

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

February 8, 2007

The Editor  
The Vancouver Sun

Delta-East Richmond MP John Cummins' analysis of the Final Agreement with the Tsawwassen First Nation fails to recognize the real value of a final treaty. Anyone can play with numbers but the facts are the treaty will bring certainty over the land base, new investment, and economic development to the region.

In 2006, British Columbia's unemployment rate was 4.8 per cent, the lowest it has been in more than 30 years. Considering this success, it's unacceptable that unemployment on the Tsawwassen reserve is close to 40 per cent. The long term benefits and opportunities that the treaty will help create, and that Mr. Cummins seems reluctant to acknowledge, overwhelmingly outweigh the short-term headlines that incorrectly characterize and misinform your readers.

With a treaty, the Tsawwassen First Nation has an opportunity to build a self-reliant community, provide a future of hope and prosperity for their youth and get out from under the confines and limitations of the outdated Indian Act.

British Columbia is building a New Relationship with First Nations founded on the principles of mutual respect, recognition and reconciliation of Aboriginal rights and title. We're committed to closing the social and economic gaps that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians over the next decade.

The status quo is far more expensive to British Columbians than the treaties themselves. It is for this reason that the Government of British Columbia and the Federal Government, of which Mr. Cummins is a member, are supportive of this Final Agreement.

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Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation