

HIGHLIGHTS 1972 BUDGET SPEECH

The Honourable W. A. C. Bennett, Premier and Minister of Finance of the Province of British Columbia, presented the twentieth budget of his administration on Friday, February 4, 1972, covering the fiscal year April 1, 1972, to March 31, 1973.

He forecast record expenditures of \$1,451,963,421, representing a yearly increase of \$151,270,821. The expenditures, which include all capital expenditures, are completely balanced from estimated revenues of \$1,453,436,000. Mr. Bennett commented that the British Columbia Government had innovated a completely new form of financial services for people by way of perpetual and special funds, and he proposed adding \$90,000,000 to these funds. He also proposed purchasing \$25,000,000 in Pacific Great Eastern Railway Company shares. Thus, he pointed out, the Provincial Government intends to inject \$266,300,000 additional funds into the British Columbia economy this next fiscal year, primarily to increase employment.

Mr. Bennett said job-creating projects must receive top priority along with policies that will increase our economic base.

Highlights of the 1972 budget are:

1. A record annual expenditure of \$1,451,963,421—\$151,270,821 more than the previous fiscal year—completely balanced from current revenues. Mr. Bennett pointed out that, as a result of long-term planning of the Provincial Government to create additional employment at this particular time, \$115,000,000 more would be spent from accumulated surplus funds.

2. No increase in tax rates for taxpayers.

3. Total health services expenditure of \$388,813,000 will be \$48,788,000 more than in fiscal year 1971/72. In 1960, \$72,291,000 only was required.

4. Total education expenditure of \$448,671,000 represents a one-year increase of \$44,711,000. In 1960, \$67,128,000 only was required.

5. \$5,000,000 to be added to the perpetual British Columbia Centennial Cultural Fund and the name changed to "British Columbia Cultural Fund."

6. \$5,000,000 to be added to the perpetual Physical Fitness and Amateur Sports Fund.

7. \$10,000,000 to be added to the Accelerated Parks Development Fund to continue this important make-work and create-jobs programme.

8. \$10,000,000 to be put into a new Accelerated Reforestation Fund as an additional make-work and create-jobs programme.

9. \$25,000,000 to be put into a new Green Belt Protection Fund to preserve green belt areas throughout the Province.

10. \$10,000,000 to be put into a new Power Line Beautification Fund to encourage the placing of power-lines underground in municipal areas.

11. A new Provincial rapid transit subsidization programme introduced to assist municipalities in alleviating traffic and parking congestion and reducing air pollution.

12. \$25,000,000 to be added to the Provincial Home-acquisition Fund.

13. Annual home-owner grant raised from maximum \$170 in 1971 to \$185 in 1972. An additional maximum \$50 home-owner grant provided for home-owners aged 65 and over for a maximum grant of \$235. Provincial home-owner grants will now total \$80,670,000 annually to offset local school and general property taxes.

14. \$6,500,000 more provided for municipal *per capita* grants next fiscal year.

15. \$16,000,000 more grants to local school districts — total will now be \$188,000,000 next fiscal year.

16. \$15,500,000 more grants to universities and colleges—total will now be \$129,500,000 next fiscal year.

17. \$231,868,000 provided for British Columbia Hospital Insurance—\$25,138,000 more than the current fiscal year. In 1960, \$48,799,000 only was required.

18. \$85,000,000 provided for fourth full year of operation of Medical Services Plan as cost paid by Government—\$32,401,000 more than was spent in the first full year of operation.

19. \$7,500,000 provided for Civil Service salary adjustments.