Olympics and now where he stands on FIFA and everything else, to take the little side runs he's done. Again, it's all public record on me. In fact, the government got very upset when I brought forward a motion around capital region living allowances early on in my time here.

The city editor did an editorial about looking into my expenses at the city of Kamloops as the mayor and as a city councillor — this was a city editor that was no fan of mine — and couldn't find anything wrong with my travel claims, my expenses and everything else. Again, we actually took action, while I was at the regional district, to bring down the costs and lower the cost of administration.

[3:15 p.m.]

We didn't pretend there wasn't a problem, unlike the Premier, who has been asked multiple times to try to get a handle on what's going on in Metro Vancouver and just

keeps trying to ignore it and kick the ball down the field. Or the park board fiasco that he was asked to weigh in on. The list goes on and on.

But of course, that's where he lives, so he wouldn't want to interfere in things going on in his specific geographic region. No, he's much better to tell Penticton that he has got a thousand tents for them if they don't accept a shelter. Maybe he can bring those tents back to Penticton now, again, and keep threatening them with tent cities and try to deny that's what he was trying to do.

If he wants to talk about his actual record in a position of power, in a position of authority as the Attorney General.... But that's this Premier's track record, and again, as we heard earlier, this Premier doesn't ever actually want to take responsibility for any of his actions or words.

The question was very simple. There was an increase of taxation in this Premier's budget of 11 new and increased taxes that total \$2.3 billion. Now, the Premier can reference some of the property tax changes he has made around school taxes, which assumes people can actually afford that if they're living in an expensive home, which also assumes that they can afford to not have a property tax deferral based on this budget. He's trying to pull more money out of low-income seniors' pockets. He can try to tap dance around that all he wants.

My statements were very clear. They did freeze basic personal exemptions for three years. They have frozen the tax brackets for three years. They did raise the personal income tax on the lowest first \$51,000, \$50,000 plus of earnings from 5.06 percent to 5.6 percent.

I would love for the Premier to show me where any of that is not factually accurate. They actually changed the property tax deferral for seniors from prime less 2 percent calculated yearly to prime plus 2 percent calculated monthly. The Premier can point to any of those statements as false all he would like if he could actually prove that. But he can't.

So again, how can the Premier justify a budget that has 11 new and increased taxes totalling \$2.3 billion of extra taxation and try to tell people this budget brings taxes down?

Hon. David Eby: There is a table in the provincial budget that outlines all different forms of provincial tax and compares them, adds them up, transparently reports all provincial tax — MSP premiums, income tax, various benefits, carbon tax, sales tax, fuel tax — and you get a net provincial tax number. It's all the things.

[3:20 p.m.]

I can tell the member that for the families that are really struggling, and there are many in the province, we have lowered all provincial taxes for families earning \$60,000 or less. They're paying less tax.

The member has got quite a defamation case against *Kamloops This Week*, I guess. They posted documents

showing he had his meal tab picked up on 14 occasions by Mr. Gill. There was a board member who said there was a code of silence. The board members knew what was going on, but they didn't say anything. Then there was actually a motion for a public apology for the conduct of the board during Mr. Gill's time.

The fact that there was no policy, a lack of accountability and board oversight.... The member stands here and insists that the poorest British Columbians are paying more, when it's not true, and insists that his record at the TNRD wasn't what it was — deflects.

We are increasing taxes on some people. We're increasing taxes on people that have homes that are worth more than \$3 million. The member doesn't like that idea. I understand that.

We're increasing taxes on speculators and people who are buying homes in British Columbia but don't pay income tax here. They benefit from the roads, the policing, the sidewalks, the services that are paid for by taxes, but they're not paying income tax here, so they have to pay the speculation and vacancy tax. The member thinks.... His colleagues oppose it.

If you own a vacant home in British Columbia, with the speculation and vacancy tax in key areas in the province, and you're leaving the home vacant, you have to pay the tax too. But you don't have to pay it if you rent it out. That is one of the mechanisms that allowed for us to address the blight of empty homes when people were searching for a place to rent.

The Leader of the Opposition, his colleagues, the leadership candidates for the Conservative Party want to get rid of that. Then they say, out of the other corner of their mouth: "We're actually concerned about affordability for people." They want to attack the main foundations of what has opened up more places to rent for people.

They can explain why they want people to pay more for car insurance, their record on hydro rates and other pieces. But I refer the member to the budget documents and recognize that we've got an aging population. We've got increasing demands on our health care system. We're in competition for health care workers across North America and around the world.

It's a competition we're winning, by the way, despite the opposition decrying our attempt to recruit American doctors as a waste of money. We wouldn't have 700-plus health care workers joining our team here in British Columbia if we didn't do that work. We sure wouldn't have more than 2,000 Americans in the health care sector applying for jobs in British Columbia if we didn't do that recruitment work.

Then they oppose the expenditure in the budget related to supporting business. They're going to vote against it — supporting investment in our province, whether it's manufacturing, shipbuilding, the tech sector, life sciences.

I do understand that the members have a perspective

on these things that's important. But it's also important to recognize the work that's being done that's delivering major investments in this province that will help to pay for the public services that people depend on, with the lowest income taxes in Canada for people earning less than \$149,000 annually.

[3:25 p.m.]

Sheldon Clare: The question that I have might take a little bit of additional research, so I understand that. I'll just let fly and see how it goes.

On May 7, 2026, during estimates for the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, the minister stated that the improvements to the Kersley-Dale Landing Road washout, the project near Quesnel, will cost \$40 million.

It is our understanding that the contract value of the project was \$6,073,906.70 when it was awarded to West Horizon Contracting Inc. on 9 April, 2025, by the ministry.

My question is: why is there a roughly \$34 million difference between the contract value and the updated cost estimate provided by the minister earlier this month?

[3:30 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: I'm advised by the Ministry of Transportation that the original project budget was indeed \$40 million. They did a competitive procurement process, and the member has the correct contract amount to do the job. So there was a savings of almost \$34 million from budget to complete the works. That is the discrepancy: \$40 million was set aside; the contract came in at less than \$7 million.

Claire Rattée: On October 3 of last year, the Premier said that his government's failed decriminalization experiment led to "really unhappy consequences" and that that's why they were ending that pilot program. I'm wondering if the Premier could state what those really unhappy consequences were, for the record.

[3:35 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: The decriminalization pilot project was intended to make life easier for people struggling with addiction to come forward for help. It did not deliver the outcomes that I hoped for, and I think many people hoped for, in that regard. That was why we did not request renewal of the exemption.

The member will know that shortly after becoming Premier, I did an event with Dr. Nolan at St. Paul's announcing our government's commitment to an initiative called the Road to Recovery. This initiative included centralized access to drug treatment through something called Access Central, a phone number people can call for assistance, whether it's for detox or treatment. I'm happy to share with the member that we've seen early numbers from Providence Health about the impact of that program.

In the Vancouver Coastal Health area, 2,000 people per month call the Access Central line. The inpatient detox wait for everyone used to be two to three weeks. Now people access inpatient detox in urgent cases. Labels aren't great, because every case is urgent, but in particularly urgent cases, they access detox within a day. For non-urgent cases — again, noting the challenge of the label — people access inpatient detox within five days.

[3:40 p.m.]

Regardless of whether they are deemed initially urgent or non-urgent, they get immediate clinical assessment by an addictions doctor.

This program has shown a 60 percent improvement in 30-day retention in the treatment program. It is showing a statistically significant reduction in daily substance use. Stable housing, quality of life.... In other words, people are discontinuing their substance use or significantly reducing it, improving their quality of life and, one would imagine, the quality of life of the people around them.

Because of the success of the program, we have expanded Road to Recovery by expanding the Access Central line to Fraser Health, Interior Health and Island Health to make it easier to get help, and we're working on expanding that to Northern Health.

Since 2017, we added more than 820 publicly funded treatment and recovery beds, with more on the way. The positive number — in 2024-25, almost 5,000 adults accessed bed-based support. That was up 1,161 people from the year before.

We looked at some of initiatives that were taking place in other provinces. We took one from Alberta. They established a rapid access addiction phone line, providing free same-day access to medication-assisted treatment. That program is helping over 22,000 people per month.

In addition, the budget includes money for involuntary care beds for people who cannot ask for help for themselves but clearly need the assistance — 100 beds between two locations in Surrey and Prince George. I look forward to making an announcement soon about those sites.

I know the member for Skeena has said that Access Central is just a phone line, but it's not. It is far more than that. It is connecting people faster to treatment, and we are going to continue that work and encourage people who are looking for help to contact the Access Central line.

Claire Rattée: That was a really weird way to answer the question that I asked, which was: what were the unhappy consequences that the Premier had referenced when deciding not to continue with decriminalization? I assumed that the Premier might know what those unhappy consequences were, but I guess he doesn't want to put them on the record, because, obviously, that would be the doing of his own government.

Nevertheless, I'm glad to see that, after ten years, they have finally decided to do what we've been asking for this

entire time and encourage treatment and recovery rather than allowing permissive structures that allow drug use.

Last year founders of the Drug User Liberation Front were convicted in the B.C. Supreme Court for procurement and trafficking of illicit drugs. But their activities didn't occur in isolation. They operated with the knowledge, support, funding and authorization of senior officials within the B.C. NDP government and the provincial health system.

We know that senior Vancouver Coastal Health officers wrote letters supporting DULF's model, fully aware that it involved acquiring and distributing illicit drugs. Provincial health authorities granted DULF special designations and exemptions even after Health Canada refused to authorize the program. The province provided significant taxpayer funding and supplied a government-owned site for DULF to operate. Officials acknowledged that procurement and distribution were not exempt under federal law, yet the operation continued with provincial blessing. The B.C. NDP government abruptly cut ties only after that public scrutiny intensified.

My question to the Premier is: will there be a public inquiry into how British Columbians' tax dollars funded this operation?

[3:45 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: I'm going to make a number of obvious statements, but sometimes you have to say obvious things just to ensure clarity.

Obvious statement No. 1: drug trafficking is illegal. Laws are enforced by the police and typically prosecuted by the federal prosecution service, and rightly so.

The second obvious thing: government-funded organizations must follow the law. This includes the drug laws and all laws. As soon as we found out that this organization was engaged in illegal activity and had been receiving public funding through Vancouver Coastal Health, we immediately acted, and their funding was cancelled.

The individuals involved have been convicted. There is a constitutional challenge, I understand, that is ongoing. They were arrested, tried and convicted of trafficking.

We have made our expectations very clear to all partners, including health authorities and others, that there are no exceptions. Everybody must follow the law. It is our government's position — again, an obvious statement; I'm going to say it out loud — that those involved in trafficking drugs should be held accountable to the full extent of the law.

To that end, we have increased funding for police. We have increased resources available for special operations by police as well as the civil forfeiture office to seize the assets of people engaged in illegal activity, including money laundering and drug trafficking. We will continue to do that work.

Trevor Halford: I am sure the Premier and the Attorney General are hard at work at recouping those costs. I hope.

[3:50 p.m.]

Listen. Basic math tells me the Premier has served just 1,287 days.

Congratulations.

When he came in as Premier, he said he was going to be a man of action. First 100 days, things are going to be moving quick. You could see, feel, touch.... I don't know — something like that. But things were going to get better.

Let's talk about that. In those 1,287 days, 11,845 days of emergency room closures. Think about that. It's averaging almost nine a day, where a hospital emergency room that a community or multiple communities is dependent on is shut down. And this isn't over ten years. This is the Premier's time in office, in the Premier's office. This is him — 11,845 days.

Some of those hospitals, when their emergency rooms shut down.... It is multiple hours for parents to drive their kids, for a loved one to drive their spouse to seek medical attention.

Now, I'm not asking for a number here. I'm just asking for basic accountability. The Premier can consult the staff, or he can stand up and answer it on his own and show some form of leadership. So 11,845 days of emergency room closures under a Premier that has served close to 1,300 days. Does the Premier himself take any accountability for 11,845 days of emergency room closures?

[3:55 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: There's no question that we have had a shortage of health care workers in the province. A number of explanations have been put forward for why this phenomenon is not just British Columbia but is national and international in scope. It's a topic of conversation in the United States, the United Kingdom, every province in Canada.

But regardless of the theories being put forward — pandemic, aging population, whatever — the answer to the problem is the same. We have to recruit more health care workers. We have to train more health care workers. That is what we are doing.

I think the example I have offered a couple of times — I will offer it again — is our success recruiting U.S. and internationally trained health care workers and fast-tracking their credential recognition. I met with some of these doctors in Nanaimo who were so excited to be working in the Canadian health care system. They were thrilled to be here. They were contributing to the system in a couple of important ways.

One was, obviously, just the direct service delivery and also bringing their perspective from the American system — some things that they thought that we could do better from their examples and time in American hospitals, ef-

ficiencies that we can find and some appreciation for the Canadian system and the quality of the opportunity they have to work with patients, not based on the insurance they have but based on what the patient actually needs.

A number of the doctors I spoke to were either gay or trans or had a family member who was or just were simply tired of the intolerance in the United States. They were thrilled with how welcoming and open and diverse British Columbia is. We've got to hold on to that. But regardless, I digress.

As of February.... We've got more current numbers than this. Let me see if I can get the more current U.S.-trained numbers.

We had more than 700 U.S.-trained health professionals accepting job offers within our public health care system in our last public announcement, which was just about a month ago.

These doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, allied health professionals are joining hospitals and clinics throughout the province, not just in big urban centres but right across B.C. — 110 in Fraser Health, 88 in Interior Health, 141 in Island Health, 30 in Northern Health, 61 in Vancouver Coastal. These are from the February numbers. They increase in the hundreds each month, which is pretty exciting.

[4:00 p.m.]

More than 2,000 American health care professionals have applied for jobs here in British Columbia, and they're serving in places as diverse as Abbotsford, Burnaby, Surrey, Mission, Fort St. John, McBride, Prince George, Terrace, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Cowichan, Nanaimo, Victoria, Port Alberni, Courtenay, Grand Forks, Kamloops, Oliver, Penticton, Vernon, Vancouver, Powell River and Richmond.

Now, it's not clear to me why the opposition opposed that work, but we will continue to run recruitment campaigns to attract U.S. doctors to British Columbia, because that is part of the solution.

Another part of the solution.... The members are going to vote against the budget. The budget includes money for a new medical school, the first cohort passing through the doors of the Surrey medical school, SFU. A very proud moment south of Fraser, a medical school that.... When the opposition was on this side of the House, they had the chance to open it, were told they should have opened. They didn't open. If they had, I think we would be facing a different situation currently, but that's another story.

In terms of the issues of actual frustration, and rightly so, of people, particularly in rural communities, when their emergency room is closed — maybe not even just frustration but fear and anxiety that that can drive.... We are focused on driving these numbers down. Diversions in 2025 were down 16 percent compared to 2024. We've got more to do.

The Health Ministry put a number of safeguards in

place with the health authorities to mitigate the risk of closures, and 92 percent of emergency department shifts that were at risk of closure were mitigated in 2025. That's how we are driving down some of these numbers. We get the health professionals out to those communities as quickly as possible, as soon as we identify that someone is not able to fill a shift that could result in the closure of an emergency department.

The member is correct that closure is unacceptable, and 38 percent of our emergency departments have experienced a closure. It's also true that 70 percent of Manitoba's emergency departments have, 66 percent of Nova Scotia's emergency departments have, and 57 percent of Saskatchewan's emergency departments have — provinces with significant rural challenges, like British Columbia.

Now, while there are sites that are experiencing real pressures, there are sites where we have had some really great success. In Williams Lake, for example, we had an 82 percent reduction in diversions at Cariboo Memorial — three in 2025 compared to 17 in 2024. Kitimat General Hospital had a 96 percent reduction in diversions. We had three in 2025 compared to 76 in 2024.

There is a lot more to do, but part of it is also about finding other ways for people to access care outside of emergency rooms, where that's possible. That's why we expanded the scope of practice of pharmacists, allowing them to provide care. Sometimes people just don't have anywhere to go for a bladder infection, for example, except the emergency room. Now pharmacists can assist them with that and many other common ailments.

We've hired over 1,000 new family doctors, connecting 4,000 people per week to primary care physicians. What this has to do with emergency room closures and emergency room pressures and availability is that if you have a family doctor or a nurse practitioner or an urgent primary care centre, it takes that pressure off the emergency room. Urgent and primary care centres have seen over four million patient visits since 2018.

The last piece that I'll share with the member is something called GoHealth BC. This is an organization set up by the health authorities with over 600 nurses and allied health employees. Basically, they are deployed out to rural communities to avoid closures and provide crucial services. They've worked over a million hours in 45 rural and remote communities. We are expanding that program.

I thank the member for the important question. This is an important issue for British Columbians, and we are focused on driving that number down, keeping emergency rooms open and giving British Columbians the care they deserve.

Question of Privilege (Reservation of Right)

Amelia Boulton: I rise to reserve my right to raise a point of privilege.

The Chair: So noted. Thank you, Member.

Committee of Supply

ESTIMATES: OFFICE OF THE PREMIER
(continued)

Trevor Halford: Those were some inspiring words from the Premier of this province. The fact of the matter is he has been Premier, like I said — I don't want to short-change him — for 1,287 days; 11,845 days of emergency room closures. He blames the opposition. None of us were Premier at that time. He blames everybody but himself.

[4:05 p.m.]

[Lorne Doerkson in the chair.]

I want to read back.... I talked about overpromising and underdelivering. I think that's really important, because when it comes to health care, when you do that and you mess it up, it actually costs lives.

July 19, 2024 — I want to get the date right — the Premier issued a news release, and he said in it: "Over the past ten years, rates of gynecological cancer have increased by almost 50 percent." That's a pretty startling number. Accurate. Startling. He also committed to three gynecological oncologists. It was almost two years ago. This was for Fraser Health.

Direct question to the Premier. This shouldn't take very long because I know what the answer is. Every Surrey MLA, every MLA who has Fraser Health in the region, would know the answer. So if we've got to wait 15 minutes, we've got big problems here, really big problems. I think the Premier should figure this out pretty quick, because if he's saying that there's an increase of almost 50 percent in terms of these cancers, he should know the answer to my question.

My question to the Premier is: how many gynecological oncologists are there at Fraser Health right now, after he promised three?

The Chair: Recognizing the Leader of the Official Opposition.

Trevor Halford: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to lend a hand to the Premier here on my final day. The answer is zero, if that speeds things up. We'll see what it is, but the answer, I think, is zero.

[4:10 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: The member stood up and asked a question that he prefaced by saying that it was about a very serious subject, a very serious cancer that kills women. I hope.... Well, I don't expect them to understand, but my taking his question seriously includes consulting with the Ministry of Health and understanding the full context of his question and the answer. It takes a little bit of time for a serious matter.

First of all, on the issue of cervical cancer, we are a world leader in preventing cervical cancer and are continuing those efforts through our ten-year cancer action plan.

There are a couple of components to preventing cervical cancer. The most effective way is to be vaccinated against the human papillomavirus. That vaccine is offered free of charge for all students in grade 6 through school-based immunization clinics. The vaccine is also offered through multigrade catch-up clinics to students who may have missed the vaccine in grade 6 at local health units, community health centres and pharmacies. This is a vaccine for cancer.

In 2025, to ensure more people in B.C. have the protection they need against HPV-related cancers, B.C. expanded the eligibility of the publicly funded HPV immunization program and simplified the immunization schedule.

Based on updated recommendations from Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization and B.C.'s immunization experts, our HPV vaccine schedule has shifted from two doses to one dose for people ages nine to 20. People 21 years and older are eligible to receive two doses. People who are immunocompromised will continue to receive three doses.

We now publicly fund HPV immunization for anyone aged nine to 26 years, removing the previous requirement to begin the vaccination series before turning 19. The province has also expanded age eligibility for specific people aged 27 to 45 who are at higher risk of HPV-related cancers.

There is another component to cervical cancer prevention, which is a home-testing kit for people, which British Columbia was a world leader in rolling out. HPV testing, provincewide self-screening for cervical cancer and risk of cervical cancer, was launched on January 29, 2024. Between January 2, 2025, and January 1, 2026, 128,555 self-testing kits were distributed. This reduces barriers for those without a family doctor or facing cultural or logistical challenges or just who feel more comfortable with the home-testing approach.

[4:15 p.m.]

These actions, along with the immunization that I walked the member through, support the plan of eliminating cervical cancer in British Columbia within the next decade, an ambitious goal that cancer experts advise us,

with these initiatives, is realistic. It will save lives, and it will save money.

Now, to the member's specific question about the availability for those facing a cervical cancer diagnosis and the need for gynecological oncology services. The province has dramatically expanded gynecological oncology services over the last year, nearly doubling the number of surgeons providing this cancer care in British Columbia.

We are committed to delivering additional gynecological oncology cancer services in Surrey, south of the Fraser, but we have taken additional steps over the last year that have also improved wait times for patients in Fraser Health.

The first step. It sounds counterintuitive, but I'll explain, if the members give me an opportunity. It was to expand the gynecological oncology program in Kelowna in September 2024 so that patients from the Interior and the North could get services closer to home. Previously, they would wait in the queue, together with patients from Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health.

Because of the success of the Kelowna program, we were able to open more operating room time in the Lower Mainland to patients living south of the Fraser, dramatically reducing wait times and wait-list size for these patients. This is following the announcement that the member was talking about. The urgency of the need for cancer care for patients facing a diagnosis like this caused us to pursue the remedy that would deliver the fastest for these patients.

We are seeing the results. In March 2025, 89.2 percent of women living in Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health received their urgent gynecological oncology cancer surgeries within the four-week benchmark target. Prior to the expansion that I told the member about last July, only 41 percent of women in British Columbia received their urgent cancer surgeries within the target of four weeks.

We're not waiting to bring services closer to home for patients living south of the Fraser. And \$3 billion in new health capital projects in Surrey, which is more than for any other municipality in B.C. Fraser Health has increased post-surgical follow-up appointments at B.C. Cancer, Surrey.

I understand the desire to have those surgeons in Surrey, and we are working hard on that.

For post-surgical follow-up appointments, to make life easier for patients that have had surgery in Vancouver but live in Surrey, we have increased those appointments at B.C. Cancer, Surrey, from four appointments to 12 as of February this year, which means patients can receive pre- and post-cancer care — including surgical wound care assessments, pain management and other therapies — closer to home.

We know the population of Surrey continues to expand, and in other communities south of the Fraser, the need

will be there. I know that people would prefer not to go to Vancouver to get these surgeries. They'd like to have it closer to home in Surrey, and we'll do the work on that to be able to deliver that south of the Fraser.

Anna Kindy: As a woman and as a female doctor, having to travel to get cancer care.... Fraser Health is the biggest health authority in British Columbia. Some 2.2 million people are without access — near access, I'm talking about — for ob-gyn oncology. We're talking not just of cervical cancer. We're talking of uterine cancer, ovarian cancer. It means multiple visits as well.

I'm going to go to a different topic right now. I think it's important to talk about it, because health care is a huge part of the budget. It's the largest part of the budget. As such, with difficulty accessing care right now in British Columbia, resourcing appropriately is extremely important. We need to know where to resource. Where do we need to put the money?

I'm going to actually bypass primary care. It seems we talk a lot about primary care, but we don't talk a lot about specialty care, which is for the sickest patients. The sickest patients need to see specialists.

[4:20 p.m.]

In order to resource, we need to know the wait times to see different specialties — for example, neurology or to see a pediatrician. Your child is sick. You need to see a pediatrician. You have a mental health issue. Primary care can deal with mental health issues, but when they get very complex, they're referred to a specialty — for example, psychiatry. If your diabetes is not controlled well, you see the endocrinologist.

I'm going to keep to those four, just for interest. I'm assuming, since it's the largest portion of the budget, that there is tracking done in terms of wait times for referral from primary care.

What is the wait time to see a pediatrician in British Columbia? What is the wait time to see a neurologist in British Columbia? What is the wait time to see an endocrinologist in British Columbia? Very importantly, with the huge uptick of mental health issues, what is the wait time to see a psychiatrist as an outpatient? Not in the hospital but in the community, what is the wait time to see a psychiatrist?

[4:25 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: It's taking too long. We'll have to get those numbers to the member, just recognizing the challenge of, obviously, this being Premier's estimates and those being detailed Health questions. We're trying hard to get the answers. I think the member deserves access to them, but we just don't have them as quickly as I would like, given the time we have left here.

What I can share with the member is that we have done a lot of work to increase surgical capacity. For those spe-

cialties that relate to surgical capacity, in the last fiscal year, April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, 378,679 surgeries were performed. That's the highest number of surgeries ever performed in a year in British Columbia.

In the last fiscal year, April 1 to March 31, the same time period, 34,645 urgent scheduled surgeries were performed within four weeks. That's a 9.5 percent increase compared to the same time frame in 2019-20. Operating time was increased by 12 percent compared to the same time frame in 2019-20, which is just, obviously, pre-pandemic, to sort of explain why that time period was chosen.

Also, the Fraser Institute — members will know this is my favourite source of truth — did a report on the number of weeks patients wait between a family doctor referral and actual treatment. Their findings were, really, not flattering for any province in Canada but showed British Columbia second in Canada for wait periods being shorter than other provinces. We were beaten only by Ontario. Everybody else had a longer wait time in the country between family doctor referral and actual treatment.

The answer to how this is possible, despite the challenges that we face in competing for these specialists, is that we've just been more successful in recruiting specialists here in British Columbia than other places. From '17 to '24, the number of specialists practising in B.C. increased by 40.3 percent. That's CIHI data. That's federal health data. Part of that is the new hospitals we're building, which attract doctors. Also, our American doctor campaign has been quite successful.

The member bridged to her questions by suggesting that we were not providing care close to home for women facing gynecological cancer in Surrey. Just to clarify, that is not the case. There are 11 gynecological oncologists representing seven full-time-equivalents who provide care to women in Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health. They actually travel to the B.C. Cancer, Surrey, regional cancer centre to provide pre- and post-gynecological-oncology care in Surrey. Women are getting care in Surrey.

All women in Fraser Health can get their adjuvant chemotherapy, which is the treatment following primary treatment, radiation therapy and surgical follow-up in Fraser Health.

[4:35 p.m.]

The member is right. I hear that the surgeries are not happening in Surrey. That is true. They are happening in Vancouver, and we are much closer to hitting our benchmarks at 90 percent. We've got to get to 100 percent.

I do understand that our goal, our shared goal across here in government, is to be able to deliver gynecological surgeries in Surrey. But our primary goal is to make sure that women get their surgeries within the benchmark, and we are making good progress to that.

Trevor Halford: I do want to thank the Premier for actually putting on record and admitting that people in Fra-

ser Health, primarily women, are getting shortchanged by this government. That's a fact, and the numbers play that out.

The fact of the matter is that the Premier, in a news release, committed to three gynecological oncologists almost two years ago. The number — zero. Couldn't deliver. Couldn't get it done. Announced it. Failed on it. That's the Premier's record.

Another thing, too, when we talk about overpromising, underdelivering, cancellations.... Just a quick question to the Premier. There is a new term in NDP language. It's called re-pace. I call it a cancellation.

Interjection.

Trevor Halford: Apparently it's funny to the Minister of Children and Families that they cancel a project in the Burnaby Hospital expansion.

My question to the Premier is a simple one. Did he consult any of his Burnaby MLAs — he or the Minister of Finance — prior to making the decision to cancel the Burnaby Hospital expansion?

[4:40 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: Our Burnaby MLAs are fighting hard for the people of Burnaby, including for the delivery of continued improvements to the Burnaby Hospital. Phase 1 is opening to patients. It's a beautiful new building. The existing Burnaby Hospital looked like it could be a hospital museum.

The city of Burnaby was grossly neglected by the previous government when it came to hospitals. I find it a little bit rich that the member who worked for that government but did not deliver improvements to Burnaby health care is now attempting to position himself as someone who is in favour of improvements to capital projects in Burnaby related to health care. That just never happened.

Regardless, the project is going to get built. It is in the province's capital plan. The reality is that the project was coming in significantly over budget, and there was a proposal that we reduce the scope of the project in order to deliver at the originally approved budget, which wouldn't deliver what the community needs.

In addition, there was a proposal that the site be changed and consistent with the original Burnaby Hospital campus plan, something that raised the concern of the hospital foundation and staff at the hospital, including the potential loss of parking on the site.

There were significant challenges with proceeding with the project as proposed, which is why the Ministry of Infrastructure and Fraser Health have taken the time to find a path forward that's both financially sustainable and also ensures that the project meets the needs of the community and the patients in Burnaby for generations to come. It remains our commitment.

Trevor Halford: Apparently the Burnaby MLAs didn't fight hard enough to the Premier or the Minister of Finance, because they came up pretty short. Budget documents show assignments until 2033. It's beyond that in terms of getting this project done.

We canvassed this in the House before. I'll do it again. This is an important topic. So \$18.5 million raised and contributed by the Delta Hospital Foundation. You think about all those people who came together and put their hard-earned money into this. And \$18.5 million — project already underway, preload, water lines, sewer lines.

What did this Premier do? He re-paced it. Turner Construction was told to pack up and leave. Long-term-care beds — desperately short in this province. Again, overpromise, underdeliver by the man of action himself — the Premier of B.C. — self-defined.

Easy question to the Premier. When is the ribbon cutting of the Delta long-term care?

[4:45 p.m. - 4:50 p.m.]

Hon. David Eby: The Delta long-term-care facility is an important piece of infrastructure for the community and, most importantly, for the seniors that need access to those beds. The challenge we faced on that project was that the costing was coming in at \$1.8 million a bed. Now, at that price, we could buy every senior a home that they could live in. It's not a reasonable price for that vital infrastructure.

The good news is that all of the works that have been done on the site will still be able to be used for the ultimate construction of the project. We're going to ensure that we're able to deliver that project at a more reasonable price to ensure that the donations from the community stretch the furthest they can — but also tax dollars as well. In the meantime, we are continuing to take action to increase long-term-care beds in the province and support seniors care in the province.

First, I want to say that our goal is to keep seniors at home for as long as possible. That's why we improved home supports to support aging in place. There was a 28 percent increase in hours delivered and a 23 percent increase in clients supported since 2017. We support more than 100 Better at Home programs that help older adults with day-to-day, non-medical tasks, like chores, so seniors can live independently.

Long-term care at home equips a senior's house with virtual care technology, customized so they can be monitored 24-7 by a health care team.

Hospital at home provides seniors the choice to receive short-term acute care in the comfort of their own home. That's a new program that I was introduced to in Nanaimo. It's a wonderful program supporting seniors.

Now, this government has already opened over 1,600 new and replacement long-term-care beds. We've opened

16 long-term-care projects, over 1,600 beds, and 21 more projects are on the way.

The projects reflect a significant number of beds in the communities — Burnaby, a new site with 216 beds; Aldergrove, 120 beds; Nelson, 75 beds; Vernon, 96 beds; Kamloops, 100 beds; Kelowna, the redevelopment of Mission Creek Landing, 31 new beds. New long-term-care homes in Kelowna, Comox Valley, Courtenay — those three, more than 400 beds. Duncan, 88 beds; Victoria, 15 new beds, 26 replacement beds and 37 independent living suites; Fort St. James, 18 replacement beds at the new hospital.

[4:55 p.m.]

The remarkable thing about all of those projects is that any one of them — any one of those projects — is more than the number of public health care beds that were built.... Any one of those projects was a greater investment in seniors than the entire public investment made by the previous government in long-term care and public care beds — \$17 million between 2008 and 2017. That gap in building public long-term-care beds is one that we are still recovering from.

I don't have to guess about what things would look like if the other side was sitting on this side of the House, because we know. We saw them in action. They fired 10,000 workers who worked in long-term care in this province — Hospital Employees Union workers. The consequence of that was that nine out of ten long-term-care homes in this province did not meet government standards. Those government standards are about: like how often you get a bath.

They froze SAFER supplements for seniors. They required workers to work at multiple facilities, which meant transmission of infection between facilities, compromising care for seniors.

I wish that the previous government had built more long-term-care beds, but they simply did not. We are building those beds, but we have to build a lot of them, which means we have to find a way to deliver them at a much better price than \$1.8 million a bed. We will deliver that care that seniors need in Delta and across the province because we've got 1,600 beds so far and 21 more sites to come, including, ultimately, in Delta.

Trevor Halford: Well, that was quite an explanation from the Premier on a long-term-care facility where the hospital foundation had proudly raised \$18 million to fund. This government couldn't get it done.

For anybody watching at home.... I'm sure there are maybe a few that have been watching this estimates process with the Premier. I'm sure it has been educating; at times inspiring; most of the time probably gaslighting, confusing. But there has been one constant theme lacking throughout this estimates process. It's accountability.

I'm going to say a couple things here. It comes from a

good place, but it's honest. There have been people that have sat in the Premier's chair before him, whether it's from the NDP party or different parties. There was a sense of accountability. There was a sense that when they screwed things up, they took responsibility for it. The Premier has been in office for 1,200 days over almost 12,000 days of ER closures under his watch. No former government's watch, no former Premier's watch, but that Premier's watch — 12,000 days of ER closures.

Nobody in the history of this province that has held that office has overpromised more and underdelivered than the current person sitting in that chair. But the sad part about that entire statement is the pain that's inflicted on British Columbians every day because we have a Premier, a government in this province that can't figure out the basics.

They can't figure out how to keep British Columbians safe. They can't manage a growing extortion crisis that is crippling our communities.

[5:00 p.m.]

When it comes to health care, we know they can't manage that. The Premier puts out a news release on a very serious issue regarding the rise in women's cancers, and he commits to three gynecological oncologists — can't deliver it. We now have do-it-yourself health care under this Premier.

That's what he talked about today — 1.3 million British Columbians without a family doctor. Major projects scrapped. Funding for children who need it the most, children with autism. A cut that this Premier reversed and promised families they would never have to suffer through the pain that they went through — changed.

It's a sad.... It would be.... We understand that mistakes happen. We understand that the climate can change. But what I can't understand is how somebody that is leading our province can be that out of touch, that tone-deaf when it comes to the issues that are facing British Columbians.

If you were a single mom that was lined up in a food bank today, if you were a senior that was struggling to make their rent this month, if you were an expectant mother who was then told that their maternity ward at their local hospital was closed.... The list is growing.

It's like the Premier doesn't want to believe that when he walks outside of this chamber, that nothing's wrong. If it is wrong, ain't his fault, ain't that government's fault. It's somebody else's fault. There's a war to blame. There's a President to blame. There's a Prime Minister to blame. There's a local government to blame. There's an opposition to blame. But the blame never resides with himself. That's not leadership; it's anything but.

We've gone through almost ten hours of debates on estimates. We've covered some important topics. Some topics we couldn't get to because on basic questions, the Premier had to take ten, 15, 20 minutes to figure it out.

But what British Columbians are trying to figure

out, and I think they've already figured it out, is with a \$13.3 billion deficit record.... The Premier has set a lot of records, I'll give him that — ER closures records, deficit records, taxation records. But does the Premier actually think that life for British Columbians in his 1,200 days has gotten any better?

Just because you announce it doesn't mean it has happened. You can announce an expansion of a Burnaby hospital, but you actually have to do the work, and you have to build it. You can announce long-term care in Delta, but you actually have to do the work and build it. What's worse is when you get other partners to do the work and fund it and then you leave them with the bag.

This was a government that championed itself to fight for the common British Columbian. The Premier can get up in a minute, and he can say whatever he wants. But I can tell you this: the common British Columbian doesn't believe him anymore. I know that as a reality. I guarantee you every MLA on that side knows that too. They just don't want to admit it.

Interjection.

Trevor Halford: I'm sure I'm right. The Minister of Energy can stand up for the Premier all he wants. I'm not sure he's going to get a pipeline named after him. But at the end of the day....

Interjection.

[5:05 p.m.]

Trevor Halford: Well, it depends. Maybe that'll change.

British Columbians are suffering right now. The Premier can look around the room, he can look around the country, he can look around the globe and try and find somebody to blame. But not once in this entire process, when we talked about some of the major issues that were facing British Columbians — affordability, health care, go down the list, failure to address court challenges, DRIPA — did he take one ounce of accountability. That's not leadership. That's not even close.

So we end these estimates, and I will say this. If the Premier wants to go out and sell the message that he just sold for the last ten hours, we're in a lot of trouble because, as much as we have an opposition and a government, at some point, we do need this government to succeed. I want this government to succeed. I want the food bank lines....

Interjections.

Trevor Halford: They can laugh all they want. The Minister of Education can laugh. The Minister of Children and Families can laugh.

But at some point, I want the food bank lines in my riding to get shorter. At some point, I want the forestry workers to come back to work. At some point, I want our ERs in

our northern communities to remain open. At some point, I want 1.3 million British Columbians to have access to a family doctor. At some point, I want our seniors to have access to long-term care instead of languishing in a hospital hallway. We all want that.

My question to the Premier is a direct one. When is he going to figure it out?

A \$13.3 billion deficit, and things have never been worse. It's not our fault. It's not the feds' fault. It's not local government's fault. It's not another nation's fault. It's his fault.

At some point, he has got to figure that out, because if he can't, we're all in trouble. We all are. To do ten hours of this, where he can't even get the basics right, is embarrassing. At some point, the Premier is going to have to look in the mirror and figure it out, and he's going to have to figure out he's part of the problem. At some point, there's going to be nobody left to blame.

As we conclude these estimates, I'll say it again. We can be on different sides of the aisle, but we need you to succeed on some things. Whether it's health care or other things, we need you to have some form of success, because right now what we're getting is clearly not good enough. British Columbians are suffering, and until this side of the House acknowledges that, it ain't going to get better.

Hon. David Eby: I'd like to take another moment to recognize the service of the interim Leader of the Official Opposition of British Columbia. He assumed this role in a tumultuous time in his caucus and for provincial politics more broadly. At a time of internal uncertainty, he stepped forward to provide stability to his party and to fulfil the objectively publicly important role of serving as the Leader of the Opposition.

[5:10 p.m.]

Now, public service often asks people to make sacrifices and take on difficult work that's not personally advantageous. By all accounts, public accounts, the Leader of the Opposition took on this job out of a sense of duty and responsibility to the role, to the Legislature, to the public and not as a vehicle for personal ambition.

His time as interim leader also coincided with one of the darkest events in our province's history, the mass shooting at Tumbler Ridge. I was up there with the member. In the aftermath of that horrific attack, a disaster that devastated a community, I saw the Leader of the Opposition show leadership, show compassion for families, for people who are struggling.

I saw him push back on and refute those who would use politics in that moment to divide communities and delay healing. It was an inspiration to people around the world as they saw political leaders of different stripes line up.

I remember what the member said. I asked my staff to pull the quote for me, because it was a memorable one and

I wanted to get it right. He said: “Yesterday parents packed their kids’ lunches. Today they’re making funeral arrangements. There’s no place for politics in any of this.”

Now, in public life, interim roles are not rewarding. They are, by definition, temporary. They are not glamorous. They require patience, steadiness, restraint and understanding that you are handing the work off to someone else. It requires a willingness to put institutional responsibility ahead of personal profile. The service of the Leader of the Opposition during his time in his tenure deserves the recognition and thanks of all of us. I do thank the member for his work.

The member, in his closing remarks, made a number of comments about the state of the province. I have to say, when I look at British Columbia, I don’t see the province that he describes. Some of it is just accuracy. The member was talking about emergency room closures. The actual numbers of emergency room closures in days is less than 10 percent of the number that he used.

I’m not going to quibble with the member about all of the pieces that I would disagree with him about, but I will quibble with the vision of a province that, objectively, in profoundly challenging international circumstances, where countries around the world are grappling with what to do in a reordering environment, the impacts of global inflation and the cost of living.... Objectively, British Columbia is leading Canada as we rebuild our national economy for this new world.

It has huge consequences for families. The member canvassed some of them, in terms of affordability, in terms of the realities of day-to-day life. It shows up at home for people — these global issues.

There is nowhere else I would rather be to face these challenges than in this province, when I look at the votes of confidence in the people of British Columbia, the resources we have and the industries we have, companies that could put their resources anywhere. They could go anywhere to do the work that they seek to do. In this globalized environment, they’re choosing British Columbia, and they’re choosing us more than anywhere else in the country.

On issues related to health care, I look at a health care system full of health care workers who are working long days, putting in extra hours to respond to a shortage of health care professionals. It’s not just here in British Columbia; it’s right across the country and around the world. We’re competing with the U.K., with the U.S. and other places for these health care workers. Their work and the work environments they are creating are inspirational to American doctors, nurses and health care professionals coming here.

That’s how we’re able to hire 1,000 new family doctors. That’s how we’re able to connect people with family doctors. Over 4,000 people in the health connect registry

are being matched to a doctor every week — hundreds of thousands of people.

When I met those American health care workers, they were like: “We’re so glad to be here in British Columbia. We love this place. It is gorgeous. We love that our family is welcome here. We don’t feel like we’re under attack. We love a public health care system, so that when I sit down with a patient, I can give them the care they need, not what their insurance allows them to receive. We love being in this hospital.” Word for word, what they’re saying.

That makes a big difference, and it is making a difference in terms of specialist wait times, in terms of surgeries, in terms of family doctors.

[5:15 p.m.]

We know, I know, that many British Columbians are struggling right now. Whatever we can do as a provincial government to provide additional support for those who are really, really struggling, we’re going to do it. We’re reducing hydro bills, supporting people with affordable car insurance, reducing taxes for families that earn \$80,000 or less.

When we look at the economy, it’s about: how do we support people in getting more wages? How do we support them in earning more money? That’s why this budget includes money for training for people to be able to take the jobs that are being created by the major projects that we are delivering here in British Columbia.

I could go on about my optimism about the future of this place in our country, in a reordering global environment and the amazing work of British Columbians who deliver every day, but someone just passed me a note that said: “He needs to wrap up.”

With that, I want to thank the member, the Leader of the Opposition, for his service for British Columbians. I want to thank British Columbians for their hard work for this province. I want to thank the public service for their assistance through the estimates process, and I will conclude my remarks.

The Chair: Hearing no further questions, I will now call Vote 11.

Vote 11: Office of the Premier, \$15,334,000 — approved.

Hon. David Eby: I move the committee report resolution and completion and ask leave to sit again.

Motion approved.

The Chair: This committee sits adjourned.

The committee rose at 5:16 p.m.

The House resumed at 5:16 p.m.

[The Speaker in the chair.]

Lorne Doerkson: Committee of Supply, Section B, reports resolution and completion of the estimates of the Office of the Premier and asks leave to sit again.

Leave granted.

Hon. Mike Farnworth: I call for the consideration of the reports of resolution from the Committee of Supply.

Supply Motions

REPORTS OF RESOLUTIONS FROM COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. Brenda Bailey: I move:

[That the reports of resolutions from the Committee of Supply on February 26, March 3, 4, 9, 12, 30, 31, April 14, 15, 21, 27, 30, May 4, 5, 6, 19, 26 and 28 be now received, taken as read and agreed to.]

Motion approved.

FUNDS GRANTED FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Hon. Brenda Bailey: I move:

[That there be granted to His Majesty, from and out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the sum of 84 billion, 357 million, 487 thousand dollars towards defraying the charges and expenses of the public service of the Province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027. This sum includes the sum that was authorized to be paid under section 1 of the *Supply Act* (No. 1), 2026.]

Motion approved.

FUNDS GRANTED FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURES, LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER FINANCING REQUIREMENTS

Hon. Brenda Bailey: I move:

[That there be granted to His Majesty, from and out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the sum of 1 billion, 451 million, 413 thousand dollars towards defraying the disbursements for capital expenditures, loans, investments and other financing requirements of the Province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027. This sum includes the sum that was authorized to be paid under section 2 of the *Supply Act* (No. 1), 2026.]

Motion approved.

[5:20 p.m.]

Introduction and First Reading of Bills

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2026–2027

Hon. Brenda Bailey presented a message from Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor: a bill intituled Supply Act, 2026–2027.

Hon. Brenda Bailey: I move that Bill 22 be introduced and read for a first time now.

This supply bill is introduced to authorize funding for the operation of government programs for the 2026–2027 fiscal year. The House has already received, taken as read and agreed to the reports of resolutions from the Committee of Supply after consideration of the main estimates.

In addition, the House has resolved that there be granted from and out of the consolidated revenue fund the necessary funds towards defraying the charges, expenses and disbursements of the public service of the province for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027.

It is the intention of the government to proceed with all stages of this supply bill today.

The Speaker: The question is first reading.

Motion approved.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, I would ask you to remain in your seats for a few more minutes while the bill is being circulated and transmitted electronically to members participating remotely.

I remind members that as the final supply bill is founded on resolutions passed in the Committee of Supply and adopted upon motion by this House, it is considered an administrative act. Accordingly, in keeping with the practice of this House, this bill will be permitted to advance through all stages in one sitting. Apart from the brief introductory remarks already made by the Minister of Finance, pursuant to practice recommendation No. 5, the bill is not subject to further debate.

Second Reading of Bills

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2026–2027

Hon. Brenda Bailey: I move that Bill 22 be read a second time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. Brenda Bailey: I move that Bill 22 be committed to a Committee of the Whole House for consideration forthwith.

Motion approved.

The House in Committee, Section B.

The committee met at 5:24 p.m.

[Lorne Doerkson in the chair.]

Committee of the Whole

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2026–2027

The Chair: Members, we'll call the committee to order.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive approved.

Schedules 1 and 2 approved.

Preamble approved.

Title approved.

Hon. Brenda Bailey: I move that the committee rise and report Bill 22 complete without amendment.

Motion approved.

The Chair: This committee stands adjourned.

The committee rose at 5:25 p.m.

The House resumed at 5:25 p.m.

[The Speaker in the chair.]

Reporting of Bills

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2026–2027

Lorne Doerkson: The committee on Bill 22 reports the bill complete without amendment.

The Speaker: When shall the bill be read a third time?

Hon. Brenda Bailey: Now, hon. Speaker.

Third Reading of Bills

BILL 22 — SUPPLY ACT, 2026–2027

The Speaker: The question is third reading. Division has been called.

[5:30 p.m. - 5:35 p.m.]

Motion approved on the following division:

YEAS — 46

Lore	Blatherwick	Dhir
Routledge	Chant	Toporowski
B. Anderson	Neill	Osborne

Brar	Krieger	Davidson
Parmar	Sunner	Beare
Greene	Wickens	Kang
Begg	Arora	Higginson
Sandhu	Lajeunesse	Choi
Rotchford	Elmore	Phillip
Popham	Dix	Sharma
Farnworth	Eby	Bailey
Kahlon	Chandra Herbert	Whiteside
Boyle	Ma	Yung
Malcolmson	Gibson	Glumac
Shah	G. Anderson	Chow
	Morissette	

NAYS — 45

Loewen	Kindy	Milobar
Warbus	Halford	Rattée
Wat	Kooner	Banman
Hartwell	L. Neufeld	Van Popta
Dew	Clare	K. Neufeld
Rustad	Wilson	Valerioté
Botterell	McInnis	Paton
Day	Bhangu	Toor
Hepner	Giddens	Dhaliwal
McCall	Maahs	Block
Stamer	Gaspar	Mok
Davis	Chan	Boulton
Sturko	Armstrong	Kealy
Williams	Chapman	Bird
Doerkson	Luck	Tepper

The Speaker: The motion for third reading of Bill 22, Supply Act 2026–27, has been read a third time and has passed.

Members, His Honour the Administrator is in the precinct. Please remain seated while we await his arrival.

[5:40 p.m.]

His Honour the Administrator requested to attend the House, was admitted to the chamber and took his place in the chair.

Royal Assent to Bills

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly:

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2026
K'ómoks Treaty Act
Dashboard Cameras in Commercial Vehicles Act

In His Majesty's name, His Honour the Administrator doth assent to these acts.

Supply Act, 2026–2027

In His Majesty's name, His Honour the Administrator

doth thank His Majesty's loyal subjects, accepts their benevolence and assents to this act.

Hon. Ronald Skolrood (Administrator): Well, I want to thank you all for your hard work and your service to the people of B.C. I know it's very difficult work. It's challenging work. But it's essential to the lifeblood of our democracy.

Hope you all have a great summer, some relaxation back with your families in your communities, with your constituencies. Thanks again.

His Honour the Administrator retired from the chamber.

[The Speaker in the chair.]

Point of Order (Speaker's Ruling)

The Speaker: Hon. Members, before I recognize the Government House Leader to do the last motion, I have a couple of things to read to you.

[5:45 p.m.]

On Wednesday, May 27, the Government House Leader raised a point of order regarding comments made by the Third Party House Leader in Committee of the Whole on Bill 9, intituled Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2026. The Third Party House Leader made submissions to the Chair later in the sitting day. The Chair has reviewed the submissions of the Government House Leader and the Third Party House Leader and is prepared to rule on the point of order.

The Chair will note the long-standing practice and expectation that points of order arising in committee must be settled in committee. But the Chair appreciates the explanation of the Government House Leader that he became aware of the comments after committee proceedings on Bill 9 concluded and that the Government House Leader was raising the matter at the first opportunity thereafter. To balance these two considerations, the Chair will take a light touch on the matter at hand.

In our House, the Chair found no precedent for the application of Standing Order 40(1) being extended to a reflection on statutory officers of the Legislature. The same applies for other parliaments that adhere to the Westminster parliamentary system, as far as the Chair can tell from a review of relevant authorities. That being said, members should always exercise care when making statements about persons outside the House who are unable to respond within the context of parliamentary proceedings.

The Chair also notes that the Third Party House Leader did not offer personal reflections on the individual officeholder but rather spoke to perceived deficiencies in the work of the statutory office. Accordingly, it is the

ruling of the Chair that there is no breach of order in the matter at hand.

With respect to the direction sought by the Government House Leader and the Third Party House Leader, the Chair will affirm that statutory officers are accountable to this House through the Speaker and that ministers play no part in the accountability mechanism. The independence that these officers enjoy is designed to ensure that their work can be undertaken without political direction, pressure or retaliation.

The Chair can appreciate the symbiotic relationship that certain officers may need to maintain with certain ministers, but these officers do not take direction from ministers, as their accountability is to this House. Most directly, the oversight function of statutory officers is exercised by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, as reflected in its terms of reference provided by this House.

While the committee does not involve itself in reviewing statutory decision-making by individual officers, questions or concerns regarding systems or processes of the respective officers are within its purview. If a member has a substantive concern that they would like to raise otherwise, the Chair suggests that those concerns should be brought to the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. It would then be in the hands of that committee to determine what steps, if any, it wishes to take to address the matter and then report to the House thereon.

Also, Members, earlier today the Government House Leader raised a point of order regarding the remote participation of the member for Bulkley Valley–Stikine in the division on the motion for third reading of Bill 20, intituled K'ómoks Treaty Act. The Government House Leader stated that the member for Bulkley Valley–Stikine appeared to have moved from her first location to another location between divisions this afternoon and questioned whether the member was in a public space during the vote in question on Bill 20.

Standing Order 8(3)(b) requires the establishment of rules, expectations and requirements for remote connectivity and participation by members. The guidance for members participating in proceedings of the Legislative Assembly remotely provides for these rules, expectations and requirements. The guidance provides that it is expected that members will connect from a suitable indoor private location. It further clarifies that connecting from a public area or from a vehicle is not appropriate.

As the Chair noted in a ruling on May 29, 2025, voting is one of the most consequential responsibilities of a member of this House. Disallowing a member to vote is not a decision that the Chair takes lightly, but it is an authority granted to the Chair under Standing Order 8(4)(b).

[5:50 p.m.]

Since Standing Order 8 was amended in March 2024

to enable remote participation by members on a permanent basis, the Chair has disallowed a member from voting in instances in which members joining remotely were in a vehicle, which is not an acceptable venue from which to participate in parliamentary business. The Chair has never disallowed a member from voting in other instances.

At the time the vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 20 was taken, the member for Bulkley Valley–Stikine was visible and audible, and the Chair had no basis to believe that the member was participating from an inappropriate location. No objection was raised at that time. The member for Bulkley Valley–Stikine has since advised the Chair that she was, in both instances, participating from an indoor private location. The Chair accepts that assurance.

The member further explained that she briefly moved to situate herself prior to the first vote and kept her camera on while doing so. She further advised that she left the camera on while she moved to notify an individual that she would be required for the second vote. She then returned to the original location from which she had cast the first vote. While such movement with the camera on is not advisable and may give rise to uncertainty, it does not constitute a breach of the standing orders or the guidance.

In these circumstances, the Chair is satisfied that the requirements of Standing Order 8(2) were met and that there is no basis to exercise the exceptional authority to disallow the member's vote. Accordingly, the vote of the member for Bulkley Valley–Stikine was properly counted in the division on the motion for third reading.

Adjournment Motion

Hon. Mike Farnworth: I move:

[1. That the House, at its rising, do stand adjourned until it appears to the satisfaction of the Speaker, after consultation with the government, that the public interest requires that the House shall meet, or until the Speaker may be ad-

vised by the government that it is desired to prorogue the Second Session of the Forty-third Parliament of the Province of British Columbia. The Speaker shall give notice to all Members that he is so satisfied or has been so advised, and thereupon the House shall meet at the time stated in such notice, and, as the case may be, may transact its business as if it has been duly adjourned to that time and date.

2. That, by agreement of the Speaker and the House Leaders of each recognized caucus, the location of sittings and means of conducting sittings of this House may be altered if required due to an emergency situation or public health measures, and that such agreement constitute the authorization of the House to proceed in the manner agreed to. The Speaker shall give notice to all Members of the agreement and shall table it for it to be printed in the Votes and Proceedings of the House at the next sitting.

3. That, in the event of the Speaker being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, the Deputy Speaker shall act in their stead for the purpose of this order; in the event that the Deputy Speaker being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, the Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole shall act in their stead for the purpose of this order; and in the event that the Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole being unable to act owing to illness or other cause, another Member designated collectively by the House Leaders of each recognized caucus shall act in their stead for the purpose of this order.]

That's how it's done.

Motion approved.

Hon. Mike Farnworth moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The Speaker: Let's go home.

Clean up your desks, please. Thank you.
Enjoy your summer. Safe summer.

The House adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

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