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NEW PATHWAYS TO GOLD SOCIETY

Statement by:

The Honourable Vivienne Poy

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

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Hon. Vivienne Poy: Honourable senators, on April 18, Senator Lillian Dyck and I were invited by the New Pathways to Gold Society to visit the historic Fraser Canyon, as mentioned in Senator Dyck's statement three weeks ago.

The board of the society consists of British Columbians who work towards reviving the historic sites and promoting heritage tourism in order to bring prosperity back to the region. Visitors can experience the 10,000 year-old history of the First Nations peoples, appreciate the tenacity of the European explorers and the trials and errors of the Hudson's Bay Company.

During the gold rush era, the canyon was flooded with American gold miners, and it also marked the beginning of Chinese settlement in the colony of British Columbia.

We toured historic Yale, where the history of the early gold mining days came to life — in the museum, the church, the graveyard, and among the ruins. The church kept a great record of the life of the town, which boasted a population of tens of thousands in its heyday, and had the best school for girls in the vicinity.

Having the opportunity to visit Tuckkwiowhum Heritage Interpretive Village, crossing the Fraser River in Hell's Gate Airtram, walking through Alexandra Bridge Provincial Park, meeting Chief Jim Hobart, and speaking to a number of the First Nations people from Spuzzum during lunch at their office were all eye-opening experiences for me.

We crossed the Fraser River on a two-car ferry attached by cables in Lytton, guided by a descendant of early settlers who showed us the area where the Chinese worked in the orchards, the farms and the gold tailings. There were Chinese characters, dating back more than a century, written on the rocks on the edge of the river.

The highlight of our heritage tour took place on April 20 when Senator Dyck and I had the honour of taking part in the cedar rope-cutting ceremony at the opening of the Tikwalus Trail.

The New Pathways to Gold Society was very fortunate that a satellite television company agreed to send a crew to film the visit. The program was aired for the first time two weeks ago.

I wish the society great success in bringing prosperity back to the people of the Fraser Canyon.
