



Third Session, 38th Parliament

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
**FINANCE AND
GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Victoria

Friday, December 14, 2007

Issue No. 68

BILL BENNETT, MLA, CHAIR

ISSN 1499-416X

**SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Victoria
Friday, December 14, 2007

- Chair:* * Bill Bennett (East Kootenay L)
- Deputy Chair:* * Bruce Ralston (Surrey-Whalley NDP)
- Members:*
- * Iain Black (Port Moody-Westwood L)
 - * Harry Bloy (Burquitlam L)
 - * Randy Hawes (Maple Ridge-Mission L)
 - * Dave S. Hayer (Surrey-Tynehead L)
 - * Richard T. Lee (Burnaby North L)
 - * John Horgan (Malahat-Juan de Fuca NDP)
 - * Jenny Wai Ching Kwan (Vancouver-Mount Pleasant NDP)
 - * Bob Simpson (Cariboo North NDP)

**denotes member present*

- Clerk:* Craig James
- Committee Staff:* Josie Schofield (Committee Research Analyst)
Jeremy Wood (Committee Researcher)

-
- Witnesses:*
- Cory Heavener (Office of the Representative for Children and Youth)
 - Tanis McNally-Dawes (Office of the Representative for Children and Youth)
 - Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (Representative for Children and Youth)
 - Martin Wright (Office of the Representative for Children and Youth)

CONTENTS

Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services

Friday, December 14, 2007

	Page
Office of the Representative for Children and Youth..... M. Turpel-Lafond	1694
Statutory Officers Budget Submissions.....	1703

MINUTES

SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES



Friday, December 14, 2007
10 a.m.
Douglas Fir Committee Room
Parliament Buildings, Victoria

Present: Bill Bennett, MLA (Chair); Bruce Ralston, MLA (Deputy Chair); Iain Black, MLA; Harry Bloy, MLA; Randy Hawes, MLA; Dave S. Hayer, MLA; John Horgan, MLA; Jenny Wai Ching Kwan, MLA; Richard T. Lee, MLA; Bob Simpson, MLA

1. The Chair called the Committee to order at 10:05 a.m.
2. Pursuant to its terms of reference, the Committee continued its review of the three-year rolling service plans, annual reports and budget estimates of the Representative for Children and Youth.

Witnesses:

- Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, Representative for Children and Youth
- Martin Wright, Deputy Representative, Monitoring
- Cory Heavener, Director, Child Welfare Learning Exchange
- Tanis McNally-Dawes, A/Manager, Corporate Services

3. The Committee deliberated *in-camera*.
4. The Committee deliberated in public session.
5. **Resolved**, that the Committee adopt its Second Report to the House as amended on the matter of the budgets of the independent officers of the Legislative Assembly.
6. **Resolved**, that the Chair deposit a copy of the amended Second Report with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly pursuant to the Committee's terms of reference and present the Report to the House when it next sits.
7. The Committee adjourned at 11:50 a.m. to the call of the Chair.

Bill Bennett, MLA
Chair

Craig James
Clerk Assistant and
Clerk of Committees

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2007

The committee met at 10:05 a.m.

[B. Bennett in the chair.]

B. Bennett (Chair): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Committee members and Mary Ellen, good morning. This is the meeting of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services. We are convened today to review the budget of the Representative for Children and Youth.

I would like the members of the committee to introduce themselves, starting with two of our members who are on the phone — starting with the member who's furthest away, Richard Lee, who is in China.

R. Lee: Hi, everybody. Richard Lee, MLA for Burnaby North.

R. Hawes: Good morning. I'm sorry I can't be there, but I have other events that precluded me from being in Victoria today.

D. Hayer: Good morning. Dave Hayer, MLA for Surrey-Tynehead.

H. Bloy: Harry Bloy, MLA, Burquitlam.

I. Black: Good morning. My name is Iain Black. I'm the MLA for Port Moody-Westwood.

B. Simpson: Bob Simpson, MLA for Cariboo North.

J. Kwan: Jenny Kwan, MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant.

J. Horgan: John Horgan, Malahat-Juan de Fuca.

B. Ralston (Deputy Chair): Bruce Ralston, Surrey-Whalley, and Deputy Chair of the committee.

B. Bennett (Chair): Thank you very much. Good morning.

Mary Ellen, if I could get you to introduce your folks, please.

M. Turpel-Lafond: Good morning. I have with me today Cory Heavener and Tanis McNally-Dawes, who were with me last day. I also have with me Martin Wright, who is my deputy representative for monitoring. John Greschner, who was with me the last day, has had to take my place at a meeting in Vancouver, a meeting of a multidisciplinary team into child deaths. He can't be with us today, so Martin has stepped in, in his absence.

B. Bennett (Chair): Again, thanks to everyone for coming. I know it's December 14, and most people are normally winding down at this time of the year and thinking about family and Christmas.

J. Horgan: Point of order, Chair. We did deal with this issue, and I was wondering if you could perhaps clarify — for at least this side of the House, at any rate — what brought us to this return visit and why we're hearing from the representative again.

B. Bennett (Chair): You're being impatient, John. If you had waited for just a second, I would have done that for you, but I'll do it now. I wanted to finish up my greeting.

Again, I appreciate the fact that people have travelled to Victoria from, in some cases, a long ways away. It is a time of the year when elected people, at least, start to relax a bit.

The reason that we're here, committee members, I think we all know, is that we want to give the representative an opportunity to provide more detail on her budget submission and that we want to give committee members another opportunity to ask questions and to address the very legitimate public interest in terms of this being public money. That's why we're here.

I did have a conversation with Mary Ellen back on Monday night — it seems like longer ago than that — and we discussed whether it would be worthwhile for her to come and address this committee again and perhaps bring more detail on the budget submission than the first time around.

I won't put words into Mary Ellen's mouth, but I think we agree that she said that it would be something she would like to do. From that, I reconvened the committee, and that's why we're here today.

J. Horgan: I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I did read in the public press that you met with the Premier recently. We on this side of the House weren't advised that there was anything untoward at the last meeting of this committee, when we heard from the representative.

There was a public discussion. We went in camera. There was a decision to come back later in the day. There was ample opportunity to review the material, which was to the standard of other material — certainly from this perspective, a very capable job done by the representative and her staff.

Again, I think the public is probably looking for a better explanation than that you thought it might be a good idea to come back to her. Reading in the public press that there was a visit with the Premier, I'm wondering if you could clarify what role that had in our returning today.

B. Bennett (Chair): John, what I would say to you is that I'm going to follow the direction of Justice Hughes and follow the direction of the representative, both of whom have said that we would be far better off in this province in terms of how we deal with children and youth if we took the politics out of the whole file. I'd really like to do that.

Opposition members can laugh if they wish, but I think it's important that we get down to business, that we assess this budget once and for all, make the final

decision and get on with it. I think that's what we're going to do.

[1010]

Mary Ellen, I would invite you to make any introductory comments that you'd like to make, and then we'll go around and see what questions there are.

**Office of the Representative
for Children and Youth**

M. Turpel-Lafond: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the committee for reconvening. I am pleased to address once again the budget for my office for the fiscal years 2008-2009 to 2010-2011.

From my discussions with the Chairman of this committee and my review of the *Hansard* of the proceedings of this committee, including the *Hansard* of the proceedings with all the independent officers of the Legislature, I certainly recognize that a sizeable piece of the work that the committee faces, and your challenge to deal with it under fairly tight timelines and with imperfect information, may pose difficulties from time to time.

I am certainly resolved in terms of my appearance today and in future years to do what I can do by producing budget submissions that may address your concerns and perhaps be more in keeping with expectations and provide some of the detail that you've requested. I certainly do note, by way of introduction, that the information filed in support of the budget submission of my office was as fulsome as that of the other officers of the Legislature and that I submitted projected expenditures for 2007-2008 following our formal session in response to some of the questions.

I wanted to reiterate that the budget I was given last year was not one that I prepared, nor was it contemplated to be one that would address the full scope of the work before me in my three main lines of activity or business: first, advocacy for children and youth; second, the monitoring of government programs and services for children and youth; and third, the review of critical injuries and deaths of children and youth.

I know you appreciate my situation as a new independent officer working with a budget prepared by government based on a former office that was not independent. As well, with the ten months of operational experience and three-year service plan as I presented to you on last day, we have a much better understanding of what is required to meet the mandate set out in the Representative for Children and Youth Act.

In my presentation — my brief opening remarks, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee — I want to return a bit to the subject of our previous discussion, but I do not want to repeat what is already on the record. As you can perhaps imagine, this first budget exercise was a bit of a challenge for us; however, it was one that we took with great vigour and rigour. We have been very busy in our first year, and our mandate is still evolving.

In particular, I can now confirm that the necessary enactments have been made to allow me to oversee the

operation of the Child in the Home of a Relative program of the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance. This represents a significant, volume-driven increase in workload and figures prominently in the budget submission I made to you, although I had only anticipated that change. Now I can say that that regulation has been deposited.

Also, earlier this week — the Chairman will know, because he is a hard-working member of this committee as well as the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth — that other committee met in camera and carefully reviewed eight deaths of children and referred them to me for further investigation. Hence, my workload has been increased in the past week, but for good reason.

I note for that committee that ministry case reviews and reports have been unevenly produced across various program areas in recent years and that cases arising from the work of contracted service providers are still not routinely brought forward. These factors suggest that our internal estimates of the total workload in this area may understate the requirement.

Further, the interest in an uptake for the services of my office has been well beyond my own expectations, as I indicated to you on last day. This is particularly true in the advocacy area. The last day I reported that there were 1,000 requests for advocacy. As of yesterday there are 1,325 requests for advocacy. As I stated to you before, it is hard to know on the basis of one year's operations whether we are seeing a steady increase or a statistical spike of some kind.

As time passes, we will develop a surer sense of this. Just now our feeling is that we could be devoting much more of our limited resources to this single area simply to cope with the current demand, yet I do know that there are areas of the province where children and youth are not aware of our office. We need to reach them and support, assist and advocate for them where appropriate. Even where we thought we had a good sense of demand of our volume, we are capable of underestimating what might be actually required.

I would mention the further work required of my office on monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the Hughes review, and in that connection, the need to respond to the widespread interest generated by the joint report that I prepared earlier this year with the provincial health officer, Dr. Kendall, on education outcomes for children in care.

[1015]

This certainly is an area in which, in my first year, we've had to rely on contracted professional services in lieu of actual staff at times to build the momentum required to take a serious look at the issues with respect to the effectiveness and responsiveness of the current programs and services for vulnerable children in British Columbia.

In my review of the transcript of our last day, I could see that there were three questions posed that I think might be more effectively answered when the bells are not ringing and you're not called to votes in the House, and so forth. There are three

areas that were questioned last day that I would like to respond to in advance, with your permission, Mr. Chairman.

B. Bennett (Chair): Proceed.

M. Turpel-Lafond: The first is the issue of building occupancy costs. I'll draw your attention to page 22 of our budget submission, which is the proposed operating budget details, appendix A. There was a question about the building occupancy costs for three locations.

First of all, I would note here again, for members of the committee, that as you well know, STOB 75 moves to STOB 59 in terms of changes that are afoot. The proposed base rent at each of the three locations for our office is as follows: Victoria, annualized at \$160,000; Vancouver at \$179,000....

I would note here, about the Vancouver location, that the former child and youth office had an office in the financial district in Vancouver, which had security and locked doors. It certainly was not my perception that the vulnerable children and youth requiring our service would be inclined to, perhaps, purchase their Louis Vuitton handbag and then come to my office for service through locked doors. Hence, we have moved our service out toward Metrotown and into one of the fastest-growing communities in British Columbia and, ideally, closer to the children and youth who are in need of our services and who have easier access by SkyTrain, etc., to our services.

For the Prince George location the base rent for the budget included in that STOB is \$127,000. The total base rents are \$466,000. Other costs in STOB 59, for the benefit of members of this committee, include the workplace technology fees, Public Service Agency services, corporate accounting services, procurement services and the ARES services. That's the first area of clarification.

The second area of clarification, in terms of questions from the committee members on the last day, pertains to administrative costs. We currently have six administrative support staff in the entire organization: four in Victoria, one in Prince George and one in Vancouver. I am proposing to add two additional administrative support staff: one in Victoria and another in Prince George.

I want to note that there are strict rules around confidentiality of information that govern my operations. Because I have separate offices and separate program areas, there needs to be a wall, in some cases, between these program areas. For example, we may be advocating for a child who has also experienced an injury which I would review and report on. There has to be a neutral review of the injury separate and apart from the advocacy that may be conducted for a child.

As a result, we have two separate record-keeping systems, and we must keep that independent and separate. In fact, we have core policies with respect to the separation of the functions of our office so that we can maintain that type of credibility in our analysis. Some of the administrative costs reflect practices that must demonstrate these separations in practice. Of course, it

goes without saying that we require administrative support in all three locations in which we conduct business.

Finally, the final area is with respect to travel costs. I would like to just clarify for the members of the committee that travel is a significant aspect of our work because the vulnerable children and youth who live in this province are not simply in the three locations....

B. Bennett (Chair): Mary Ellen, if I could get you to stop just for a second. There is noise coming through one of the two of you that are phoning in.

Just hang on for a second. We'll see what we can do here.

Mary Ellen, are you okay to carry on?

[1020]

M. Turpel-Lafond: I'm fine. I have four children, so I'm used to constant distractions. No problem, as long as I don't revert to my normal voice, which is a much louder one. In any event....

With respect to travel costs, the children and youth that need to be served by our office, of course, live all over the province. They do not necessarily come into the three offices, and as a result, we have to travel to meet them.

The estimated line item for STOB 57. I wanted to speak a bit to that one in terms of how we arrive at that estimate because, of course, we have worksheets that detail how we have come to this estimate for our expenses. In particular, the cost of travel in British Columbia — as some members, such as Mr. Simpson, would be well aware....

Just to make the members cognizant of it, the cost of, say, driving from Prince George to Fort St. John is \$700 for a trip. A trip to Bella Bella from Prince George would be \$1,700 per trip. A trip to Cranbrook would be \$1,000. A trip to the Queen Charlottes would be \$1,000. For a trip to Atlin, of course, you have to go via Whitehorse. That would be \$1,200 per trip.

Meeting children and youth in person is important, and we need the advocates, including the advocates I'd like to add, to be able to travel. As well, for the other aspects of our mandate, particularly around the reviews and investigations of critical injuries and deaths, to some extent the work has to happen in the field. Our work recently on the four deaths in the north has required us to travel in the north.

When I look at the workload in that area, it pertains to children who have been injured or have died in all regions of the province. There will be a certain amount of work in the field — and the travel will be required in fulfilment of that.

Having said that — those responses to those areas — I want to reiterate that the budget I submitted to you last day, which I bring forward again, represents the best assessment by myself and my staff of the additional resources I require to satisfy the mandate under which I work.

I would certainly like to conclude my opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, by assuring the members of this

committee that I have personally acquainted myself with the Financial Administration Act, the Financial Information Act, the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act, the Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act and the Public Service Act.

We have a set of core operational policies that I brought today, and should you be interested in that kind of detailed understanding of our operation, I'd be delighted to leave them with you.

I'm sure you can understand that with my professional background, I am very interested in operating by the book, shall we say. I want to ensure that my staff operates in that context and that even though I'm an independent officer of the Legislature, I do follow the core policies of government, including the core policies and procedures manual that provides for policies with respect to items such as procurement.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to make an opening statement. I'm pleased to answer any questions that members of this committee might have today.

B. Bennett (Chair): Thank you, Mary Ellen, for the detail, and you're right. The detail on travel and on administration and office costs, and so forth, was something that members wanted to know about in the last meeting. I would confirm that you brought the level of detail to the first meeting that we had which I think is more or less standard for statutory officers.

However — and this is totally unrelated to your office — I would also say that what I have noticed is that the statutory officers basically bring budget submissions that are individualized to their particular offices. There hasn't been a practice with this committee in the past, apparently, to ask for more standardized budget submissions, which I think would make it easier for the committee to review those submissions. In the future that's something that we're going to work on.

Again, thank you for the information.

I. Black: Thank you for coming back with your team, Representative. Let me also offer thanks for the additional information that you provided at the conclusion of our last meeting to Member Hawes. That has actually gone a long way to addressing a lot of the questions I was left with.

[1025]

I do have a question or two from the new materials that you've presented. One of them has to do with the professional services line item on STOB 60. I noticed that you projected about \$450,000 a year in expenditures on a go-forward basis. You are coming off a year, based on the projections.... I'm taking this from the new materials that were left with us. The projections in that area right now are about \$590,000, so that represents it coming down.

I just wanted to ask: why is that likely to come down, and are you leaving yourself the wiggle room you need?

M. Turpel-Lafond: Would you like me to increase my request here? No.

All humour aside, though, I can say that we allowed professional services because of the recruitment lag — to be able to use professionally contracted services, understanding that there would be some recruitment lag.

Given the fact that we've been able to address some of that recruitment lag, and if the budget as submitted is approved, we would anticipate the new staff being in place on April 1. I don't see that next year, so some of it does come down.

I've also had a better opportunity to cost out what would, for instance, be the cost for independent legal counsel services, for monitoring projects, for advocacy. I now have a much better sense of the costs of a multi-disciplinary team and the expert consultation and advice as well as contracted and professional services around website enhancement, Internet, and so on.

I think it's reasonable to expect that that will come down.

I. Black: You actually touched on the next question I had, which had to do with the staffing. If I heard you correctly, I just want to confirm that you're hoping to have most of the new hires in place by the beginning of.... Did you say March or April?

M. Turpel-Lafond: April 1.

I. Black: April 1. So the staffing numbers here anticipate a full 12 months of employment from the people that you're hoping to hire.

M. Turpel-Lafond: Yes, they do.

I. Black: I notice that on page 5.... There's a phrase here that I didn't understand, and I'm hoping you could explain it for me. On page 5 on the overview you speak about the focus the organization has been on. You've got three bullets there, and the middle one speaks of a critical injury and death review and investigation program. What comprises that? I wasn't familiar with that term.

M. Turpel-Lafond: All right, the critical injury and death review and investigation programs. Do you mean: what is that line of business in our organization? Well, it is essentially that the statutory obligation under the Representative for Children and Youth Act has my role to be to review injuries to children which are serious in nature — meaning having some continuing impact on them, not trivial but serious in nature — for children who are served, in some sense, by the government.

In other words, they may receive a contracted service. It could be a child in mental health service provided by a contracted service provider — so youth mental health, for instance. I may get a reportable of a suicide attempt. I would review that, provided it was within a one-year time frame that they were served at the time of the incident.

Now, of course this depends very much on the extent to which these are reported. As I indicated in my

opening comment, I have a class of reportables now. I reported out from my first quarter that I had 69 injuries reported to my office of children and the cohort that would be covered by my operations. Of that group of 69, approximately 40 will go to further investigation.

With respect to deaths of children who receive services or are in care of the state, their deaths are reported to me, either through the coroner or through a ministry, and those are reviewed. Initially, I would review them.

If there are criminal proceedings underway, the criminal proceedings must go forward, and we must never interfere with that. When the criminal proceedings are completed, if the coroner feels there's no need for an inquest, we then conduct our review.

The purpose of our program, though, is to look at whether the system of supports for children, particularly vulnerable children, might be enhanced in some form to prevent a future occurrence and also to look at how we can learn from these experiences and strengthen those systems of support.

The program, if you like, involves a review. It involves an investigation by trained investigators of specific cases, which may include gathering additional evidence. In some of the deaths that I'm reviewing, there were no criminal charges, and there were no ministerial reviews, so there's quite a bit of collection of information required, including direct interviewing.

At the point that that is completed, on both of these sides we would, as is happening today in Vancouver, unfortunately without me, have a multidisciplinary team — pediatricians, nurses, police and others — come together, review the situation, review the facts and consider what type of recommendations for improvement to the system can be done. So it's based on an expert review.

[1030]

We would come back, and we would prepare a report for the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth. The select standing committee would accept some recommendations, place that before the Legislature, ask us to follow up on those recommendations to see that ministries or others impacted make some of the changes that might be recommended to improve the system, and then report back to them on how that's proceeding.

That program area is quite.... From the point of reportable to the point of recommendation, it requires a variety, or a team, of skilled people, including investigators and external advisers.

I. Black: Okay. Thank you.

You mentioned in your opening remarks here.... You gave us an update on the number of advocacy requests which have been coming into your office, and I notice in the submission, as well, that there's an explanation on the response that you've had, to date, in some of the outreach efforts — at one point mentioning there have been over 500 electronic messages, etc.

Have you had time, or has your team had a chance yet, to analyze the nature of those such that you get a sense of whether that represents pent-up demand

relative to a go-forward trend that you can expand on at the moment? Have you had a chance to review that, and what have you found so far?

M. Turpel-Lafond: We are reviewing that. We do look at what we call systemic areas, so there may be.... For instance, we have had numerous requests for advocacy support with respect to what used to be called the family support program. That was, I think, eliminated in 2001. That was with respect to the family law courts — an advocacy and support program where an advocate would assist families during family breakdown to ensure that the interests of children were considered in that process.

We've had numerous requests for that. That's outside the scope of our mandate. So that would be one that I would take and place, say, before the Attorney General and say: "There is a significant demand for this. Perhaps you should consider reinstating it. We don't do this."

Other areas. We do analyze the trends, and I do have the opportunity to meet with ministers regularly to say: "I see a trend here." A significant trend for us in our first year pertains, of course, to children that are in care, children that have a significant event, such as a move from foster home to foster home, but also children with disabilities or their families that have concerns about the service that they can't obtain.

We do a trend analysis, and if we see a significant trend.... If, say, 200 of these were pertaining to children with disabilities not being served, then I would move over to my deputy, Martin Wright, in monitoring and say: "We need to very carefully evaluate the effectiveness and responsiveness of these services and programs to see why we have 200 children that are not accessing these services."

So they feed into other parts of the mandate.

I. Black: Super. Okay.

J. Kwan: Thank you very much, Ms. Turpel-Lafond, to you and your staff team for coming back to the Finance Committee. I've sat on the Finance Committee for many years, and I think this is unprecedented. I think it's the first time ever where an independent officer has been requested by the committee to come back after the decision has been made with that office's budget.

I appreciate, also, your opening remarks. I suppose some of the detailed information that you provided to the committee earlier today.... I do note that some of that information was already presented to us at our last meeting as well. Thank you for coming back to reiterate those points.

I have two questions, really, for you. Just looking at the transcript for November 29, whereby questions were put to you by committee members.... In particular, a question was put to you from Iain Black on the issue around: if your office does not receive a budget increase, what does that mean?

Your response was this: "If we do not receive a budget increase, what does that mean? It means we will not be able to investigate and review the deaths

and injuries of children based on current projections of what our workload will be. What would I do in that circumstance? I will go to the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth and say: "There are five children, and we can't review them. Help me."

Then you go on to say you feel that this is a unique type of work and that "I wouldn't want to have happen what has happened in the past" and so on.

My first question is this: since that meeting took place, where you provided that answer to the committee on November 29, to today, where we are sitting here on December 14 — about 15 days since that time — has the answer to that question changed?

[1035]

M. Turpel-Lafond: No, it hasn't. I mean, if the resources are inadequate with respect to responsibility.... Of course, I've been back to the select standing committee just this Tuesday. It had eight additional cases referred, after careful deliberation by the committee.

My inclination would be to return to that committee and seek their direction. As an officer of the Legislature, I would report and go back to the committee that approved my service plan. I feel that the budget which has been put forward is a budget that is a fair estimation.

There may be areas where it's insufficient, in which case.... I think I'll have a better understanding of that by next year. I feel that the full budget request put forward should allow me to do the task — but based on the preface I mentioned earlier, which is that there are some unknowns.

It is quite possible, because of the reportables, that there could be a series of cases that come forward that no one contemplated because the system is uneven. So I do say that the answer to the question last day is the same answer I would give today.

J. Kwan: Just to follow that up with another question, if I may, along the same line of questioning from our last meeting, from Iain Black. The question centred around this, and let me just quote it and put it on record to make sure that I don't put forward misinformation.

The question is: "What counsel could you give to us? If we are sitting in that unenviable position of saying: 'We've got' — pick a number — 'a million dollars, and we can spend it in the Ministry of Children and Family Development, or we can spend it with you.' What counsel would you give us as we go through the thought process of prioritizing what is always a limited budget of money to spend?"

Your response, Ms. Turpel-Lafond, was: "But the work that we're doing is trying to understand what the impact of current programs and services is on children and where children fall off these services and end up having very poor outcomes on their health, well-being, etc. How are programs and services that are being created and designed today really meeting those needs? We are trying to have a better understanding of that, to support the system across the way."

In other words, the budget, as I interpret that answer that you have put forward, is to allow you not

only to investigate the deaths, to provide for closure for the families and friends and accountability to British Columbians, but also to assess how well we're doing within the ministry in terms of the service and program delivery and whether or not those services are meeting the needs of children and families who are in need of protection.

If I interpret that correctly, I will also then follow up with this question. Based on the answer that you gave us on November 29 — versus today, December 14 — has that changed?

M. Turpel-Lafond: It hasn't changed. I would just note again, upon reflection on that question.... You'll note that last day I talked about how the most significant thing is to support, of course, better outcomes for vulnerable children. That's the whole objective of this work.

One of the goals in our service plan that was adopted by the select standing committee is to see the development of a coherent children's plan in British Columbia, meaning a plan that is tied to some very strong performance measures and outcomes. That may become some type of annual thing so that we could know, on an annual basis, about the health, safety and well-being of children in British Columbia, across a variety of ministries.

The whole notion is to see what the impact is now of the envelope of programs and services that are offered — to see if it has the impact that is needed to improve the circumstances for children and youth, to build that system of support on the vulnerable side and then to measure progress.

One of the roles of our office is to have that very strong push toward stronger outcomes, stronger public accountability, stronger performance measures, etc., in that field. So that's an area that we contemplate, within our line of business, monitoring in the next year.

I certainly say that the answer to the question is the same, but it isn't a black-and-white choice. It's the unique part of the role of our independent office. Unlike some others, we can report out to the people on how children and youth are doing in British Columbia. But we would like to collaborate, as well, to see that there is a coherent set of performance measures and accountabilities around how children and youth are doing on a year to year basis, in terms of down to the level of the child.

[1040]

J. Kwan: Actually, I have one last question, Mr. Chair.

B. Bennett (Chair): Go ahead.

J. Kwan: Again, based on the transcript of our last meeting, you indicated in the answer to members of the committee — particularly in this instance, to Iain Black, it looks like.... Around your budget for your office, your response states: "Do I have a 20-percent model? Do I have a 10-percent model? No. This is the

model. We'll live with whatever happens, but it's the Buick and the Chevy model." Those were the words that were used.

You were very upfront at the last meeting, as well, in indicating to the committee what the requirements were for your office in terms of a budget demand in order to meet your mandate. You told the committee on various occasions throughout the meeting that you have included the materials submitted to the committee and that the percentage change in budget was 36.2 percent in terms of increase over the current budget; that you were unabashed about it; and that you needed that money in order to meet that mandate — the mandate that's been given to you as the Representative for Children and Youth.

You say, of course, that if you don't get the budget, you won't be able to meet that mandate. So we're back here today with the same submission that you have given to us on November 29. Is this still what you had said — a "Buick and Chevy model"?

M. Turpel-Lafond: It is. It's the best estimate by me and my staff of the resources I need to fulfill the mandate. Certainly, understanding that, with the independent office that I have.... I mean, the goal is not to build some type of an empire in this office. The goal is, in fact, to see some significant change and then allow this office to, I hope, shrink with respect to the mandate.

At what point that can happen I'm not sure, but the goal is to work closely with the select standing committee and others to see that the system can be strengthened and improved. While there may be some role for independent oversight with respect to children in care, the fact is that the mandate might be able to be diminished. Certainly, from my own perspective, that's the objective that I take to the work. We're not an institution trying to perpetuate itself. We are a new office, and we devised a budget that was a reasonable projection of the cost to carry out these lines of business required under my statute.

J. Kwan: Thank you very much. That's sort of similar to the answer that you gave us last time, on November 29. In other words, the budget that you presented to us today is consistent and exactly the same as what you had presented to us on November 29.

M. Turpel-Lafond: Yes.

J. Kwan: The answers that you have given to us to the questions are the same. If you didn't get the budget, we knew on November 29 that your office would not be able to meet the mandate and do the work that is necessary for your office and, more importantly, for British Columbians and the children of British Columbians.

I really do appreciate you taking the time to come back to reinforce that very same notion and the points that you have presented to this committee on November 29. What has changed, I think, is not what you're presenting from your office but rather something else.

M. Turpel-Lafond: I would just say, Mr. Chairman, that I am delighted to have a second chance, to come back. If I can amplify in any way, I am delighted to do that, or if I can reiterate, I am delighted to do that. So thank you.

B. Bennett (Chair): Thank you.

Members, I would just say that we're here to ask either new questions or questions for which members didn't feel there were sufficient detailed answers in the first meeting. I'm not going to interfere or try to interfere with any members that have their own agenda. They can do what they think is appropriate.

Members, we will continue with the meeting, and I would ask you to try and ask new questions or questions for which you thought there were insufficient details in the first meeting. We'll carry on with that as best we can, and then we'll make a decision.

[1045]

R. Hawes: Thank you for coming back, Ms. Turpel-Lafond. I have a few questions, and I want to thank you first for the additional information that was provided, because I find it very, very helpful.

You answered a couple of the questions that I had when Iain Black spoke to you earlier, about the professional fees in particular. When I looked at the new information, that made me wonder — and you have answered that — with respect to salaries and to the FTEs.

With respect to the FTEs, I understood you to say that you have used some professional outsourcing to find some of the skilled people that you need so that as of April 1 those people will be in place. Is that what I heard you say?

M. Turpel-Lafond: Yes. I guess what I need to clarify is that for the additional FTEs, the 14 FTEs that are proposed, in many of these areas like.... Let's take advocacy as an example. Working with the Public Service Agency, I've run competitions, so I have an eligibility list. We've kind of gone through that process, so I have a list of qualified people who meet the core competencies, etc., with the PSA. So if this budget is approved, I can return to that eligibility list and bring the people on staff in a fairly quick way.

In the recruitment cycle, it's not going to have to be initiated. We are in a recruitment cycle, and I know that the same holds with respect to monitoring. We've run some competitions and have eligibility lists of individuals. These positions are banded, if you like, and the work around the recruitment piece is well in hand. So I think it is reasonable that they would be in place on April 1.

I have to say that there sometimes is a lag in recruitment in working at an office like mine. In the area of advocacy, to obtain a position as an advocate in my office, of course following the Public Service Agency guidelines, there has to be a merit-based competition.

Also, it requires both a criminal-record check and a police check, because we're dealing with children. A police check is something that the applicant has to initiate at their local police station. They may not choose to proceed at that point, but it takes additional time.

Of course, we have to be very cautious because of the nature of this work and the confidentiality. Especially in advocacy, where people will have direct contact with children, I can't entirely control that lag. But I have noticed that it may take an extra month, in some cases, to complete that, depending on how busy people are. That's done by a particular agency in British Columbia, which does part of it, and the other part of it I have to look at.

I just made the comment that we have eligibility lists. We've worked with the Public Service Agency. We're in large measure ready to proceed. I can't give you a precise date for everything, except that I'm fairly confident that by April 1, the 14 FTEs can be filled.

R. Hawes: When I look at your projected expenditures through to the end of the current year, I note that you weren't able, I think, to fill all the positions. Last time you were at 28, when we talked a couple of weeks ago, of your 30 FTEs. I think you said that there is some difficulty finding people with the right skills in British Columbia right now, with the way the economy or whatever is operating.

I guess that's the danger of making assumptions. I note you're 11 percent under, with the new information that we've been provided with, for your salary and benefits for the current year, and I'm assuming that's because of the time lag in hiring people.

I guess the assumption was that the same thing would be happening with the 14 FTEs, so I'm glad you clarified that. That really does answer a significant amount of the questions, and the additional information does satisfy the questions that I would have had.

I do want to say that over the past week or two weeks, I heard many times that I'm a mean-spirited, vindictive nitwit. Well, my wife says I'm a nitwit for wanting this job in the first place, but I want to assure you personally that my questions are not meant to be either mean-spirited or vindictive. If they came across that way, I would like to apologize to you. Certainly they weren't meant to be either mean-spirited or vindictive.

[1050]

I believe that our function here is to ask questions about the expenditure of taxpayers' money and to make sure that we're satisfied with how it's being spent. I am very satisfied with what you're doing, and I do believe that you are performing a very valuable service.

I know that next year, when you come forward with your budget request — as I think you said earlier in your opening remarks — you'll know what the committee would be looking for, and I'm sure that there will be a lot less pain for everybody next year.

Thank you very much, Representative.

M. Turpel-Lafond: Thank you very much. Certainly, no apology was necessary, but it's accepted to the extent that that is of some significance for you. I don't know if I should send your wife flowers or something, but all the best to her. Thank you.

B. Simpson: I thank you, Mary Ellen, for coming back.

I guess I'm struggling a little bit with the Chair's direction to depoliticize the discussion today. I find that quite ironic, given that I believe the reason we're back here is because this became a political debate. It leaves me wondering what would have happened if the response in the public, the response in the press, had been different. Would we be back here today having this discussion, or would it have flown below the radar and your office would have had to live with a curtailed budget?

That's political, Mr. Chair.

We had two opportunities to ask the detailed questions that are being asked today. With respect to MLA Hawes's comments, you answered a question in your first presentation where you'd said that you had hard numbers around occupancy costs, building costs and centralized management support services. You have hard estimates around that.

You had hard estimates around travel costs. You had hard estimates around additional staff, etc. Nobody asked the questions to ask for those hard estimates to be tabled. That was our first opportunity to get those numbers out the first time.

The second time was when we could have actually reconvened this committee and brought you back before a decision was made. If members of this committee felt that in order to make a decision they needed more detailed information, we could have reconvened this committee — brought you back and asked those questions then, before we made the decision.

What has happened today is that we've come back and that we've got some line item information that may make the bean-counters happy. But as far as I'm concerned, it does nothing for what we need in terms of making a decision about your budget. It's not new information. It's slightly more detailed, and we could have asked those questions the first time.

Here's the question I have for you that's new. If we don't reverse our decision in this committee, what is that going to cost to your ability to deliver your services to children in this province? What is going to have to go, and what will you not be able to do if this committee does not reverse the decision it made the first time? That's a new question.

M. Turpel-Lafond: I think the answer I gave last day to a similar question holds, and that is: there will be some aspect of the mandate that cannot be carried forward. Given the nature of the work, I would anticipate that it will be in relation to the critical injury and death review component.

What I would do is meet with my executive, look at it and go back to the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth. Certainly, as an officer of the Legislature, I feel very much that the mandate placed before me is something I wouldn't want to simply not do, without some public reporting and reporting to that committee.

When I met with the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth earlier this week and the item was raised very briefly, it was on the understanding that

after today, if there was some issue remaining, I could come back to the committee to address it. Of course, that's in your hands. But in any event, I would conduct myself as I would as an independent officer of the Legislature, but working through the appropriate committee structure.

B. Simpson: Thank you. I think you made that clear during the first presentation as well. You made it clear to us that this was not a padded budget. You made it clear to us that it was a Chevy budget. I think the obligation of this committee is to examine that on face value. That's what we do with the other officers of the Legislature. We examine it on face value, and we ask ourselves this question: "Will this budget will allow you to deliver the services?"

[1055]

I think you made it very clear that this is what you needed and that if it wasn't sufficient — not if it was over but if it wasn't sufficient — then you had the option to go to another committee and ask for those additional resources.

I'm satisfied, as I was the first time, that this is not a padded budget. This is the minimum necessary to do a mandate that you indicated to us will likely even expand more, not retract. I am satisfied, again, that the questions we got today and the question that we got answered just now are sufficient for me.

D. Hayer: My question is probably very similar to one I had last time. Maybe you can clarify something. I'm looking at page 18, where it breaks down your FTEs. It says that currently you have 30 and that, including the new staff positions, in the future it will be 44.

I'm looking at where the monitoring, reviewing and investigation has 12, and where knowledge exchange has one, which is about 43 percent. Then administration and advocacy are at 17 under the old system. If you went to 30, then you're looking at 43 percent for people who will actually investigate, review and write reports, and under the new process you're looking at about 36 percent.

As the work increases in the future, would you maybe take some FTEs from advocacy or administration and add to investigations, program managers and analysts? Or would you still try to hire some people and come back to committee saying that you need more money to hire more people? As the work will have increased, you might need more people to investigate, to write reports and also to analyze why the deaths have happened — how they can be prevented and how we can improve the system.

M. Turpel-Lafond: I can say that this is, at this point, our best estimate, based on projections. Obviously, with the current complement of eight front-line staff working in advocacy, the proposal to add four more to have 12 in that area is very significant. If that were to decrease, would I reallocate FTEs or would I come back? I think what I would do is come back on a year-to-year basis and indicate where I think things are.

The monitoring, review and investigation portion, where we're now at 12 and moving to 16, is certainly a reflection of a greater workload than I had anticipated in that area, now that I've looked at all of the reportables, etc. If we could be more effective in coordinating with, say, the coroner, the Public Guardian and Trustee, the director of child protection, etc., that work might become work that can happen without the degree of scrutiny that's required at the moment.

In a sense, it's not a lack of rigour, but... If we could promote a certain amount of public accountability in reporting out in that area, it might be possible that we could strengthen some of those reviews from an internal basis so that the full investigation might not be necessarily on our shoulders. It would be conducted elsewhere, so the systemwide improvements would be there.

I think I have to look at the ability to reallocate the FTEs or to present a picture next year as to where we are with that. I will certainly look very carefully at the allocation of staff.

I have to be very careful, though, because if I have had a staff in advocacy, for the reasons I indicated earlier, they may have advocated for an individual — a child or a youth — who's been injured and whose injury we review. They would not be able to participate in the review, because that has got to be a separate, neutral analysis to have credibility. So I wouldn't be able to move people. We have to keep some separation in these functions, because I have three distinct functions.

D. Hayer: My second question. When the Finance Committee was going around the province, many of the businesses were saying that they could not find workers. Lots of times they just go to the next person doing the same type of business and maybe try to pay a little bit more money to attract those people rather than going outside the province or outside the country.

When you are looking at these positions, are these staff coming mostly from within the government of British Columbia, or are they coming from outside the province — within Canada or outside — to fill these positions? What is attracting them? Is it because of the type of work it is? Or is it because you can pay more in this position than for work in other parts of the government, within our provincial government?

[1100]

M. Turpel-Lafond: The question is a very good question: namely, where is my staff drawn from? I am within the Public Service Agency, so the banding of positions, the remuneration of positions, is consistent with the Public Service Agency remuneration. That's something that has been very significant. Not all independent officers follow that. I do follow that.

Positions in my office, an independent office, would be available to members of, say, the public service of British Columbia. My staff is comprised of, in part, some people who were formerly in a line ministry, if you like, and they came into my office.

I have to explain that that is a very important part of my work. To have credibility in the work you're

doing, you need people who have expertise about how the system functions. People may enjoy coming into an independent office for a period of time. They may be banded at the same level that they were, and then they can return again. There is ability to transfer knowledge, etc.

Some of my staff comes from within the public service, based on their expertise and their merit. Some of my staff comes from outside. My deputy of critical injuries and deaths was a deputy minister of health and social services in the Yukon. My deputy for advocacy was a band manager of a very large Indian band in northern British Columbia. So people come from different places.

The key thing, from my perspective, is pursuant to the review that was done by Mr. Hughes. Mr. Hughes emphasized that to be effective, this independent office has to have two things: the trust of the public, which is really driven by the independence of the office, and its ability to look independently at...

Mr. Hughes also said that this office would be effective if it had the respect of the bureaucracy. The respect of the bureaucracy is something that can only be earned by having knowledge and the quality, the rigour and the knowledge of the practice.

Some of the expertise in my office pertains to the actual business of child welfare — the business of the health, safety and well-being of children. We have to have a staff that has that ability to look at the area and have respect because of their knowledge. That comes from different places. It's a small group. It's a very collegial group. But I think that it is a diverse group of individuals.

Is it difficult to recruit? I've had enormous interest. Some of the recruitment that we've done in the area of monitoring, 300 or 400 applications for positions.... We've had great success in attracting people, but as Mr. Hughes said, the independence, the public trust and the respect of the bureaucracy are all things that I have to consider when I mould the staff.

D. Hayer: Thank you very much. This is the first time — I've been on the committee for four or five years — that we've had to hold a meeting and there were three cameras on the mainstream and all the media personalities were in the room too. It's a little bit of extra stress on everybody, but thank you very much for doing a good job.

In the past, we have said to the other independent officers: if you do require more resources, you can always come back to the committee. I presume that still holds true for all the independent officers now and in the past. Sometimes they come in. Thank you very much.

J. Horgan: I thank you again, Ms. Turpel-Lafond, for coming back to the committee. I was convinced last time that your budget was reasonable and that it would ensure better outcomes for vulnerable children, which is your objective and, I understand, the objective of this committee.

I am a bit concerned, however. I asked the Chair at the outset what compelled us to come back. Had it been the release of the Progress Board, which showed that

British Columbia was ninth of ten in the social condition measurement? That would have been a reasonable, I think, time to call back the committee to address your budget, which was underfunded by this committee on December 7, and to address new information.

I would have thought that being tenth of ten with respect to child poverty would have been a reason to come back to this committee, but instead we came back.... If I can read from *The Vancouver Sun*, December 12, a quote from the Chair: "It was a stupid mistake. I don't mind if you print me saying that, because it was."

Now, I'm quite all right with spin. My mom told me that in politics as in life, if a building is falling, get out of the way. So I'm reluctant to take too much time talking, because I think most of the talking has already been done. The objective, which this side of the committee was absolutely clear on when we voted in favour of your initial proposal, was that it was adequate.

[1105]

Now that we have new information, now that we know from the Premier's appointed Progress Board that we are ninth of ten in the social condition, do you believe that there may be an opportunity in the current fiscal year to come back and seek more resources to achieve the outcome that we all want, which is to protect vulnerable children?

M. Turpel-Lafond: I would say that the budget that was presented should allow me to fulfil my mandate for this year. If for some reason I felt there was a challenge with that, I would go back to the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth, report to them and seek some direction from them with respect to that.

As I am concerned, of course we need to work with great urgency on these issues, and I would just say that I welcome the opportunity to come back to the committee again. The issue before you for decision is your issue. I'm the independent officer. I am pleased to come back, and I am grateful for the chance for you to deliberate again.

Of course, the common goal, I think, in this room and more broadly is that we have better outcomes for children and youth. One of the goals of my office is to have the type of reportables and the type of public accounting so we can know how children and youth are doing, and so we can all work together with greater urgency to address their needs.

J. Horgan: One final follow-up, Chair, if I may....

B. Bennett (Chair): If you can't resist.

J. Horgan: I can't resist. It's to do with spin; that is, there's a perception in the public that your materials were insufficient. I said at the time — and I want to reiterate — that I think your staff did a fantastic job, as do other independent officers, in bringing forward information as best you can. It's our job to determine whether it's adequate.

On this side of the House we were more than happy with the first presentation. Thank you again for the second one, and I look forward to the next.

M. Turpel-Lafond: Thank you.

B. Bennett (Chair): Thank you very much. I would just make a few comments, I guess. I'm not going to respond to most of the rehashing of the past couple of weeks, but I will respond. I wasn't going to say anything about the particular comment referenced by Member Horgan.

I don't think, as Chair of the Finance Committee, that it is ever a bad thing to be interested in how public money is going to be spent. I know the representative agrees with me on that; I know that all the statutory officers agree with me on that. I think that is our job.

I would say in closing — the only other thing that I would like to get on the record — that I know every single member of this committee, from both sides of the House, cares about children and youth in this province. I have absolutely no doubt about that.

I am certainly more familiar with government members than opposition members. I know that government members all have children and that there is no issue here of people not caring. It's an issue of people seeing things differently. That happens in politics, and it's never going to be any different.

Mary Ellen, I want to thank you very much for coming to the committee meeting today. We did get more detail. I think that's important; that's part of our job. We appreciate it, and we will now deliberate.

Statutory Officers Budget Submissions

B. Bennett (Chair): Committee members, as our witnesses are departing, the only other thing that I would like to introduce to you as a topic for discussion — hopefully, it doesn't require a lot of discussion — is that one of the lessons I've learned from this is that this committee could do a more rigorous job of analyzing the budgets of statutory officers. I don't say that with any disrespect to the officers.

I think there's been a practice in the past year of statutory officers bringing their budget submissions to this committee, in many cases without the committee even having them beforehand. That is my understanding of how it actually worked up until this year.

I don't believe, personally, having experienced the Treasury Board process, that that's an accountable way for us to deal with public money. I'm going to be recommending that this report include a recommendation, starting for next year, that we make sure we have budget submissions in hand 14 days prior to the meeting when that officer will come to us. That's what I wanted to say about that. If there's any discussion on the record for that, let me know.

John, did you have your hand up?

J. Horgan: Yes. I have before me a letter from the Ombudsman addressed to you. It was sent to the Deputy Chair and to the Clerk earlier in the week with respect to the budget presentation of the Ombudsman's office.

The Ombudsman requests that if there is a sentiment to review these issues as we've just done with one statutory officer.... She's wondering when she's going to get her call to provide further detail for the committee so that she can achieve her budget outcomes as well. I'm wondering if the Chair has had time to consider that and whether we'll be reconvening next week to hear from the Ombudsman.

B. Bennett (Chair): I will address that, John. But if I could just get some sense from committee members as to whether everyone is in agreement with perhaps adding some rigour and some structure to this process going forward so that we standardize budget submissions, so that we have the capacity to compare statutory officer budget submissions one to the other and also so that we have the time that it takes — we're all very, very busy — to prepare for these meetings. What do members think?

H. Bloy: I think 14 days may be a little too long. I would suggest seven days. If it wasn't for a deadline, lots of things wouldn't get done, so....

B. Bennett (Chair): Sure. Okay.

B. Simpson: I had my first term on this committee last year. I raised this issue last year about standardizing the independent officers' budgets. I thought we got a good one from the Auditor General last year, which was a good three-year budget with some options for us that ought to be looked at: a low, a medium and a high budget, and what it meant for his service delivery capability. That issue has been raised here before.

In this case I want to be crystal-clear, since this is an on-the-record discussion. We had the independent officers' budgets in front of us before we came into this meeting. That's not the issue in this case, because you, Chair, made sure that we had it at least a day in advance. In this case, we had it the weekend before we came in. That is not the issue in this case — about not having it in advance.

B. Bennett (Chair): No. I agree. I've been very clear about that — that we did have them this year because I asked for them. But we had some of them the night before, and we also held all of our meetings in one week. We met with every single statutory officer in a period of three days. I think that we can do better.

This is absolutely no reflection on the statutory officer who we just met with. I think this is — and I'd appreciate it if everyone would look at it this way — a completely independent issue. I think it's incumbent upon this committee to try and improve our process. That's the only reason that I'm raising it.

B. Simpson: With respect, I'd like to respond to that. As Chair, you had the opportunity to have this discussion when we went in camera. You did it on the record while people were still in this room, while that officer was still in this room, and it sounded as though we did not have these submissions in advance.

We did have these submissions in advance. As Chair, you linked the two by how you did it. We could have had this discussion in camera, as an issue for us to discuss, and then go into a recommendation in the report.

B. Bennett (Chair): We are going to have the discussion in camera. We'll discuss the recommendation and whether we're going to make a recommendation on this in camera. I brought it up on the record because I wanted the public to know that I believe, and I think everyone here believes, that we can improve upon the process. I didn't link it, but I accept that that's your view of it.

I would say that we should go in camera. But before we do, I'd like to respond to Member Horgan's question or comment about the Ombudsman.

I did receive a letter from the Ombudsman this morning about 45 minutes before this meeting. The letter arrived by fax, apparently, to my Victoria office on Wednesday, and my legislative assistant did not pass it on to me. I heard about this yesterday from the Clerk's office. I was travelling, I had my BlackBerry, and the letter was in PDF form, so I couldn't open up the letter. I didn't see it until this morning when I got here.

I immediately phoned the Ombudsman to confirm that yes, indeed, I had seen her letter. We had a relatively short discussion, and I've committed to her that we'll have a more fulsome discussion in the new year about what it is that she wants to talk to us about.

With that, could I have a motion to go in camera?

J. Horgan: I just want to follow up on Bob's comment. My concern, Chair, is that the spin is: "We didn't have adequate information. We would have done a better job if only we'd been better equipped."

That's not what happened, and you know that's not what happened. You said so much in the public press.

[1115]

We were lectured about the importance of being earnest with this information as we walked out of the room, and you were looking directly at the opposition when you said that. Not a word of this came out before the report was released, and I read in the paper, "It's common knowledge that I would have preferred to give her the full amount," he said" — the Chair. That's you. That wasn't common knowledge as far as I was concerned. That was in camera. In fact, we had an opportunity for you to support that, and you didn't.

I'm concerned that the spin coming out of this is that it was a process issue. It wasn't. It was political. You know it. That's all I've got to say.

B. Bennett (Chair): Well, that's your opinion, John. We are going to move in camera, and I'd like a motion to that effect.

The committee continued in camera from 11:16 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.

[B. Bennett in the chair.]

B. Bennett (Chair): I need a motion to amend the report.

Motion approved.

B. Bennett (Chair): Motion to adjourn?

The committee adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

HANSARD SERVICES

Director
Jo-Anne Kern

Manager of Print Production
Robert Sutherland

Post-Production Team Leader
Christine Fedoruk

Editorial Team Leaders
Janet Brazier, Robyn Swanson

Senior Editor — Galleys
Heather Bright

Technical Operations Officers
Pamela Holmes, Emily Jacques, Dan Kerr

Indexers
Shannon Ash, Laura Kotler, Julie McClung

Researchers
Mike Beninger, Caitlin Roberts, Pavlina Vagnerova

Editors
Laurel Bernard, Catherine Cardiff, Andrew Costa, Aaron Ellingsen,
Heather Gleboff, Margaret Gracie, Jane Grainger, Iris Gray, Linda Guy,
Barb Horricks, Bill Hrick, Paula Lee, Elizabeth Levinson, Nicole Lindsay,
Donna McCloskey, Cristy McLennan, Marg MacQuarrie, Constance Maskery,
Jill Milkert, Lind Miller, Lou Mitchell, Karol Morris, Dorothy Pearson,
Erik Pedersen, Janet Pink, Melanie Platz, Robin Rohrmoser,
Heather Warren, Arlene Wells, Tara Wells

Published by British Columbia Hansard Services and printed under the authority of the Speaker.

www.leg.bc.ca/cmt

Hansard Services publishes transcripts both in print and on the Internet.
Chamber debates are broadcast on television and webcast on the Internet.
Question Period podcasts are available on the Internet.