



2010 Legislative Session: 2nd Session, 39th Parliament

Government Announcements and News

- *BC eliminates PST* – The winding down and elimination of the seven percent provincial sales tax was put into motion with Bill 9, the Consumption Tax Rebate and Transition Act. It also provides for the elimination of the 8 percent provincial hotel room tax, but continues the two per cent additional hotel room tax levied on behalf of local governments, regional districts and destination marketing organizations to raise revenue for local tourism marketing. Passage of Bill 9 will ensure that British Columbians are not subject to these taxes as the HST takes effect on July 1, 2010. [Read more](#)
- *Province reaches agreement with BCGEU* – The provincial government and the BC Government and Service Employees' Union, representing 27,000 public service employees, have reached a tentative agreement on a new contract. As part of its public sector bargaining mandate, the BC government is aiming to settle contracts with a two-year term, no net increases in total compensation costs and compensation trade-offs (savings found through changes in collective agreements may be used to fund compensation increase). Now, 50 per cent of public sector employees are now covered by negotiated agreements that would have expired in 2010. [Read more](#)
- *Forest Act introduced* – Amendments to the Forests and Range Statutes Act will encourage utilization of low-grade timber and wood waste for bioenergy purposes. Previously only timber could be scaled, but under the changes, bioenergy products such as wood chips also can be scaled by either volume or weight. The amendment also allows for scaling to take place at harvesting or production sites in addition to scaling stations. [Read more](#)

Question Period Topics

- Minimum wage
- Olympic events attendance by Small Business Minister
- Removal of sales tax exemption for energy-efficient appliances
- Application of harmonized sales tax to green products
- Impact of HST on families, sports organizations and social services sector
- BC Hydro rates and ferry fares
- Foreign workers at Esquimalt Dock

Legislative Debate – the Minimum Wage

Thursday, April 1

Raj Chouhan, MLA, Burnaby-Edmonds: Yesterday Ontario boosted its minimum wage to \$10.25 an hour. Today minimum-wage workers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Northwest Territories and the Yukon are also getting a raise. But here in B.C. our lowest-paid workers haven't had a raise in almost a decade and are the worst paid in Canada. My question is to the Minister of Labour. Why is he refusing to give B.C.'s lowest-paid workers a raise?

Hon. Murray Coell, Minister of Labour: The member may know that between December 2001 and today, 391,000 jobs have been created in the province of British Columbia. The average wage in British Columbia is \$22.60 an hour, the third largest in Canada. There are 325,000 low-income earners in British Columbia who've paid no tax since 2001 in British Columbia. People earning less than \$20,000 a year in British Columbia pay no medical services premiums. Our job as government is to make sure that people are employed in British Columbia, and we're doing that.

R. Chouhan: This is such a ridiculous statement that was made. Even Pinocchio wouldn't make a statement like that. B.C. has the highest level of child poverty in the country. Most of the children live in households where at least one of their parents works full-time. It's a shameful reflection on the B.C. Liberals, but there is one thing the minister could do. He can increase the minimum wage now. Will the minister do the right thing and increase the minimum wage today and follow the lead of Ontario and other provinces?

Hon. M. Coell: In the 1990s the only people who were in business was U-Haul, taking our young people to Alberta for jobs. Mr. Speaker, 390,000 jobs have been created in this province in the last eight years. We've done that through reducing taxes — all the taxes that the NDP refused to support and voted against.

Status of Bills

BILLS INTRODUCED (first reading)

Government Bills

- [Bill 7 - Forests and Range Statutes Amendment Act, 2010](#)
- [Bill 9 - Consumption Tax Rebate and Transition Act](#)
- [Bill 8 - Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Statutes Amendment Act, 2010](#)

BILLS DEBATED (second reading)

Government Bills

- [Bill 8 - Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Statutes Amendment Act, 2010](#)

BILLS PASSED (third reading)

Government Bills

- [Bill 6 – Finance Statutes Amendment Act](#)

Reports

- *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the 39th Provincial General Election and Referendum on Electoral Reform, May 12, 2009*