

**Premier Gordon Campbell
Speech to B.C. Broadcasters
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Check Against Delivery

Our world has changed in ways we can't shift. No matter how much we may want to stay with the status quo, no matter how much we may long for something we recall, we must recognize the world we live in is completely different from what it was even ten years ago.

The economy and demographics have changed dramatically. As broadcasters, if you think about the people you serve and how you connect with them, like us, in government, you are confronted with a significantly changing world.

Changes created by the Internet and our connected society are going to have huge impacts on your industry. The issue is, how do you advance?

Part of the solution involves ensuring regulatory agencies, like the CRTC, change to reflect the world we live in.

People are fascinated by regulation. They will say to me, "I want this improvement, but I don't have any money for it, so why doesn't the government pay for it?" They forget that the only money government has comes out of your pocket.

My point is that, in a changing world, you as broadcasters face some of the same changes our government is facing. Like you, we're going to have to respond to change, provide services in different ways, and work to ensure yesterday's good regulation does not linger unchanged when it becomes today's impediment to growth and progress.

Our society is aging. I'm at the head of the baby boom, and that wave is having huge impacts on some of the things we've taken for granted in the past.

The health system as we know it came about in the 1960s. It's changed a lot since then, and so has the society that funds it.

In the 1960s, there were more people at work than not at work. By 2010, there will be more people leaving the workforce than coming into the workforce. So we know we're going to be relying on fewer and fewer people to support the public services we demand as we get older.

As we age, we put additional pressures on the health-care system. Our government has added \$1.7 billion to the health budget in just two years. Last year, even though we increased the number of operations we provided to British Columbians by 9,000, waitlists grew.

The big issue here is how we can catch up. One thing is certain: if we keep doing things exactly the way we used to – in the '60s, '70s, '80s or even the '90s – we're going to watch that very important service deteriorate. So we have to change it.

In 1991, the Seaton Royal Commission Report on health care came out. Recognizing the aging population, it urged government to provide a continuum of care, ranging from independent living at home, to levels of supported living, to institutional care.

Previously, people had two choices: you could be at home, or you could be in institutional care in a hospital. We now know that, because there were no intermediate alternatives, being in hospital itself was one reason for some people's health to deteriorate.

I had a great grandfather who broke his hip – and he died from breaking his hip, effectively, because he had to be in an institution that wasn't able to care for him the way we did at home. We watched his well-being and quality of life deteriorate. And basically, I think he gave up.

If we could have kept him independent longer, I think there's a good chance his quality of life would have improved and he would have been with us longer.

As we move to create a continuum of care for seniors and better meet their needs, there are going to be changes. And some people will resist them.

People have been asking me about what I've learned in the first two years of this government. One revelation is how powerful the status quo is. People are always interested in change for someone else, as long as they can stay as they are and do what they're comfortable with.

One of our challenges is dealing with that.

Getting back to health care, the average, annual cost for taking care of someone five to nine years old is \$800. At age 65, it's \$3,800 a year. The average cost for someone who's over 90 is \$20,800 a year.

Guess what the fastest-growing demographic cohort is in British Columbia? Over 90.

Naturally, most of us want our parents to get into that cohort, as long as they're healthy and they've got a good quality of life.

Still, about 70 per cent of our health-care dollars are spent in the last year of a person's life. And we have to find ways to deal with that – like encouraging prevention and healthy living choices – because health care costs continue to grow.

Ten years ago, health-care represented 33 cents of every dollar government spent. Today it's 42 cents. Over the past decade, it's grown at seven per cent a year, and PharmaCare

costs have grown at 15 per cent a year, while our economy has grown about two per cent a year.

If you don't look at what you're delivering in terms of health care, how you can care for patients where they live? How you can be cost-effective and thoughtful, including patients in dealing with the health issues that we face?

Without changes, we're not going to be able to deliver to the next generation the quality and kind of care that we've taken for granted.

So we're making changes. For example, we've chopped the amount of administrative overload in the health-care system. We will have reduced that by 41 per cent over our first three years of government. That money will be going to patient care.

We're increasing the number of physicians in the province. We've added 11 in Prince George, five in Cranbrook and four in Trail. We know that if we can create a critical mass of caregivers in the regions of the province, we will deliver services more effectively.

We're also informing British Columbians so they can actually take individual action – and that's where your industry comes in.

People don't want more tax dollars going into advertising. But they are saying this: we need more information; we need to know more of the facts, so we can help solve some of B.C.'s problems.

So we put together a package, and we said we were going to spend \$100,000 – out of a \$10.7-billion health-care budget – to tell citizens where they could get information if they wanted it.

We want to create an information flow that is not political. I want it to be information people need, so they can understand and have an impact on the challenges we face as a province.

Education is another area in which we face demographic and other challenges.

Last year, the number of children in the education system shrunk by 7,100. It's going to decrease by another 9,100 next year. There are fewer and fewer children in our education system.

We've actually increased per capita funding for K-to-12 students significantly over the last budget. Still, we've had to make difficult choices and changes to ensure our kids get the best education possible.

In doing so, we've asked ourselves: who is the first teacher a child has? It's their parents. We want to bring parents into the system. Study after study has told us that the more parents are involved in education, the better the achievement of the kids in the system.

We're encouraging parents to be part of the system. We're asking them to be part of the school planning council or the teacher's college, and to think about choices for kids to learn and teachers to teach, not just because we believe it will give them confidence in the system, but because their involvement ensures the system is responding to the needs of their children.

Over the last few years, we've watched achievement improve in British Columbia. We've watched the number of aboriginal students graduating from school increase significantly.

For us to provide our children with the kind of education they need and allow them to rise to their individual challenges, we are going to have to be willing to change the system, to provide for more individualization and more choice.

Children learn in different ways. We have to be willing to have a flexible system that responds to that, which means removing institutional inertia and overcoming the status quo mentality. And we're making progress.

Another challenge we're rising to is the need to turn our economy around.

We laid out a plan when we ran for office. We've accomplished over 90 per cent of our goals, and we're not even halfway through the term yet. But we're not claiming that we've reached the final destination.

We've made progress, as many objective indicators will tell you. In 2002, the average weekly paycheque in British Columbia went up by three times the national average.

British Columbia has the second-highest level of investment intent for the next year. People want to invest in British Columbia.

I'm glad we're number 2. It's certainly better than number 10. But I want B.C. to be number 1.

We've done a lot to encourage that. We've dealt with some of those redundant regulations I was talking about earlier.

We've eliminated 61,000 regulations – and we expect to eliminate about 180,000, so we're a third of the way there. Unnecessary regulation costs B.C.'s economy an estimated \$5 billion, so it's significant.

What's also significant is that we're cutting those costs without having an impact on public health and safety, which are critical to a sound regulatory regime.

We've also reduced 27 separate taxes in the province. We've left over \$950 million in people's pockets and over \$350 million in the pockets of investors.

Again, the indicators suggest this is working. We were number 1 in retail sales growth in the first quarter of this year. We're number one in hotel sales growth.

Our energy exports are up 79 per cent. Our mineral exports are up 39 per cent.

We have the second-highest level of building permit activity. We're well above the national average in housing starts.

On top of that, in March, we had the fastest-growing job numbers in the country.

I think, so far, the evidence is that we are starting to move in the right direction and create an environment that invites people to come and invest.

The fastest-growing economy in British Columbia in the last five years was in Whistler-Pemberton, an all-season resort.

Whistler now receives more visitors in the summer than in the winter. It is renowned internationally.

We want to take what we've learned from that experience and apply it to skiing destinations across the province.

To support tourism destinations – as well as forestry, mining and the huge potential of the energy industry in this province – we're investing hundreds of millions of dollars in transportation infrastructure in the heartlands of this province.

In Highway 16, Highway 97, Highway 95, Highway 3 and Highway 1, we're making investments because we know the flow of goods and services is a critical part of our economic base.

We live in the best province in the best country in the world.

Never before was that reinforced for me more than when we had the Olympic Evaluation Committee come to review our bid for 2010. Thank you to all of you in the association for the work you've done in supporting 2010.

The Evaluation Committee recognized the exceptionally professional approach of the bid committee and the top quality of the venues. But what was truly great about their review was that they witnessed a display of the rich diversity of British Columbia: from First Nations, to children doing Irish dance, to others showcasing the Chinese culture, to great Canadian entertainers.

There was great Canadian content throughout. We had David Foster. We didn't get Shania Twain, although we sure tried.

The diversity that we offer set our bid apart. If our bid wins on July 2, athletes who come here from around the world will feel at home, because we know we have that kind of diversity in British Columbia.

As I travelled the province earlier this year, people in community after community made it clear they're excited about the Olympics. Beyond the billions of dollars of economic activity and the thousands of jobs it will create, they're excited about what it can do for their communities.

The other day, I heard Catriona LeMay Doan speak about what she went through to become a four-time Olympic gold medallist. She is a true champion, and she said: the thing that's important about getting to be the best you can be is to recognize there's a whole team of people behind you.

You can't reach a worthwhile goal without some challenges. It's sometimes difficult to think about what B.C. could be.

But consider this: with all the natural resources we have, the talent you see in your communities every day, and our collective creativity, think of what we can accomplish when we think of ourselves as one team and one place.

Think of what we can accomplish when we focus on what we are doing for the next generation – not what we're doing for ourselves next week, but what we are doing for the next generation of British Columbians.

Think of what we can accomplish if we give them the ability to dedicate themselves to their talents and interests.

The Olympics allows us to do that. The Olympics is a symbol of reaching higher, of moving faster, of being stronger.

Imagine how it will feel in British Columbia on July 2. When we go to Prague, I believe we're going to be awarded the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

That will give us a chance to give our kids a gift beyond imagination – a chance to encourage them to reach into themselves and be the best they can possibly be.

Think of how you'll feel when, in 2010, athletes from right here at home stand on the top of the podium and get the gold medal, and we watch that flag go up the post, and sing O Canada with them, right here at home.

Think of how it feels to be part of a society that gives everyone a chance to be their best.

That's what we're striving for in this province. That's what we can do. That's the challenge we have to rise to meet.