



We remember



January 7th

1981

2005

B.C. is about to enter another record-breaking year for construction. Over the next decade, we can expect to see a \$16 billion boom in the construction industry. However, in the rush to meet completion dates and budget projections, we must never forget about the safety of the workers.

A tragic accident occurred on January 7, 1981. On that day in January, 24 years ago, four carpenters plunged thirty-six floors to their deaths when a fly form used for pouring concrete broke away from the top of Bentall Centre's Tower IV. Gunther Couvreur, 49; Brian Stevenson, 21; Donald W. Davis, 34; and Yrjo Mitrunen, 46; lost their lives in that tragedy.

Representatives from the business community, provincial and civic governments and labour are here today to remember that event and express our ongoing commitment to improving safety on construction work sites.

The inquest jury made 12 recommendations to reduce the likelihood of a similar flyform accident from ever happening again. One of the recommendations called on the Ministry of Labour to hold an inquiry to investigate safety practices in the B.C. construction industry. A new Construction Industry Advisory Council was formed. It recommended that 35% of WCB inspectors have a background in the construction industry. It also recommended that inspectors make

visits to all construction sites at least once a month, that inspections be carried out during all shifts that workers were on a site (afternoon, graveyard and weekend shifts) and that inspectors visit rural and outlying construction sites.

Nonetheless, the construction industry continues to see an average of 29 deaths a year since the Bentall Centre accident. Last year, 44 workers in the construction industry died.

The Workers' Compensation Board has undergone restructuring in the past four years. There are fewer WCB inspectors to conduct field inspections. Occupational health and safety regulations have been cut. Performance based regulations (inspecting employers based on their track record) have replaced specific prescriptive regulations.

We are facing a massive increase in construction activity in the next five years. Now more than ever the responsibility for workers' safety rests with WCB inspectors, employers and the employees themselves.

To honour those men who died on this day 24 years ago and the families who struggle to live with only their memory, we, in labour, industry and government, hereby reconfirm our commitment to reducing injuries and eliminating deaths in the construction industry.

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