

B.C. Natural Resources Forum speech

Wednesday, February 1, 2017
12:00 PM

Thank you very much.

I would like to say a huge thank you to Shawn for the kind introduction he gave most of my speech so I don't have to repeat that statistics to you but you should know though that one of the reasons that BC statistics are so good, one of the reasons that we are number one in job creation, we have the lowest unemployment rate we have had compared to the rest of the country since 1961, one of the reasons that we are going to be able to eliminate our operating debt for the first time since 1974 which we will do in just a few years is because I work with such an incredible team and in this region that team is led by Mike Morris and Shirley Bond and I hope that all of you will give them a big hand.

I always say the word statistics with a little bit of care because to me they are statistics, but I mean obviously they are statistics, but for me those numbers are people and when we talk about 191,000 jobs created in BC since the Jobs Plan was introduced what we are talking about is 191,000 people who are now better able to look after the people that they love. Those are working people in our province who enjoy the dignity of a pay cheque setting an example for their kids for what it means to go out and work every day, living a fulfilling life where they are making their own living and that to me is what a job is. My father was a school teacher all of his life, at a public school in Burnaby for forty years and he understood and demonstrated every day how important it was to be able to provide for the people in your family who depend on you and that is what a job is. And so when we talk about 191,000 jobs or being number one in job creation in the

country growing at three times the national average what I am think about are those individual families who are doing better today because people like Shirley Bond and Mike Morris and other members of our cabinet and caucus who are here today have worked so darn hard to make sure that we deliver on the promise of creating work for working people in BC.

And of course there are those and we are going to have this debate in about 70 days when we call the election, there are those who think the natural resource industry are the jobs of yesterday - the workers of yesterday - the businesses of yesterday, and we are all going to be called on, me more than anyone in this province to stand up for what the resource industry means for BC and what it means for Canada.

Because without a resource industry in Canada we do not have a health care system that is available when you need it, where you need it. Without a resource industry in Canada we don't have in BC the best education outcomes anywhere in the country. Without a resource sector in Canada we find people unemployed, looking for work, under employed, unable to look after the people that they love in their lives. The resource sector is vitally important today and it will be tomorrow. So what you need in this country are people who are going to fight for what you do, fight for your right to go out and work to create jobs, to extract resources, to sell them all over the world. You need a government, you need champions that are going to tell the world the story of what we do here in BC, a story that includes resource extraction that is done more sustainably than anywhere else in the world, more safely than anywhere else in the world and comes out with the products that are the highest quality you can find anywhere in the world.

Our customers will know and they do know that if you

buy from BC, you can be proud of what you sell. If you buy BC lumber you can tell your customers how proud you are to have such an ethical, sustainable product in your product inventory. If you sell mining products, if you buy mining products from BC, natural gas from BC, if you buy agriculture products from BC - you can know if you are a buyer that BC does it better than anybody else in the world and so you need champions that are going to fight for you and know that your business is the business of the future and that you need workers who are well trained and ready to take those jobs so that you can continue to produce more jobs. You need a government that is going to be there to support you in innovating, in new products so we can stay ahead of what the market needs and a government that is going to fight to make sure that we are opening up trade opportunities for you all around the world. On that, let me say this because around the world we have seen a retrenchment when it comes to trade, there is no secret about that, we have seen Brexit, we have seen TPP fail, we have seen of course the massive changes south of the border in parts of both major political parties as they retrench and become more protectionist. You need a champion that is going to fight for your industries and top of mind in that of course is softwood because the lumber industry is a huge employer for thousands of people but also the sustenance of hundreds of small communities and I want you to know that we are not going to back down on softwood. We are going to make sure that we get the best possible deal for BC workers and we are going to make sure that the Americans and our other partners around the world know that after softwood, when the next dispute comes, we are not going to back down on that either. We are going to fight for what BC needs and we aren't going to wave the white flag and surrender for a deal that isn't going to work for BC workers.

And in the meantime we are going to keep doing business, for example, announcing today \$27m to support an iconic species that is under threat, that is our caribou populations. \$27m for an enhanced caribou recovery program. That is going to enhance habitat protection, it is going to grow our ability to do research and monitoring, it is going to support a maternal project it is going to help us control predator management - all of those things are going to support not just our hunting and guiding industries which very much depend on making sure that our habitat and eco systems are imbalance, not just our environment which all of us want to protect for our children and their children but also all of the industries that operate out there and need certainty of the land base.

Second, we are partnering with the federal government to create a new wood innovation research lab at UNBC. Now you know they are already doing incredible work out at UNBC creating structures with wood that cut energy consumption by up to 90%, they are thinking about the future, they are helping us to find ways to persuade the world to use wood to fight climate change and we are going to support the vision of Dan Weeks, with the support of the federal government and the support of the city of Prince George, to make sure that we are able to grow innovation when it comes to building wood structures and innovating with wood which we believe will help us create thousands more jobs for BC workers in BC.

And another industry that had a big year but not its biggest year ever, its biggest year is yet to come, but with the work beginning and the first final investment decision on the very first LNG - Woodfibre - we are going to see the creation of hundreds of jobs, \$1.6b private sector investment and that is just the beginning. Pacific

Northwest LNG, as it moves forward, means an investment of \$36b from the private sector, almost 5,000 jobs and again as that project moves forward we get closer to a future that really will change the economics, not just for BC but for the whole country as we position ourselves to become the world's second largest supplier of LNG anywhere on the globe.

And just you wait, because up in the Montney they say that we have what will perhaps become the biggest play in Western Canada for oil. Oil that BC will be able to begin building pipelines for and exporting all around the world - another tremendous opportunity that we are beginning to think about with the industry so that we can create more jobs for British Columbians. And then of course, mining and the work that miners do all across the province, because mining again is vital for small communities. So many of our communities across the province were founded on mines in the first place and we have had probably the worst commodities market, certainly in my lifetime, some would say in history, although my son would say my lifetime has been the entire history. We are still continuing to grow the mining industry. Brucejack, Red Chris - up and running creating hundreds of jobs for British Columbians, Silver Tip, Blackwater growing and just about to get started. Mines are still opening in our province in this terrible commodities market and I like to think that much of that is due to the very hard work that we have seen from Bill Bennett who has been just an absolute champion for mining over the years.

Before we get to questions, I just want to finish with this which is just kind of where I started, the resource industry needs champions in this world and all those folks who think that we can just have a huge technology industry without the metallurgical coal that is required to build an

iPad or they think that we can have all the tech jobs that we need and we won't need people to still dig up the copper to build the broadband Internet are diluting themselves. Our economy works in tandem. Rural communities and urban communities need each other and with Donna Barnett as our Minister for Rural Development along with Shirley Bond and Steve Thomson our minister for Forestry, John Rustad our minister for First Nations reconciliation we have a team that is determined to make sure that we close that gap between urban and rural communities because BC needs both working together.

So last let me say this, this is a world full of uncertainty - that is no secret to any of you in this world, and it is becoming increasingly unpredictable I would argue and I think in a time of unpredictability and a time of uncertainty what BC is really going to need are leaders who are going to fight for you. With leaders who are going to be clear about what we stand for. Leaders who are unashamed of the values that we hold true. That don't feel any reticence about saying what we believe and doing what we believe. British Columbians always have a right to know where their leaders stand and means being clear, consistent and principled and so I want to ask all of the members of our team who are here to stand up for a second, all of the members of our team who are elected already, all of the ones who are nominated, I think Ellis Ross is here from Kitimat, the father of LNG in BC. All of our cabinet members, caucus members and candidates because I want you to look at them and I want you to know that every single one of them is a fighter. Every single one of them in their hearts believes in what you do, every single one of them wants to make sure that we stand up for workers by standing up for workers' jobs. Stand up for communities by making

sure that you have business and income and wealth being created in your communities so that you can thrive. Every one of them is going to fight for your future and fight for your children's future to make sure that BC doesn't just stay number one today but we continue to be the leader in Canada in creating jobs because every single one of these men and women today.

Every one of these people has your interest, your future at heart. Every one of them believes in the resource industries and BC needs a fighter now more than ever, every single one of these men and women is a fighter because they believe in you.

Thank you.