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Letnick delivers heartfelt message

Rookie MLA asked to 2nd throne speech for B.C. Liberals

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Kelowna-Lake Country Liberal MLA Norm Letnick was front and centre following the throne speech on Tuesday.

His first speech in the Legislature on Wednesday afternoon was meant to second a motion to accept the throne speech.



Letnick

But it was also an opportunity to honour the late Brian Given, to thank those who supported his first bid for provincial office, to praise Premier Gordon Campbell and his plans, to thank the B.C. Liberal government for a \$1-billion investment in the Central Okanagan and to speak at length about the region's potential.

"I wish to dedicate this speech — my first in this chamber and, clearly, amongst friends — to the memory of my good friend, Kelowna city councillor Brian Given, who passed away last week at the age of 57," said Letnick.

On the throne speech: "I believe without any reservation that the progressive, politically courageous, fiscally prudent and environmentally astute free-enterprise measures outlined by this government are not only in the best interests of every member on both sides of this House, not only in the best interest of British Columbians today, but, more especially, also in the interest of our children."

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"It's a time for sound planning, and the message delivered yesterday constitutes a responsible, reasoned approach to helping British Columbians in every corner of this province find their way out of this quagmire," Letnick said.

On Campbell: "I have personally been inspired by the unwavering leadership of our premier and his commitment to build a better province for all by bringing forward legislation that addresses the injustices and inequalities which have plagued First Nations people, that seeks to reverse the damage to air and water quality caused by unchecked expansion, and that creates greater efficiencies in how taxes that we pay are collected and remitted."

On Liberal investment in the Valley: "Kelowna and the surrounding area has benefited enormously from significant improvements to infrastructure and services with the addition of a brand new bridge, the W.R. Bennett Bridge."

On one of his key priorities: "The orchards, vineyards and golf courses which populate the Okanagan have come to grips with the troubling reality outlined recently by Statistics Canada. The Okanagan Valley is the driest watershed in Canada, with the fastest-growing population. Therefore, the drought-proofing of the Okanagan has to be an important priority for elected leaders at every level."