

April 17th TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2011

Throne speech a waddling waste

LAME-DUCK LEGISLATURE: Taxpayers on the hook for insanely meaningless session

Take one lame-duck premier, one lame-duck opposition leader and one extremely lame, lame-duck legislative session, and what do you get?

A waddling waste of time, that's what. Not to mention one quacking huge bill for B.C. taxpayers.

With the governing Liberals in the final throes of a leadership contest to replace outgoing Gordon Campbell, this week's four-day legislative session is the biggest joke since the fondly remembered Kitties4Christy website.

Take Monday's throne speech. Please.

At a modest 13 pages, it was not only the shortest "throne drone" in memory, it was also the most irrelevant. Packed with meaningless piffle about the Olympics and little else, I don't think a thoroughly bored Lt.-Gov.

Steven Point could have breathed life into the occasion if he'd been carried into the legislative chamber in a giant egg à la Lady Gaga.

Actually, maybe he should have changed his name to Steven Pointless for the day, because that's what his speech was. (Though cut him some slack: He didn't write it. He just had to read it. And stay awake.)

Global TV reporter Keith Baldrey summed up the frustration for all involved when he sent this out on his Twitter feed: "The throne speech is so utterly and completely lacking



Michael Smyth
IN THE HOUSE

in news, I gave my embargoed copy back to the gov't." (Bravo, Keith, your best work in years.)

Today's "status quo" budget is also expected to set a new record for unimportance and unnew-worthiness, especially since Finance Minister Colin Hansen has already revealed the deficit will be smaller, which will probably be the biggest news in the filing.

Why is the government wandering aimlessly in the void like this? It's because Campbell's resignation announcement created a temporary power vacuum, and the government has been sucked into legislative limbo during the resulting leadership race.

"Absolutely nothing is happening internally," an insider told me. "Nobody has any real mandate to do anything, so nothing is getting done."

But while all that was not happening, there was the little matter of Campbell's fixed legislative calendar, which legally compels the government to bring in a budget this week, never mind that Campbell's successor will immediately bring in a new one to replace it.



Lucky Lt.-Gov. Steven Point had the 15-gun Vice Regal Salute to keep him awake. — POSTMEDIA NEWS

All of which means this week's legislative session is a waste of time, a waste of legislative resources and (of course) a waste of your money.

How much of your money? It's impossible to get an accurate number, but consider that you have 85 MLAs winging their way to

Victoria from every corner of the province, all of them with expense accounts.

Then you have the Hansard staff, security staff, the additional staff on duty in the taxpayer-subsidized dining room and who knows how many local cops on overtime patrolling the

grounds. (There was quite a heavy presence on Monday.)

Add it all up and you're talking hundreds of thousands of dollars for what's surely the most meaningless session of parliament in B.C. history.

msmyth@theprovince.com
www.twitter.com/MikeSmythNews

Apology From Philip Owen To Dr. Kim Rossmo

On August 6, 2010, I made statements on morning talk shows on both CBC Radio One and CKNW News Talk 980 relating to the Vancouver Police Department's Missing Women Investigation that culminated in the conviction of Willy Pickton for numerous murders. In some of those statements, I was critical of former Detective Inspector Kim Rossmo's involvement in that investigation. Those statements were completely unfounded, inaccurate and misleading.

I apologize to Dr. Rossmo for having made those statements and I fully retract them. I acknowledge that Dr. Rossmo was one of the first people to identify that a serial killer was likely involved in the disappearance of women from the downtown Eastside. I further acknowledge that in August, 2010, Deputy Chief Constable Doug LePard released the Vancouver Police Department's Missing Women Investigation Review in which he noted several times Dr. Rossmo's unique skills and contributions to that investigation.

Owen apologizes to former officer

PICKTON MURDERS: Former mayor says statements unfounded

BY KEITH FRASER
STAFF REPORTER

Former Vancouver mayor Philip Owen has placed newspaper ads apologizing to an ex-police officer involved in the Missing Women Investigation that led to the serial-murder conviction of Robert Pickton.

An ad to run in today's *Province* says that on Aug. 6, 2010, Owen made statements on CBC Radio One and CKNW morning talk shows that were critical of former detective inspector Kim Rossmo, a geographic profiler.

"Those statements were completely unfounded, inaccurate and misleading," says the ad. "I apologize to Dr. Rossmo for having made those statements and I fully retract them."



"I'm pleased that we were able to resolve this."
— Kim Rossmo, the geographic profiler who was one of the first people to identify that a serial killer was working in the Downtown Eastside

Owen acknowledged that Rossmo was one of the first people to identify that a serial killer was likely involved in the disappearance of women from the Downtown Eastside. He also acknowledged that in August Deputy Chief Const. Doug LePard released a review of the Pickton investigation noting Rossmo's skills and contributions to the investigation.

The ad also will be published in the

Vancouver Sun, *Calgary Herald* and *Ottawa Citizen*.

"I'm pleased that he's made the apology and corrected the inaccuracies that he had stated both on CKNW and CBC and, unfortunately, were picked up by Michael Smyth's column in your newspaper," said Rossmo on Monday.

"I'm pleased that we were able to resolve this."

Rossmo said the issue had been resolved "quite quickly" and had not reached a stage where legal action had been decided upon.


"I had asked for the apology, and they agreed to publish the apology."

After Rossmo's contract with the Vancouver police was not renewed, he filed a wrongful dismissal suit, which was eventually decided in favour of the Vancouver Police Board.

He is currently a professor in the criminal justice department of Texas State University.

kfraser@theprovince.com
twitter.com/keithfraser

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Missing Women Commission of Inquiry	
EXHIBIT No: 196	
Date:	May 16, 2012
	Registrar