



Asia Pacific Summit

Premier Gordon Campbell October 13, 2004

Check Against Delivery

Let me start by welcoming all the ambassadors, consuls general and high commissioners from the Asia Pacific representing Canada abroad. Thank you for all the great work you do on our behalf.

I also have a special welcome to His Excellency Kensaku Hogen, Japan's Ambassador to Canada. We're celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of Japan's and Canada's diplomatic relations this year. It's been a strong partnership. Japan is still British Columbia's second largest export market and strongest Asian partner, and we intend to nurture that relationship and continue to build it in the years ahead.

I'm also pleased that we're joined by Arup Gupta and representatives from Tata Consultancy Services from India, who are opening a new office in Vancouver today.

The Asia-Pacific Foundation chair, Tom Axworthy, and president John Wiebe have joined us today. Let me just say that the Asian Pacific Foundation is now celebrating its twentieth anniversary – two decades of opening up our perspectives, looking to the future, and seeing how we can take advantage of our unique positions in Canada and our unique position on the Pacific Rim.

As you may know, British Columbia, Canada, Vancouver and Whistler have been awarded the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. We only won that honour by three votes – and let me tell you what I think made the difference.

It wasn't just that we had a great partnership; it wasn't just we were working with Canada. When the Olympic evaluation committee came to British Columbia, and they reviewed our bid, we had a celebration of our multicultural background here. When the evaluation committee walked in, they saw a community that truly does celebrate its diversity. They saw a community that celebrates the strength of people who have come here from China, from India, from Hong Kong, from Japan - from all around the world in fact. This is a place where we welcome everyone from the world to share in our communities. And that's one of our true assets that we hope you're going to help us build in the months and the years ahead.

Over the last three years, we've changed from an economy that was threatening to close down to an economy that is opening up, to an economy that says to the world: we are a small economy, but we are an open economy.

We are a trading economy. We depend on those trading links to make a difference to the quality of life of all the people that live here. We have 4.2 million people that live in British Columbia, and the vast majority of our jobs in this province depend on trading. They depend on trading from British Columbia to the rest of our country and British Columbia to the rest of the world. And the Asia Pacific is critical to our economic and trade future.

So far this year, exports to China are up by over 55 percent. Exports to Hong Kong are up 69 percent. Exports to India are up over 24 percent. To South Korea they are up 22 percent. Whether it's in mining products, whether it's in lumber, whether it's in the trade or the whole range of activities that are there, we know that we're connected and our future is directly connected to the Asia Pacific.

When you talk to people in British Columbia, they'll tell you that they recognize how strong our Asia Pacific connection is. When the Foundation asked Canadians, "Is Canada part of the Asia Pacific?" only 32 percent of Canadians said yes, but over 70 percent of British Columbians said yes. We are Canada's Asia Pacific, and we intend over the next number of years to focus more than ever on the opportunities across the Ocean and to highlight the opportunities that British Columbia represents to those economies as well.

We know we have to take significant steps to make sure that we facilitate the movement of goods and services and people back and forth across that vast ocean, and we know that we have the people here that will help us do it.

I'm very pleased today that I'm joined by a number of my colleagues from the Legislature. Harry Bloy is here from Coquitlam; John Nuraney is here from Burnaby; Karn Manhas is here from Port Coquitlam; Patrick Wong, who is our minister of state for trading and multiculturalism, is here with us. John Les, our Minister of Small Business and Economic Development has joined us.

The significant thing is that each of these people has been trading ambassadors for us, taking our message across the ocean to their communities. I first visited China and Japan in 1987 as the mayor of Vancouver. Last year, when I visited in India, and I visited Amritsar, Chandigarh and Mumbai, you felt that people from British Columbia and the Canadians who joined me in that trade mission had a special connection between India and Canada. And one of the things we're going to be trying to do as a government is make sure we can build on that connection.

The Asia Pacific Foundation was created 20 year ago. Back then, 8 percent of British Columbians were of Asian heritage. Today it's 22 percent. That's a larger share than anywhere else in North America. Geographically, socially, economically, B.C. is Canada's leader on the Asia Pacific. Twenty-four percent of our exports in British Columbia go to the Asia Pacific. That's 5 percent in Canada. The same number is 5 percent for Canada.

What we tried to do when we came into government three years ago was start to open our province up to investment, and we've seen some really significant and important results.

We have the best job creation record of any of the provinces in Canada since December of 2001. We've lots of investment that's going up in mining. We actually have new mines opening in British Columbia for the first time in a long, long time. To show you the benefits of that, Pine Valley Mining, near Chetwynd, just made its first major shipment from a new B.C. coal mine in 20 years. It's been supported by Japanese investment, and the coal is going to Korea. That's the Asia Pacific at work, and that's what British Columbia can help to our partners around the Pacific Rim.

One of the first things we did was we went to the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and we asked them to tell us what we need to do to make sure we can maximize the benefits of B.C.'s incredible energy resources.

Needless to say, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers came and gave us a long list of idea. We said we couldn't do everything, but give us your top five. They gave us their top five, and we worked with them. The government brought in a new royalty regime for deep wells and a new royalty regime for summer drilling, and we waited. We only waited for four months. In four months we had the largest single sale of oil and gas drilling rights in the history of the province – over \$400 million.

The president of Encana told me: "We did this because you put in place an environment that allowed us to do it."

We went to our forest industry and asked what do we need to do to get this industry competitive again, ready to deal with the global marketplace, ready to go back to Japan and grab more of our market share back, ready to go into China and take advantage of their housing starts, where it's got three times the number of housing starts they have in the United States? What do we need to do? And they told us.

Over the last 18 months, we undertook the largest single reform of the forest industry in British Columbia in the last 50 years. What's happened? We're actually looking for workers in forestry again. Our mills are virtually at 100 percent capacity again. We had an 18 percent increase in the amount of investment in forestry last year. We have 17 percent expected this year.

I want you to know this: we singled out the Asia Pacific as a marketplace that we want to expand for our products. We've recognized that we have work to do there. We went to work in China. The \$12 million Dream Home China project is really a project to market B.C. technology and B.C. wood in a way that meets the needs of the massive and growing Chinese middle class in a way that's flexible, that is sensible and that's environmentally sound. We are already watching the benefits of that commitment that we've made, and we're going to be continuing with that commitment as we move ahead.

There's no place in Canada that does more in terms of fuel cell development and research than right here in British Columbia. And the great thing is, it's being recognized around the world. It's being recognized by Mitsubishi, who are investing \$14 million to base their global hydrogen subsidiary right here in British Columbia.

It's being recognized in Beijing, where we're going to launch public transit buses powered by B.C. fuel cell technology. We'd like to see our partners take that technology and use it in Beijing in 2008 for the Summer Olympics, in Shanghai for Expo 2010 and in Delhi for the 2010 Commonwealth Games. We'll be able to use it in Vancouver in 2010 as we create a hydrogen highway from Vancouver to Whistler to show the technology and what it can do. That will come right out of the minds and the research of people right here in British Columbia working with people around the world.

I'll tell you another thing that I think has been really significant, and it's something that is recognized in most parts of the world. In British Columbia we developed an organization called the B.C. Centre for Disease Control. The first incidence of SARS in Canada was here in British Columbia, and the people at that centre were incredible in ensuring that we did not lose one life in B.C. to SARS. We have a group of exceptional scientists here in British Columbia and we decided that we were going to try and find a vaccine for SARS, so we developed what we called the SARS accelerated vaccine initiative. It was an initiative that was completely different from the kinds of development that we had in the past. It included people from Guangzhou; it included people from Toronto. It included people from across our country and from around the world.

This is what happened: because of that commitment and the open collaboration that was taking place, instead of it taking ten years to find what they think will be a vaccine that will deal with SARS, it will have taken two. That's the kind of leadership we're seeing in British Columbia. It's the kind of collaboration that we're seeing between public health authorities in China and public health authorities in British Columbia. It's something that builds a quality of life for everyone. When we find a vaccine for SARS that we know will work, the entire world will benefit from that. And it's because of the open doors of collaboration of research and of development that we've been able to establish between British Columbia and the rest of our country and the Asia Pacific that we'll be able to celebrate that.

There is no question that we have enormous opportunities here, and there is really now one thing with the potential to hold us back a little bit, and that's our transportation infrastructure.

I'm pleased that Larry Berg is here from the Vancouver Airport Authority. They are planning to invest \$1.4 billion in expanding the airport to make sure that we can take care of the increase in travellers that we expect from Asia over the next number of years. It is a significant opportunity for us to build the coastal connections, the trading connections and the personal connections as we open up our tourism markets once again and we share with one another our cultures and the cultural opportunities that they present.

Larry is expecting a 50 percent increase in travelers over the next decade at YVR – I'd like to exceed his expectations. So we've just doubled the funding that we're putting into tourism promotion in this province. We've done that because we see huge opportunities ahead of us. We have a safe and secure province. More importantly, we have a province with a vast array of tourism products that people from the Asia Pacific specifically enjoy.

Then there is the Port of Vancouver. In terms of total tonnage, the Port of Vancouver ships more exports than any other North American port. It is an enormous asset to British Columbia. The port itself is investing \$1 billion in its future to maximize the benefits that they can offer to their customers.

As well as the port of Vancouver, we are opening up the port of Prince Rupert. You may not have heard of the port of Prince Rupert, but you're going to hear lots about in the near future. There is no faster way into the middle of the continent of North America than from Asia through the port of Prince Rupert and down to Chicago. We have just completed what we call the B.C. Rail investment partnership. There is going to be a \$32 million investment by CN and the government at the port to help build the containerization facility and improve the tracks. And a new Chicago express train from Prince George to Chicago will cut two days off the normal travel time for goods and for services into that part of the world.

So we are very excited about our transportation infrastructure which we are building - not just the airport, not just the port of Vancouver but also the port of Prince Rupert and our road infrastructure as well. We have a multi-billion plan to improve our goods and services movement through the gateways of Vancouver and of Prince Rupert, through British Columbia on into the continent, and we know that that's going to be important.

What I would ask you to do today, as you spend time talking with John Les and others on the panel, is think of what we could do that would make your investment in the province more beneficial, that would remove the barriers to investment in the province that you may have seen, that would make sure that we can care for your customers and the people that are coming from your communities in a way that meets their needs as expeditiously and cost-effectively as possible.

We are going to invest in British Columbia and in building stronger ties with the Asia Pacific. Legislation in the House right now regarding the B.C. Rail investment partnership includes a \$4-million contribution to build stronger ties between British Columbia and the Asia Pacific. We are going to work with the federal government. We are going to maximize the benefits for British Columbia, to Canada and to our customers, our friends and our strategic allies in the Asia Pacific, because that's how everyone is going to benefit. So \$4 million will go to that program, and we think it's going to have a huge impact across our province in terms of building the kinds of relationships that we want.

Finally, I would say this to you. Twenty years ago, when we looked at the Asia Pacific and the Asia Pacific Foundation was brought together, it felt new. This is no longer a new issue, but it's more important than ever. It's important for us to have new ideas and new approaches and not to be afraid of exploring those new ideas and new approaches. Instead we should grasp them and move forward in a way that looks forward to building an even better and brighter future for everyone on the Asia Pacific.

In 2010 we intend to celebrate the world and to celebrate humanity and all that humanity shares, all that humanity offers to one another. In 2010, Expo 2010 will take place in Shanghai, and in Shanghai they, too, will be celebrating our common interests, our common goals, our common purpose. The 2010 Asia Games will take place in Guangzhou, sister city for Vancouver. In 2010 the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi will give the people of India the chance to welcome all of the members of the Commonwealth to that exceptional event. And in 2010 we will celebrate the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

That's the Asia Pacific: New Delhi, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Vancouver. That's the Asia Pacific and all we can do when we work together, when we learn from one another and when we learn to celebrate the human spirit. It is the human spirit that created the diversity in British Columbia. It is the human spirit that came across that ocean to help build a stronger province and a stronger country. The Asia Pacific Foundation celebrates that spirit; it celebrates that creativity. It celebrates the contribution we can all make when we work together in collaboration, dreaming of a better future.

Thank you very much.

