

Premier Gordon Campbell
Address to the Vancouver Board of Trade
July 2, 2002

Check Against Delivery

All the Olympic athletes here today will tell you what an incredible moment it is to be chosen as an Olympic athlete and to represent Canada on the world stage – to represent the best we have to offer, to be recognized for their commitment and dedication to their goals and dreams.

We should look at the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games as our opportunity to set some goals and some dreams for ourselves as a country, as a province, as a city and as a community, and we should close our eyes for a minute and think about what it will be like.

Think about it will be like at the opening ceremony when the entire world comes to our city and our province and our country. Think about what it will be like when people from around the world recognize the strengths of our diversity, the commitments and the talent of our people. Think about reaching beyond the mundane to something that is bigger than all of us, something that is bigger than our city or our province or our country, something that says to the world that when we come together and dedicate ourselves, there is nothing we can't accomplish in Canada.

Yesterday I was in Los Angeles celebrating Canada Day with Canadians who have gone to California because they thought California was a place of opportunity. I could tell them that British Columbia and Canada have far more opportunities and a far more exciting future than they'll ever find in California.

At the reception, young people came up to me and said, "I'm coming home." There is no better feeling as we set goals for ourselves and encourage other members of our community to reach out for them and achieve them.

The 2010 Olympic bid is our chance to imagine how great we can be. It's our chance to imagine the strength of the community and all of its diversity when we bring our talents and our creativity and our passion together. We're excited about British Columbia and Canada going out and competing with the best in the world.

I'm looking forward to competing with Berne and beating them. I'm looking forward to competing with Salzburg and beating them. I'm looking forward to making sure we work together to accomplish the maximum we can, to optimize our bid in every way possible. We've already set aside millions of dollars for cultural enhancement and millions of dollars for athletic enhancement as we move towards the Games.

I want to reach out to every child in this province who dreams of what they can do during that Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games and say: “We want to give you a hand up to make sure you can accomplish your goals. It won't be easy. There will days when you look at yourself and say, ‘Gee, I may not want to do this after all – it's much more difficult than I thought it was going to be.’ But if you keep to it – if you stay dedicated, if you stay committed – your entire province and your entire country is going to be behind you.”

A week ago I was at the Western Governors Association in the United States, and I heard Mike Leavitt speak. He is the governor of Utah and hosted the Salt Lake City Games. He said something that was probably as important for me as anything I've heard from someone in public life who's involved in this.

He gave a presentation on the Olympics and some of the security challenges they faced. As he finished, he said, “Everyone in the room should know this: the Olympics made every one of us better. It made us more welcoming and more encouraging to strangers. It made us better in terms of how our communities work and how our transportation system works. It made us better even in the restaurants where people recognized they had a responsibility to be an ambassador for Salt Lake and for Utah and for the United States.”

The Olympics can help make us better in British Columbia. The Olympics can help make us reach out beyond the mundane to something that is bigger than all of us, something that is stronger than we can imagine, something that is more inspiring than we normally think about.

If we reach out together to the next generation of athletes in British Columbia and across this country, if we build on our strengths and our creativity and our passion for the place we live in, if we recognize how fortunate we are to live in a country like Canada and a province like British Columbia and a city like Vancouver, there is no question whatsoever that on July 3rd, 2003, the journey begins to the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympic Games right here in Vancouver/Whistler, British Columbia.

Thank you very much.