

BC BUSINESS SUMMIT A SUCCESS

November 8th and 9th saw the gathering of approximately 1000 business leaders from all areas of BC, to discuss what could be done to improve the current state of the provincial economy.

The Summit kicked off with a strong statement by Jim Pattison who set the tone by expressing the need for a competitive tax system, a reduction of the red tape that is strangling business within the Province, and a new co-operative approach between Labour and Management. Pattison called for the elimination of the Corporate Capital Tax and the sales tax on equipment and machinery. He recommended the modification of labour legislation, the need for flexibility and co-operation with the Labour environment, in order that investment can be encouraged successfully. Pattison also advocated the need for future vision and a "Big Bang" approach, stressing that baby steps would not be acceptable.

Throughout the two days delegates heard from all sectors of the business community. However, despite the diversity of the speakers, the message was notably similar: Reduce personal income tax, make the tax system competitive, reduce the regulatory burden, encourage investment, stop the "brain-drain" to other provinces and states, develop a strategic financial plan for the province to enable it to compete with other jurisdictions, particularly Alberta and the Northwestern U.S.A.

the Construction and Real Estate Industries. Mr. Horace Harrison (retired) formally of Jardine Insurance, chaired the presentation which included speeches from Mr. Jon Markoulis of Concord Pacific Group Inc, discussing Residential Development and Construction, Mr. John McLernon of Colliers, Macaulay, Nicolls Group, discussing Commercial Development, Mr. Mark Betteridge of Mark Betteridge & Associates, discussing High Tech Construction, and Mr. Al Webster of Stuart Olson Constructors, discussing ICI Construction. The message was consistent with the other sectors -- reduce taxes, reduce regulation, encourage investment, and encourage training.

One of the highlights of the first day of the Summit was a rousing speech by former New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna, who responded eloquently to the issues, drawing on his experience in New Brunswick

While the first day of the Summit focused primarily on what the problems are for the various sectors, the second day provided a series of workshops, in which recommendations and possible solutions were discussed by the delegates. The day began with case studies from Alberta, Oregon and Massachusetts, all regions where economic renewal has taken place fairly recently. From there delegates chose from the following list of workshops:

- Education, Training and Human Resources

- Economic Development in the Lower Mainland
- Toward a Competitive Tax System
- Land Use Issues
- Infrastructure Challenges
- Labour and Employment Policy
- Regional Economic Development
- Attracting Investment to B.C.
- Streamlining Regulation and Cutting Red Tape
- Export Strategies

A great deal of information was presented and discussed at these workshops, the result of which will be consolidated by the B.C. Summit Organizers into a final paper and distributed to the various participants.

The Summit closed with a final review of the two days, and an address by Jeff Mooney, CEO of A&W Food Services of Canada, Inc., who stressed a number of recommendations for the Province:

- Create the Most Competitive Tax System
- Create the Most Competitive Regulatory Regime
- Establish competitive employment and labour laws to foster economic growth
- Increase Access to Crown land and resources for the resource and tourism sectors
- Develop a Highly Skilled and Productive Workforce
- Balance the Provincial Budget and pay down Debt.

Over the next few weeks, Summit organizers will be preparing their summary of the information and

recommendations resulting from the event. BCCA will obtain a copy of this report, and endeavor to keep members informed. Information may also be obtained from the BC Business Summit website: <http://www.bcbusiness-summit.com>

HOMEOWNER PROTECTION OFFICE RELEASES DRAFT PAPER ON LICENSING

On November 9, 1998, the Homeowner Protection Office issued a discussion paper on the Proposed Implementation of Residential Builder licensing and Warranty Provisions pursuant to the new *Homeowner Protection Act*. As this is only an initial proposal, and still open to alteration, we would strongly recommend that members acquaint themselves with the contents of this proposal and provide opinions to their regional association, or to us at BCCA.

The discussion paper can be found on the internet at:

<http://www.hpo.bc.ca>, or copies of the paper can be obtained at the Homeowner Protection Office (604) 646-7055 or toll-free 1-800-407-7757.



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