



5th Session, 37th Parliament

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(Entered Confederation July 20, 1871)

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR
Her Honour the Honourable Iona V. Campagnolo, CM, OBC

5TH SESSION, 37TH PARLIAMENT

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2004

The House met at 2:05 p.m.

Introductions by Members

Hon. R. Harris: Joining us in the House today is Ken Belaski. I am very pleased to be able to welcome him here today. Although he is now retired, Ken previously served the B.C. government as manager of the B.C. Forest Service range program and was instrumental in developing changes to some legislation that I will be introducing today. Would the House please make him feel welcome.

B. Belsey: I have the pleasure of introducing someone who is here from Prince Rupert, the manager of the chamber in Prince Rupert and also the manager for the visitors information centre. Not only that, she manages my house and my apartment down here, so if you would all join me in making my wife welcome.

Hon. S. Hagen: In the House today is a good friend of mine, Bruce Kehler. He's from the Comox Valley but also has businesses around British Columbia and is an entrepreneur of note and very active in the building supply business, taking advantage of the growth in the economy in the province and the new houses being built. Would the House please join me in making him welcome.

K. Stewart: It is my pleasure to introduce a gentleman who has a law practice in Maple Ridge, who's been a very good advocate for youth in our community. He happens to be the past president of our riding association and the brother of the aforementioned guest. Would the House please welcome Mr. Gord Kehler.

Hon. S. Bond: It is my privilege today to welcome a friend to the gallery. He's someone that I worked with for a significant period of time on the school board in Prince George. It's a pleasure to have with us today Mr. Bill Christie.

J. Bray: Joining us in the gallery today is someone that I've introduced several times before. He is a community mental health advocate, and he is here again to witness the proceedings. I would ask the House to please welcome Terry Colburn to the Legislature.

H. Bloy: It is an honour for me to introduce someone today that's a friend of a colleague of ours from Burnaby-Edmonds. We have Roy Arjun and his girlfriend Nafissa Khan with us today. Roy has worked very hard for Patty in her riding, and he is quite an entrepreneur himself. I'd like the House to please make them welcome.

B. Kerr: I was told by the member's legislative assistant that I wouldn't get any birthday cake unless I

wished him a happy birthday in the House today. The member for Vancouver-Kingsway is celebrating his birthday today, and I ask the House to wish him a happy birthday.

S. Orr: I have three very, very special guests in the House today. First is a gentleman called Gerald Dirks, and he served with the national board of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind for many years and is currently a member of the board of Blindness International. The second person is no stranger in Victoria. He is very well known and very well liked. It's Albert Ruel, and he's been on staff with CNIB since losing his sight 12 years ago. With them, they have a sighted person helping them, and her name is Patricia Dirks. Would the House please make these three very special people welcome.

Tributes

EDWARD PATRICK O'CONNOR

G. Halsey-Brandt: It is with sadness that I report that the founding president of the union that grew into today's B.C. Government and Service Employees Union has died in Richmond at the age of 96.

Edward Patrick O'Connor served as the first president of the B.C. Government Employees Association from 1942 until 1945 and then as its general secretary until 1967, the year he received the Canadian Centennial medal. He then retired and, as usual when people retire, worked even harder as he took on an 11-year appointment as labour's representative on the Public Service Staff Relations Board. We express our thanks for the work he did on behalf of all British Columbians.

[1410]

Introductions by Members

Hon. K. Falcon: Today in the House we're joined by members of the B.C. Trucking Association. As members of this House know full well, truckers play an important role in our economy, moving important goods and products for small businesses right across the province. I would ask my colleagues to please make them all feel welcome today.

Tributes

EXPERIENCE OF SONS OF FREEDOM
DOUKHOBOR CHILDREN IN NEW DENVER

Hon. G. Plant: I rise in the House with the honour of paying tribute to some very special guests who are joining us here today. They are Irene Popoff, Elsie Eriksen, William Sherstobitoff, Shirley Sherstobitoff, Joe Sherstobitoff, Fred Konkin, Walter Swetlishoff, Naida Hamoline, Georgina Kootnikoff, Naida Stoochnoff and Grace Worrall.

They are representatives of a very special group of British Columbians known as the New Denver Sons of

Freedom Doukhobor children. I would like to take a few moments to talk about a sad chapter in B.C. history that concerns them.

The provincial ombudsman brought this chapter to the attention of government and the public in her 1999 report entitled *Righting the Wrong: the Confinement of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor Children*. This report details the events that occurred some 50 years ago, when 104 Sons of Freedom Doukhobor children were removed from their parents, who were arrested during a protest in the West Kootenays.

In 1953 some 104 children were taken by bus to New Denver, where those of school age were kept in a residential care facility and those who were not of school age were returned to their families. Over the next six years, from 1953 to 1959, the government enforced a policy of mandatory school attendance. Approximately 200 children were placed in the New Denver institution during this period. Many Sons of Freedom parents, determined not to surrender their children, hid them from the police. Initially, the children went to school in the institution, but eventually they were integrated into the local public school in New Denver.

No doubt the New Denver experience affected these children and their families in profound ways. In many cases, these children were kept from their parents for extraordinary periods of time. Some children were not allowed to return home during the summer or at Christmas because of uncertainty that their parents would return them to New Denver.

This was not an easy story to hear, nor is it an easy story to tell. I commend all those who came forward after all these years to talk about what must be extremely personal and painful memories. Many of these people, we have since come to learn, have buried their past, and they even felt it necessary to hide their Sons of Freedom background and their association with New Denver from their friends, their neighbours and their employers.

The challenge that we as government today face in understanding what happened half a century ago is not as simple as one might expect. What we do know is that these were frightening times for the residents of the Kootenay and Boundary regions of British Columbia. Bombings and burnings had been occurring throughout this part of the province for over three decades. Fear and anger had escalated among both the Doukhobor and the non-Doukhobor communities. To this end, the government of the day was under tremendous pressure to do something to end the violence.

We can't fully understand or explain the motives of a government of 50 years ago. We can, though, recognize the circumstances under which these events occurred and acknowledge how things might be done differently if we were to do them today.

I would like to thank those who had the courage to come forward to remind British Columbians about this history. Many of us were unaware or had forgotten about the conflicting values and political turmoil that involved the government and these communities over

half a century ago. In particular, too many of us were unaware that you, as innocent children, were taken from your homes, your families and your communities.

[1415]

We recognize that as children, you were caught in this conflict through no fault of your own. On behalf of the government of British Columbia, I extend my sincere, complete and deep regret for the pain and suffering you experienced during the prolonged separation from your families. We recognize and regret that you were deprived of the day-to-day contact with your parents and the love and support of your families. We recognize and we regret the anguish that this must have caused. We will continue to offer counselling to former residents and to your relatives — including your siblings, your offspring and your spouses — who wish to access this service.

We hope that this acknowledgment will enable you to work with us toward continued reconciliation and healing.

Introduction and First Reading of Bills

UNIVERSITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2004

Hon. S. Bond presented a message from His Honour the Administrator: a bill intituled University Amendment Act, 2004.

Hon. S. Bond: I move that Bill 60 be introduced and read a first time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. S. Bond: On March 17 the Premier announced that the new Okanagan campus of the University of British Columbia would have a separate senate to govern local affairs. As well, we committed to expanding the university's board of governors to provide representation from the Okanagan region.

Under the existing University Act, each university is allowed only one senate, which makes decisions regarding the academic governance of the institution. As well, the act details the exact composition of the boards. The amendments being made to the University Act by Bill 60 will allow the University of British Columbia to establish an additional autonomous senate for the Okanagan.

When government consulted with stakeholders regarding the proposed UBC Okanagan university model, a core concern was the ability for the region to guide the development of the university to meet its very unique needs. So with the formation of UBC Okanagan, it was promised that a distinct senate for the Okanagan region would be a part of the new university. The amendments being introduced today will also expand the UBC board of governors to guarantee local representation for the Okanagan campus of the university on the overall UBC board of governors.

Finally, Bill 60 will make two deregulation amendments to the University Act. These two changes involve reducing the red tape surrounding the disposition of university lands and granting the powers of a natural person to the public universities governed by the act.

I move that the bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 60 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

RANGE ACT

Hon. R. Harris presented a message from His Honour the Administrator: a bill intituled Range Act.

Hon. R. Harris: I move that Bill 57 be introduced and read for a first time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. R. Harris: Today I am introducing Bill 57, the Range Act. This bill provides the first substantial update in 25 years to the management of Crown range lands. The bill was developed with government ministries and range users and reflects the changes necessary to ensure Crown range lands are managed for the best interest of British Columbians. This bill brings range use into the twenty-first century and provides government with the ability to ensure that range land is used efficiently. Under the bill, flexibility for both the district manager and range tenure applicants is improved.

I move that the bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House.

[1420]

Bill 57 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

JUSTICE MODERNIZATION STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2004

Hon. G. Plant presented a message from His Honour the Administrator: a bill intituled Justice Modernization Statutes Amendment Act, 2004.

Hon. G. Plant: I move that the bill be introduced and read a first time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. G. Plant: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 64, the Justice Modernization Statutes Amendment Act, 2004. This bill amends a number of statutes intended to support our continuing effort as government in ensuring that our justice system is fair, equitable and efficient for all British Columbians.

We're amending the Small Claims Act and the Court Rules Act by introducing enabling amendments that will pave the way for future improvements to the civil justice system by making it possible to increase the monetary jurisdiction of the small claims court to as high as \$50,000 and to establish simplified procedures for cases under \$100,000 in the Supreme Court. These changes will enhance access to justice by supporting work that is already underway to make simpler and more affordable processes available to the public in both courts.

This bill amends the Crown Proceeding Act to allow the Crown to be sued in provincial small claims court. This amendment complements the amendments I have already described.

We are amending the Class Proceedings Act to suspend the limitation period during an application for class certification. This should reduce the pressure on judges to certify classes and in turn may decrease the number of class proceedings.

We are amending the Evidence Act to provide certainty regarding admissibility in court of electronic court documents and to set standards for electronic documents and signatures. These amendments are urgently required to enable government to move forward with the implementation of court automation projects.

I move that the bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 64 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

ATTORNEY GENERAL STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2004

Hon. G. Plant presented a message from His Honour the Administrator: a bill intituled Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 2004.

Hon. G. Plant: I move that the bill be introduced and read a first time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. G. Plant: This bill, the Attorney General Statutes Amendment Act, 2004, makes amendments to a number of acts. It makes some housekeeping amendments to correct some minor drafting errors and oversights and to clarify some provisions of the Administrative Tribunals Act, which was passed earlier this year.

These amendments, which have come to light as that act is being implemented, include consequential amendments to the Financial Institutions Act and the Forest and Range Practices Act and a transitional provision to the Mental Health Act.

Bill 62 also modernizes the Estate Administration Act by increasing the value of small estates that will be

eligible for simpler summary administration processes from \$10,000 up to \$25,000. A consequential amendment to the Motor Vehicle Act applies the same threshold to the expedited transfer of vehicle ownership to a beneficiary on the death of the vehicle's owner.

Bill 62 also makes two amendments to the Libel and Slander Act. First, the act will be amended so that a person sued in defamation for publishing the opinion of another person will not have to agree with that opinion in order to have the benefit of the defence of fair comment. The second amendment will provide that there is no liability for damages in defamation with respect to a publication in the collection of a public or educational library. This will protect educational libraries and their associated local governments and educational institutions from financially onerous litigation, while protecting the rights of plaintiffs by ensuring that they may prevent the distribution of publications that have been determined or acknowledged to be defamatory.

[1425]

Finally, this bill makes minor amendments to the Offence Act to support something called the Contraventions Act agreement between British Columbia and Canada. That agreement allows for the enforcement of minor federal offences under a provincial ticket scheme that provides both French and English language prosecution and service.

I move the bill be placed on the orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 62 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Statements (Standing Order 25B)

FOOD BANKS IN VANCOUVER

J. Nuraney: Some time ago, Pat Tracy, the editor of *Burnaby Now*, asked the residents of Burnaby to help the food bank. She said that whether it is summertime or winter, there is never a right time for folks to go hungry.

I was quite touched by her remarks and took up the challenge to help the food bank. Over the past weeks I have had the privilege of observing food banks' operations and meeting some of the most dedicated individuals who do so much to provide our communities with this invaluable service.

The Greater Vancouver Food Bank operates 18 distribution depots that presently feed up to 9,000 people each week. More than 100 agencies depend on the food bank to provide 16,000 meals every week. Sadly, the most troubling statistic is that 40 percent of the food bank's recipients are children. The bank's Basics for Babies program provides food, formula and diapers to help with the challenges of raising a young infant. Under the program, Kids Picks provides healthy snacks

and nutritional information to preschoolers aged 18 months to five years.

I'm very happy to say that last weekend, I launched an appeal that was successful in sending six carloads of food to the food bank. We also managed to collect some cash donations — over \$2,000. As our government works through various ministries' initiatives to reduce poverty and hopefully some day to eradicate it, I want to assure the House that the spirit of our community to help achieve this goal is very much alive.

UBCM MEETING AND OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION

B. Belsey: Last month British Columbians witnessed one of the best-attended Union of B.C. Municipalities meetings ever held. Municipal governments, regional districts and some first nations communities participated in what is always a great opportunity for MLAs to meet with local representatives around their ridings. The business discussed was as diversified as the representation in attendance.

One issue near and dear to the hearts of many in attendance was a motion brought forward by the Prince Rupert city council calling on the federal government to lift the moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration in the Queen Charlotte basin. The motion was carried by a two-thirds majority of delegates representing hundreds of thousands of British Columbians. It must be noted that it was not, and I repeat not, with reckless abandon that the UBCM delegates approved this motion. It was after months of debate within communities, in the resource sector committee meetings, in the rooms and hallways at the convention and ultimately on the convention floor.

What this means to the Pacific Northwest region in which I live is that we are one step closer to revitalization — revitalization and seeing more jobs than there are locals to fill them, just like in Alberta, in the northeast corner of this province; revitalization for revenue surpluses to build new hospitals, schools, airports, bridges, roads, highways; revitalization of a sustainable society safety network that provides for early childhood years, K-to-12, advanced education, adults and senior programs, and sustainable solutions to homelessness for the underprivileged and most vulnerable in our communities.

Imagine the revitalization that could take place in our province if our Premier could hand out \$3 billion for infrastructure improvements just like Ralph Klein did last month in Alberta. The NDP says no to oil and gas exploration and development — not now, not ever. That's like saying no to revitalization in my riding.

[1430]

ROADKILL TAX

B. Bennett: For decades, as a matter of course, British Columbia trappers made use of dead wildlife found at the side of the road. However, in September 2000 the parsimonious government of the day radically in-

creased the tariff charged on this benign and functional rural practice. A dead elk or moose cost \$71; a deer or black bear, \$61; a red-tailed hawk, \$65; a dead bison, \$116; and any species not listed, \$25. Presumably, if you found a dead or mortally wounded mouse and wanted to feed it to your cat, you would be required to travel to the nearest government office, fill out the forms, pay your \$25 and quickly journey home to satiate your eagerly waiting carnivorous kitty. Of course, you might decide to stop at the general store and pick up a \$10 bag of cat food, but that would be your choice.

Trappers back in the year 2000, not being intimate with the infinite ingenuity of governments in the field of fees and permits, could not quite recognize the government's logic. At a Finance Committee meeting in Cranbrook before the last election, a constituent of mine, Carmen Purdy, inquired as to the sanity of this particular regulatory endeavour. One of our distinguished journalists, Mr. Leyne, wrote at the time: "Is this proud province in such reduced circumstances that government inspectors have to roam the roadside ditches looking for people who are looking for roadkill in order to levy a tax on them?"

I'm exceedingly proud to inform the House today that this government has cast the shackles off our enterprising and industrious trappers. Although we do continue to charge fees to British Columbians who wish to utilize roadkill for lunch, a fur coat or living room rug — and I hope we can repeal that tax as well — trappers can now avail themselves, without cost, of the spoils of highway carnage, which no doubt will be compounding as a result of the strengthening economy and increased movement of goods and services.

Now, although this isn't quite on a scale with the Magna Carta, let us rejoice at the democratic spectacle of free trappers all over this heavenly province scooping up dead animals from our roadside ditches, no longer living in fear a tax collector may be lurking in nearby bushes. At long last the roadkill tax, if not completely snuffed out, is at least gimpy and on its last legs.

Mr. Speaker: That concludes members' statements.

Oral Questions

FREIGHT SERVICE BETWEEN PRINCE GEORGE AND VANCOUVER AND B.C. RAIL-CN RAIL AGREEMENT

J. Kwan: On our first day back I have a question for the Deputy Premier on an issue that just isn't going away for this government. Can the Deputy Premier tell this House how much service the new owner of B.C. Rail is providing on the Prince-George-to-North-Vancouver corridor?

Hon. K. Falcon: Actually, this is more good news coming out of this partnership transaction. One of the things we're very excited about is that under this partnership arrangement, the private sector will be making the kind of significant capital investments that the gov-

ernment, frankly, couldn't divert scarce dollars away from health care and education.... We know, for example, that they've already added, thus far today, 400 additional centre-beam cars that will be used to move goods and services from Prince George down to Vancouver and to Chicago much more efficiently and effectively than we have in the past. We already know that their transit times have increased so dramatically in the short time they have taken over the line that they have already got some excess capacity in Prince George, and they're already out beating the bushes looking for new shippers. As usual, it is more good news out of the B.C. Rail-CN partnership.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant has a supplementary question.

J. Kwan: As usual, this minister has just proven to this House that he doesn't know what he is talking about. This minister needs to take the time to learn his file. First, the Premier broke his promise not to sell B.C. Rail. Then he sold it to his big campaign donor, CN, for a pittance of what it's worth. The opposition has learned that CN is in fact reducing service on the Prince George corridor by a full two-thirds.

After promising that this promise — this broken promise — would benefit communities, how can the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Transportation expect northerners to trust this government when we now know that CN is cutting its freight service?

[1435]

Hon. K. Falcon: One thing I have learned after long experience listening to questions in this House is that, inevitably, the information that the members have is false, misleading or just not exactly accurate. What I will say to this member — this may be a surprise to the member — is this: actually, CN as a private company generally doesn't spend a billion dollars so they can reduce services and not increase the opportunities for themselves. They are actually investing in the rail line. They are investing significant dollars already, as I mentioned. Almost 400 of the 600 cars they've committed to, they've already acquired. They are already increasing the transit times that are running from Prince George to Vancouver, so that shippers are realizing a benefit. Of course the average shipping rate has been reduced by 7 percent — again, another benefit for interline shippers.

I have absolutely no doubt in saying this. This is going to be the foundation for the revitalization of northern British Columbia, and that member and that NDP government just do not understand that this is going to be great news for northern British Columbia and the province.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant has a further supplementary.

J. Kwan: I see the shadows of Martyn Brown's choke chains coming on.

Let me quote a letter of September 29 from CN's corporate vice-president.

Hon. K. Falcon: Is it secret?

J. Kwan: Maybe the Minister of Transportation would want to listen up just so that the Minister of Transportation has the facts. "CN plans to reduce freight service on the Prince-George-to-North-Vancouver corridor from the present three trains per day to one train per day." This is a letter from the vice-president of CN dated September 29, 2004.

The Deputy Premier told her local newspaper that the fate of employees is her number one priority. Let me ask the question to the Deputy Premier: will she stand up and explain to her constituents why CN is cutting service to her community and laying off workers, when she said she was fighting for them?

Hon. K. Falcon: Well, as it always is with this opposition, they only look at one side of the ledger, and the side of the ledger they look on, of course, is full of gloom and doom. There is nothing that could ever go right, and goodness knows, this most successful rail organization in North America somehow is going to screw up their portion here in B.C. That's the way the opposition looks at it.

But what is the reality? The reality is that there are going to be enormous new job opportunities opening up — they kind of forget to talk about that side of the ledger, so I will talk about that — for example, the containerization at the port of Prince Rupert. We've already got a private sector port operator that's willing to invest up to half a billion dollars — hundreds of new jobs potentially being created. We have the restoration of commercially viable passenger tourism services now being recently announced, which is going to create new job opportunities up and down that corridor — again, revitalizing northern communities. Of course, we've got jobs in the new regional district head office, the wheel shop, etc. As usual, that member is just looking at one side. There is always another side, and it's very positive.

J. Kwan: You know what? This government's schemes have been shrouded in secrecy. Whether it is B.C. Rail, B.C. Ferries or ICBC, it doesn't matter. The fact of the matter is...

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

J. Kwan: ...that this government is not telling British Columbians what's going on. What we now know is that CN is cutting freight services.

The sale of B.C. Rail is a question of trust. How can you trust a Premier who's broken his promise to the north, who sold a profitable company? How can you trust a Premier who said that service will improve on the line, when CN is in fact cutting services? The gov-

ernment blacked out page after page of the contract with CN to sell B.C. Rail. Will the Deputy Premier stand up today and release the entire agreement with CN so that we know how deep this boondoggle actually is?

Hon. K. Falcon: I'm not even sure where to start, so why don't I start with the most recent part....

J. Kwan: Release the documents.

Hon. K. Falcon: "Release the documents," the member of the opposition cries. Well, Mr. Speaker, actually, that's exactly what we did. And I will remind the member of the opposition that there was no requirement whatsoever for government to release any of that information. In fact we decided...

Interjection.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[1440]

Hon. K. Falcon: ...to do that voluntarily. Both ourselves and CN released all of the information that wasn't commercially sensitive. I'm sure that member wouldn't want us releasing confidential shipping documents, arrangements with shippers and the information that had to do with personal privacy. Of course we're not going to release the personal privacy information related to employees, how much they earn and their social insurance numbers. Maybe that member would do that kind of thing, but this government won't.

So what we did was release everything. We followed the strictures of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act even though we didn't need to. We released all of the information that was most relevant to the folks out in the public who needed to know what was happening, and that kept our commitment to do exactly that.

J. Kwan: That's what we've heard for over a year from this government. Every time another piece of this ripoff puzzle falls into place, the B.C. Liberals spin the same old tired line. This broken promise is why north-erners have had enough of this government.

If the Deputy Premier doesn't trust British Columbians with the contract, why won't she hand it over to the auditor general so that British Columbians can get an independent verdict on whether the government is telling the truth? To the Deputy Premier.

Hon. K. Falcon: I'm sorry, but it's essentially a re-hashing of exactly the same question she continues to ask, so I continue to share with her the good news that's happening. I recognize that this particular member feels she knows how to run a railway more efficiently than the number one railway operator in North America.

Interjection.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. K. Falcon: That's perhaps not altogether surprising, because this is a member whose government oversaw losses of well over a billion dollars in that railway, which they had the opportunity to operate. That's why, Mr. Speaker, what we've done is actually kept the commitment of the Premier. The rail lines and the public rights-of-way all continue to be held in public hands. What we've done is brought in the most successful private sector operator in North America to actually run the railway, because they know how to run a railway. That is going to result in lower rates, improved transit times and a revitalization of the northern economies.

NEEDLES BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

B. Suffredine: The Minister of Transportation is having such a good day today that I am going to give him another chance.

Interjections.

Mr. Speaker: Please, order. Let us hear the question.

B. Suffredine: In the 1960s the valleys of the Arrow Lakes region were flooded to enable power dams to be built in the Columbia River and to fulfil the Columbia River Treaty obligations. Now, people in that area were promised a fixed link at Needles, and construction of that bridge actually began in the early 1960s and then was halted when construction estimates came in at double the expected cost.

Constituents in this area strongly support the construction of the bridge, but they're a little bit cynical about whether it's actually going to happen. Our government took a huge step forward this spring when Buckland and Taylor were selected to complete a detailed bridge design, but I still get inquiries on a regular basis by people wondering if it's actually going to happen this time. Could the Minister of Transportation tell my constituents when they can expect to see real evidence of construction of a new bridge at Needles?

Hon. K. Falcon: As the member well knows, the Premier made a commitment to the folks in the Kootenays that the Needles bridge would be a priority of this government, something that this government will be doing. I had the opportunity along with the member to visit with many of the residents from Fauquier, in the Kootenays, to talk about the Needles bridge. I am pleased to let the member know that detailed design work on that bridge should be completed by December of this year, when we will then review all that information. I'm pleased to say that we should have construction starting on the new Needles bridge by the summer of next year.

Interjection.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[1445]

ACCESS TO BEETLE-INFESTED WOOD FOR SALVAGE OPERATIONS

W. Cobb: My question is to the Minister of State for Forestry Operations. We as a provincial government just recently announced an increase in the AAC for salvage and pine beetle-infested trees. However, many of my small operators, like woodlot owners and salvage loggers, are concerned about not getting access to this beetle wood.

Can the minister explain if there is anything being done to ensure that these smaller operators actually do have access to the wood as well?

Hon. R. Harris: Thank you to the member for the question. I was recently in his riding. We met with a number of salvagers and small operators in the 100 Mile House area, and I know it's a big concern for a lot of his constituents. Back in April of this year we announced a pine beetle plan, and part of that was a process where we went out for expressions of interest. To date we've received over 66 different expressions of interest. They range from everything from small sales for a lot of the small operators he represents and is speaking about today, as well as some larger projects.

I'm pleased to say that as of last week, we've started to act on some of that information. While I was in Prince George we announced that we were going into the marketplace to tenure three new tenures. All of them would be for ten years: two of them in the Quesnel district — one for 50,000 cubic metres annually and one for 25,000 — and one in the Vanderhoof region for 50,000 cubic metres. These size tenures are actually aimed specifically at the small operators.

Another aspect that we've done in terms of trying to revitalize this industry is the reallocation process. Through the reallocation process we're moving 8 million cubic metres from major licensees into, in fact, a whole bunch of avenues for small tenure operators to access timber. Just recently we announced the first community salvage licence in Lumby, as well as a number of community forest licences around this province. We are working to ensure that those folks do in fact get access, and we'll continue to do that.

GRAVEL EXTRACTION FROM FRASER RIVER

R. Hawes: My question is to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management. I'm asking it, actually, on behalf of all of my colleagues in the Fraser Valley and the people in the Fraser Valley.

For years a moratorium on the removal of gravel from the Fraser River has caused the bottom of the river to come up, to the point that there is a real danger of flooding. The dikes, in the event of a real heavy downpour, are not likely to be able to sustain the river. A historic agreement was reached in the last month between DFO and this government to remove a consider-

able amount of gravel over the next five years. This is just tremendous news. For that, I would like to congratulate the minister and thank the minister and his predecessor for the hard work they did.

But my question is this. The people in the valley still remain somewhat cynical because they don't really trust the DFO folks. We want to know when we will begin seeing gravel taken out of the river. Luckily, this government is the one that's working on it — not the previous one, who actually worked on putting the moratorium in place. Perhaps the minister can tell us: when will we see gravel coming out of the river?

Hon. G. Abbott: The agreement we recently signed, I think, is rightly a historical agreement. To set the member at ease, we expect that come January we will see something like half a million cubic metres of gravel extracted from the Fraser River. That's an important step in a number of ways towards better flood protection, better habitat management, safer navigation and better fisheries protection.

There are a lot of benefits that come from a constructive relationship between our government, through Land and Water B.C. and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. I know we have had, at times, a difficult relationship in the past between provincial and federal authorities, but I think we are into a stage of what could be called cooperative federalism in respect of resource management.

I do want to thank the member for his advocacy and all of the Fraser Valley members for their advocacy, which was a very big part of getting this agreement in place. Local governments, the Fraser Basin Council and first nations have all played a very important role in putting this agreement together, so it's a great win-win-win. It provides that five years of certainty for the Fraser River and its management, and I congratulate all who were a part of putting that deal together.

[End of question period.]

[1450]

Petitions

K. Krueger: I rise to table a petition signed by approximately 1,100 people concerning the cutback in hours at the liquor distribution store in Barriere, B.C.

Orders of the Day

Hon. G. Plant: I call second reading of Bill 45.

Second Reading of Bills

COMMUNITY LIVING AUTHORITY ACT

Hon. S. Hagen: I move that the bill now be read a second time, and I'm pleased to open debate on second reading.

This bill, the Community Living Authority Act, represents an important step forward in the way our province delivers services to individuals with developmental disabilities. During the fall and winter of 2001, the Ministry of Children and Family Development consulted with families, staff and stakeholders. Many of these people said that the old system was rigid, overly bureaucratic and unsustainable over the long term. We were told that providing community-based services through regional authorities was the preferred option for effective and efficient delivery of supports, and we listened.

The community told us they want to create an environment where adults with developmental disabilities can participate in and contribute to their communities and live a full and valued life. These communities would be communities where adults with developmental disabilities and their families have access to choice, to shared responsibility and to community-based services, where families are central to this vision and would be involved in decision-making. As many adults with developmental disabilities as possible can remain in their families' homes or live semi-independently in their communities. Services are delivered through locally based agencies sensitive to community capacities.

[H. Long in the chair.]

Building on the Community Services Interim Authorities Act established in October of 2002, this bill responds directly to the needs of people with developmental disabilities, their families and advocates by paving the way for community-based delivery of services. As this October has been proclaimed Community Living Month in British Columbia, it is an appropriate occasion for me to present this historic bill for its second reading.

The proposed act provides the legal framework needed to establish a single permanent authority, the Community Living British Columbia Authority, to plan, develop and oversee the delivery of services for individuals who have developmental disabilities and their families. The passage of this act represents a momentous occasion for thousands of families and caregivers. This means more choice, greater flexibility and ultimately improved services. Our goal with the introduction of the act and the development of the authority is that services and supports will increasingly reflect the needs of the community. Most importantly, these resources will better address the individual needs of those participating in the programs and their families.

The creation of a permanent authority has been a dream of people with developmental disabilities and their families, advocates and care providers for more than 20 years. For most of those 20 years, they have been telling us basically that they know best, that those with the firsthand day-to-day knowledge of their needs and challenges should be the ones guiding the development of community living in British Columbia, and they're right.

[1455]

With the introduction of this act we are showing all British Columbians with developmental disabilities

and their families that we are listening, and what's more, we are responding. We're moving closer to a system of care that families have asked for and another step away from the institutions of the past.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development consulted with families, staff and stakeholders. Many of these people said that the old system was rigid, overly bureaucratic and unsustainable over the long term. Our review found that providing community-based services through regional authorities was the preferred option for effective and efficient delivery of supports. That's what this act provides.

The Community Living Authority Act establishes a new authority, community living British Columbia. The authority will be responsible for delivering some of the community living services currently delivered by the Ministry of Children and Family Development. These include a wide variety of services and programs, such as the residential programs which promote independence while meeting the clients' needs in their communities. Programs like community residences, which vary in size from small family homes to larger residential facilities — they all provide care and support as needed — or semi-independent living, which assists clients to live either alone or in small groups in homes or apartments.... Here people can live as independently as possible with the help of in-home support staff as required. These services are tailored to the needs of the individual.

We offer respite and relief services. These programs provide emergency or short-term care for adults in community residences and give their families and caregivers periodic relief from their responsibilities. Respite provides temporary care outside the home, while relief services provide alternate in-home care. Intensive adult care programs provide short-term, community-based care for adults with challenging behaviours or unique needs that cannot be served by the existing respite or temporary care facilities.

The ministry also offers training programs, like the self-help skills that provide training in personal care, social integration and job readiness. Individuals may receive one-to-one or group assistance under these programs, and they are encouraged to progress towards more demanding or challenging activities as they are able. Our home support programs assist individuals to maintain independent or semi-independent living by offering direct homemaking or household management services or by providing training in these skill sets.

The supported work programs provide a combination of work experience, training and support that help individuals find and maintain work experience placements and employment. Professional support services provide assessment, support, consultation and planning to individuals or those who support them to ensure continued success in community placements. These professional support services also help service providers, ministry staff and families to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programs and services related to community living, including training for caregivers.

One of the key pieces of the act is the provision that the governing board of community living British Columbia will be led by a majority of people who have a close connection to people with developmental disabilities. An advisory committee comprising individuals with developmental disabilities who are currently receiving community living support will be established to help guide the board's work. This advisory committee of self-advocates will have a regular input into the ongoing operations and strategies of the new authority.

In addition to providing more options for those accessing services, the act clearly outlines the powers and duties of the new authority, including multiple levels of accountability and performance monitoring. Under the legislation, the Ministry of Children and Family Development will continue to protect the public trust by maintaining provincial standards for service delivery and monitoring service delivery.

[1500]

The legislation also ensures continued protection to all people receiving community living services. The Ministry of Children and Family Development will provide this protection through its power to establish provincial standards for the delivery of community living support; approve community living B.C.'s service, budget and capital plans; monitor and access the authority's performance; and provide support and assistance to community living British Columbia. In addition, the government will have the authority to regulate conflicts or potential conflicts of interest.

Community living British Columbia will have a board of directors appointed by government on the basis of merit. The board will reflect the authority's provincial scope and its mandate. A majority of directors must be individuals who qualify for services from the new authority or who have a significant connection to those individuals. Board members will also have a demonstrated ability and the expertise to run an organization that will manage a budget of more than \$600 million a year and ensure the continued safety and protection of the more than 9,000 persons currently served through community living services.

Just last week we appointed a new assistant deputy minister for community living. He will become the CEO, or chief executive officer, of the authority when it's established, ensuring a smooth transition of services from government to the authority. Community living British Columbia will be guided by its service plan and will be required to meet provincial standards relating to service delivery. The role of the ministry is to ensure that the authority fulfils its obligations to provide improved services for British Columbians with developmental disabilities and their families.

Over the past several decades, community living advocates have worked hard to make sure that anyone with a developmental disability is able to live as fully and independently as possible in their communities. The proposed Community Living Authority Act allows us to build on that progress, bringing services closer to those who need them the most.

J. Kwan: I rise today on the first day of this fall session to respond to Bill 45. This bill, the Community Living Authority Act, was introduced in May by the former minister in what is becoming a revolving door of ministers responsible for Children and Family Development. Even this past May, the long-promised legislation was way behind the government's own schedule.

The legislation is another victim of this B.C. government's cost-cutting agenda and the chaos this government has created in the Children and Family Development ministry through its deep cuts in its budgeting, insider scandals and endless bureaucratic restructuring. In particular, plans for creating a community living authority suffered badly from the fallout of the Doug Walls scandal — a faulty, secretive process that was set in motion almost as soon as this government was elected.

In debating this bill, it is useful to review what a twisted, tortured path this long-promised legislation has faced under the mismanagement of this government. In June 2001, B.C. Liberal insider Doug Walls met with Ken Dobell, the Premier's senior deputy, and this small group laid down the plans for community living and the model of individualized funding long before the core review process for the Ministry of Children and Family Development was even started. Then on October 12, 2001, we know, cabinet approved a government model based on Doug Walls's proposal — a full six days before the minister's core review was completed and without the full support of community living stakeholders. The following two years were then earmarked not with progress towards a new authority for community living but instead with scandal, budget cuts and a series of delays and with the resignations of key Community Living Coalition members when the concerns over Doug Walls's roles.... The process was ignored by this government.

[1505]

As a result of the damaging Doug Walls scandal, the minister in charge had no choice but to resign, and after several months of total chaos, the Premier named a new minister on January 27 of this year. That minister, of course, only lasted nine months, presiding over a series of attempts to get the ministry in general and the community living sector specifically back on to some kind of even keel — from the independent audit into the Doug Walls insider scandal to a series of community living readiness panels and reports.

On January 31, 2004, the readiness panel missed a self-imposed deadline necessary to meet the target transition deadline of June. The new minister instead stated that the Bert Boyd panel would come up with a revised time line for devolution by February 27. But wrong again. Another deadline was missed. Instead, the government chose to hang on to the Bert Boyd report so that it could drop it at the same time as the Doug Walls audit, allowing this important development to get buried in the fallout from the scandal.

The government may not like what I'm saying, so instead of taking my word for it, here's what legislative columnist Paul Willcocks had to say at the time:

"But the Doug Walls audit, ugly as it was, wasn't even the worst news released by the ministry. Rather cynically, the government chose the same day to release an assessment of their efforts to restructure the ministry. The readiness report revealed that, after more than two years and tens of millions of dollars, remarkably little progress has been made.

"The ministry unveiled its big plans in January 2002. The government would slash spending on Children and Families and save money by moving to 11 new semi-independent authorities. Ten regional authorities — five aboriginal and five non-aboriginal — would take over children's services. A community living authority with a \$600 million budget would provide services to mentally disabled British Columbians and their families.

"The transition work was always going great according to the former minister" — I should say the former, former minister — "ahead of schedule even. A year ago he said the community living authority and the first two regional child protection authorities would be up and running by last fall. He was wrong. The regional authorities won't be ready until 2006.

"After the bleak readiness report on the community living authority, the new former minister said the target start date for it now is late 2005 — two years later than the first minister promised. The report reveals that the most basic questions haven't been answered. The minister doesn't know how services will be delivered. It hasn't developed the organization systems or the management team to make the authority work. It doesn't know how it will cope with transition costs or even rising demands, given this current reduced budget. It hasn't figured out what's going to happen to staff.

"It is shocking that so much time and money could have been spent so ineffectually without anyone in government noticing — not MLAs, government caucus committees, the Premier, cabinet, the top bureaucrats. It's a grimly incompetent performance. It's also a betrayal. The Liberals promised an end to endless bureaucratic restructuring in the ministry during the campaign. The Premier spoke passionately of the need for more money, but what they have actually been delivered is arbitrary budget cuts and a botched and mismanaged reorganization.

"Footnote. The failure is hardly a surprise. The Liberals were warned repeatedly that the idea of simultaneously restructuring the ministry while cutting the budget by more than 10 percent was reckless. They chose to ignore the warnings and apparently also chose to ignore the fumbling in the ministry's restructuring plans."

That was from a column by Paul Willcocks in the *Kelowna Daily Courier*, May 18, 2004.

Then finally, on May 19, the former minister, or at least the most recent former minister.... I know I've referenced that a couple of times, but as we've noted, the government has changed the ministers — well, actually, more than once — twice over the last few months. The most recent former minister introduced an exposure bill, Bill 45. That's what we have before us today.

[1510]

The intent of an exposure bill, the government likes to claim, is to allow public input and consultation. Yet here is an interesting thing. If the consultation is to be real, then surely there is the possibility that the bill might actually change as a result of that process and of the public's input. We have in British Columbia dedi-

cated professionals, volunteers, family members and self-advocates in the community living sector — people who work tirelessly with and on behalf of the developmentally disabled. I know they have important things and important insights and input to offer.

Of course, talk of consultation is just talk. A member of my staff spoke with a key stakeholder group, the B.C. Association for Community Living, and she was told that there was apparently a chance to send input in to the ministry's website. But unfortunately, they hadn't been informed of it. Imagine that. The government does its consultation by website and then doesn't even inform a stakeholder — a key stakeholder in the sector, the B.C. Association for Community Living — that there was a way to ensure that the input is provided to the government. Perhaps the reason is that the community living sector — including the B.C. Association for Community Living, which has worked closely with this government towards this legislation — is deeply unhappy with key aspects of the bill.

The community living sector is particularly angry at the government's refusal to include a self-advocate on the board of the authority and to allow family members to have a 50-percent-plus-one majority on the board. This is viewed as a complete betrayal by self-advocates and family members and the community living sector as a whole.

Here's what the B.C. Association for Community Living put on its news release yesterday:

"We are pleased that this legislation is finally coming forward, but we are concerned about the lack of consultation on its content and about some of its shortcomings. For example, while it creates a provincial board and enables family members to be represented, it does not specifically require any representation by people with developmental disabilities. This has always been one of the pillars of our vision, and we will continue to work towards getting that representation.

"The B.C. Association for Community Living also remains concerned about the much-reduced budget for the services that will come under the new community living B.C. We welcome the legislation but remind the government that there are growing numbers of people on wait-lists for services and increasing numbers of children, youth, adults and families who are experiencing crisis as a result of being unable to access services when they need them. It's not much help to have your child on a wait list for 'early' childhood intervention if it takes three years to get the service. It is time for this government to reinvest so that individuals and families can get the supports they need, when they are needed."

Lack of consultation, the refusal to provide the family and self-advocate representation on the board, and the chaos and crisis created by continued budget cuts are, of course, the hallmarks of this Liberal government. This B.C. Liberal government has tried to balance the budget through deep cuts to two ministries — Children and Family Development, and Human Resources — in a very mean-spirited attack on the most vulnerable in this province.

Under this B.C. Liberal government, the percentage of the budget that the B.C. government spends on programs for families and kids has never been lower.

When this year's budget kicked in on April 1, \$63 million worth of programs were eliminated from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, along with 152 full-time employees. The community living services for adults with developmental disabilities were cut by \$50 million over the last three years, while services to children and families, including children with special needs and their families, were cut by \$145 million.

[1515]

It is in this context that this bill, the Community Living Authority Act, must be debated. It is in this context that family members and self-advocates, dedicated professionals and volunteers in the community living sector want to see this bill debated and improved. They want to see progress, finally, towards the long-promised devolution of services, but not without key changes.

We in the NDP opposition will be supporting the community living sector in its goals of finally moving ahead with a community living authority. In committee stage we will be examining the bill closely and will be offering positive suggestions to improve the bill and to make it serve the people it is meant to serve. We will, as I mentioned, come forward in committee stage with suggestions as to how the bill could be improved and better reflect the true input from the community that has worked on this issue over the last number of years.

J. Bray: I rise very happily in support of Bill 45. I have a lot of very positive things to say about this bill and, in fact, the move this government is making on behalf of families with a member who has a developmental disability.

I can't go without first acknowledging some of the rather arcane and bizarre comments from the opposition — an opposition who, by the way, for ten years heard the pleas and the cries from the community living sector for things like individualized funding, more involvement, more control and a continuation of the movement from institutionalization to community care. That government did nothing for those families, so I find it kind of odd for the member for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, who was a cabinet minister for a weekend or two, to actually stand up now and suggest that somehow we haven't done things well, when they had ten years and moved zero on the front of community living.

You know, she made mention that we have had a couple of cabinet ministers in that ministry. It might be interesting for people to note that from '96 to 2001, that government had a revolving door of cabinet ministers. In fact, the Ministry of Labour had nine ministers in four and a half years. The kind of continuity was absolutely bizarre. I worked in the civil service. Every week it was just a decision: who's our minister this week? They moved them around.

In fact, the Ministry of Children and Family Development.... They got so weak in the gene pool on the NDP caucus that they actually went and appointed someone who wasn't even a member of government to

be that minister — an absolutely shocking example of how weak the NDP were. I can tell you that that ministry went through reorgs not in terms of trying to deliver service, not in terms of improving protection for children, not in terms of enhanced supports for families with a person with a developmental disability but internal reorganizations about org charts and policy manuals and what services were in this ministry and out of that ministry. It was chaos.

What we brought in when we got elected were service plans that set out clear objectives, clear performance measures, clear goals, clear lines of responsibility, and for the last four years we've been carrying out that plan. That's the difference between the government that the opposition was a member of and this government.

The other thing I found interesting was that that member talked about our consultation process and had the bizarre criticism that we used the Internet for our consultation — that we actually wanted to make sure that not just people from the member's home city of Vancouver could be part of the consultation or that members of my community could visit ministry staff here in Victoria, but we actually wanted consultation from Prince George. We wanted consultation from Dawson Creek. We wanted consultation from large urban centres, but we also wanted the opportunity for smaller towns and rural areas to be able to provide consultation directly to the minister.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker. That's what the Internet is for. That's what the technology allows. It ensures that every British Columbian who has a family member receiving community living services or a concerned individual in the community could actually give direct feedback on this exposure bill so that we could make sure it was the best piece of legislation and that the supporting regulations met the needs of communities large and small across this province.

[1520]

I remember that when that member was a member of government, consultation was: if you happen to know somebody in Vancouver or you live in Victoria — great. If you lived anywhere else in this province, you were shut out. I think it's actually a credit to the Ministry of Children and Family Development to put that opportunity on the Internet for every single British Columbian to have direct feedback. That's why we're coming forth with a bill that's strong, and the policy and regulation framework will actually recognize those consultations and ensure that this act serves communities large and small.

Now, the member did talk about the history of community living, that we've really come a long way in society in general from the days of institutionalization with people and individuals who had developmental disabilities to recognizing that the best place for individuals was in their community, at home or close to home, and providing opportunities for those individuals to participate as fully as possible in the communities in which they lived.

In the eighties that move garnered great steam, and that move made its way from deinstitutionalization.

Although the NDP talks a great game about how they care, they actually were inept at carrying that momentum forward. That momentum stalled in the nineties because that government wasn't prepared to think outside the box. That government was not prepared to look at something other than "government must do everything for everybody all the time."

This government, while in opposition, talked to the community living sector, family caregivers, self-advocates, academics, professionals in the field — including professionals, by the way, in the Ministry of Children and Family Development, bureaucrats who that member suggested didn't know what they were doing. I find that an insult to our public servants who are a critical part of this new framework.

While in opposition, we listened to that community who said the momentum for us to be in community living is to continue that devolution. We've now gone away from institutions to community care and home care, but we also need to move from government being the driver and the organizer and the deliverer of those services to the community itself taking charge of the services we know our family members and our loved ones need to maximize their independence and their ability to participate in the community.

There is no question that we listened when in opposition. When that member was a member of government, she didn't listen at all. When we got elected, what did we do? We actually laid out the framework that was visionary and that actually looked outside the box, outside the structures of rigid government silos. We moved forward with this new authority that would transfer the responsibility and the accountability from government, from politicians, to the people involved in the community living sector. Now, that was a bold move. It was a move that was noticed not just across Canada but in fact around North America and in Europe. As we moved to devolve those services away from government and closer to the community that was being served, we were actually looking at a new model.

The member mentioned the time it's taken for us to get to this point. Her time lines are correct, but her understanding of how significant a move this is clearly isn't. That government moved forward on things regardless of the facts. That's how you got Hydrogate. That's how you got fast ferries. That's how you got the Ministry of Children and Family Development's seven ministers between 1993 and 2001 and three between 1998 and 2001. They just moved without any consideration, without any thought into what was happening.

We've made sure that as we take this vision and make it implemented on the ground, we've got one thing at the centre of that agenda. We've got our eye on the ball for one thing and one thing only — that those most vulnerable who are receiving these services see no negative impacts from this visionary change and, in fact, see an improvement and enhancement in the services. I'm proud that the minister ensures that we're not going to move forward until we've got that in place.

[1525]

The NDP just rushed all over the place and made mistakes all over the place. We all remember that the Ministry of Children and Family Development under that government was in the news every week for inept decisions made by the politicians. That ministry under the NDP had nine independent offices reviewing every decision a front-line social worker made — nine. We have the best social workers in North America right here in British Columbia, but they got such mixed messages from the NDP that they were unable to make any decisions. In fact, the NDP brought in a system that put social workers behind the desk 70 percent of the time, filling out reports, and only 30 percent of the time looking after family services or children at risk.

Well, we've recognized that we've got professional social workers, so we've removed that kind of bureaucracy and that kind of conflicting oversight so that front-line social workers can practise to their full scope of practice and serve families. The result is that families get better service. Social workers are doing the work they're supposed to be doing, and we're now moving to the next phase, which is looking at how we can devolve services even further. We've done things the right way. That government most certainly did not.

Why am I so pleased with Bill 45 and the fact that we're moving forward with the authority for community living? It is because it continues that devolution. It ensures that the heroes in our community — those who actually live day to day supporting, nurturing and loving individuals with developmental disabilities — continue to increase the control they deservedly should have over the course of their loved ones' lives, and that communities continue to have more control and structure over the services provided in that community to meet the needs of those individuals, whether those individuals live in a larger urban area like greater Victoria or a smaller area like Prince Rupert. The community and those living in the community are the best to make those decisions.

This act does some important things, though. It establishes accountability and responsibility. It certainly doesn't abrogate government's role in that, but it ensures that the community has the structure through the authority to deliver those services in a more timely and effective way for the clients and the loved ones they're involved with. It removes government from that day-to-day operation — which, by the way, often came out of Victoria, which meant that it was not relevant to people living in other parts of the province — and ensures greater relevance.

The other thing that's important about this is that this is not done in isolation. It was a vision that this government — the Premier and the ministers — had, but after that, we went directly back into the community to consult. Exposure bills, as the member of the opposition criticized, are actually one of the many ways in which we've consulted the community living sector. The bill, an exposure bill, is just one more way to ensure that over the summer, those that will be affected by this act — those with developmental disabili-

ties and their families and caregivers — had an opportunity to provide the ministry directly with input.

That's critical because it ensures that as we move forward, as the authority is named and as it starts to do its work and as the programs are transferred over, they've got the benefit of that information from large and small communities. I, for one, am absolutely pleased that we've gone through extensive consultation leading up to the exposure bill being introduced in the House in the spring, but then, subsequently, all throughout the summer.... We've provided it in a way that allowed people not to have to spend a lot of money, not to have to travel to Victoria or Vancouver. From their own communities, they could provide detailed information and feedback to the minister.

It's important to note who we're talking about here in terms of who this authority is going to have oversight on. It's for all those with developmental disabilities aged six forward. It's a large population; it includes adults. Currently, it has a budget of \$600 million.

I can tell you that British Columbia is a leader in the types of community services we provide for those with developmental disabilities. There's always more to be done. There are always new enhancements. There are always different ways to do things. This government is always prepared to look at all of those new options, but by having the authority available, people who live in the community living sector daily, being closer to the people receiving the service and closer to those providing the service, will be able to be more responsive as new program ideas emerge and as new literature is published on services for people with developmental disabilities.

Do you know who's going to benefit from that? The group we had our eye on to begin with — those most vulnerable in our community, those with developmental disabilities. That's what this is all about.

[1530]

You know, it frustrates me that the opposition would take this segment of our population and play politics with it. It's actually reprehensible. For ten years they did nothing with this sector, left them to wither on the vine. Individualized funding? Oh, don't want to talk about that. New ways and new programs to allow participation in the community? Oh, don't want to talk about that. Different setups for group homes that provide greater flexibility for individuals to participate in the community? Oh, don't want to talk about that. How about contract reform — different outcomes, actually measuring the performance of contractors to make sure that the services are being provided and that the clients are benefiting from the services? "Oh, don't want to talk about that."

Now that we're actually moving forward with a vision for community care on behalf of those same individuals with developmental disabilities, the opposition wants to play politics. Well, I can tell you that this government doesn't play politics with those individuals. We want to make sure that we're providing the kind of care they deserve and the support for their families. We will continue to do that. We will continue

to work on behalf of those families and with those families to ensure those services.

The NDP used to do things like actually expropriate charitable buildings — take them over, take them back from the community. We're providing back to the community, and we're providing them with the supports and the structure to enhance and improve services for people with disabilities.

One of the things we're ensuring is that most of the services provided to individuals with developmental disabilities are done through service contracts. One of the things we're working on as a government, and I know the minister is working on, is ensuring that as the authority is up and running and the transfer of those contracts from government to the authority happens, the service providers and the recipients of the service are clear on what's happening so that we have that smooth transition so that on the ground, ultimately, initially nothing will look any different.

There's a lot of work involved with that. You've got electronic systems. You've got contracts. You've got the type of work involved in administering those on a daily basis that has to make sure that it's all in place so that we don't make any errors. I know that the minister — and he spoke about this in his statements — is ensuring at the ground level that there's no disruption.

The benefit of having the community living authority is that over time, those services can be enhanced. The contracts can be improved — made more specific to the community and to the individual — and ultimately the service provided to the individual and the support to the family should be improved. I don't know why the opposition doesn't think that's a good idea. I think it's a heck of a good idea. I know that the constituents I have been dealing with for the last three years on this file in community living are eager to see that transition and to work with the authority to improve those services and improve those contracts and deliverables so that the benefit goes to the individuals being served.

It's also important to recognize that although this is going to be an independent authority, it is still an operating agency of government. It's not like government is off the hook. Government is still responsible for the services, but what we've recognized is that there's a better way, a more visionary way to deliver those services.

The minister, in his comments, has mentioned that there's a new assistant deputy minister who will be the initial CEO of the authority. I think that is the kind of good thinking that leads to strong transition. You'll have a board that will have someone who understands how government works, understands the goals of the community living authority and can help the board move in that transition so that, again, services are enhanced as we move forward. That, to me, makes a lot of sense.

The member opposite, the NDP, raised a concern about the makeup of this authority. There are a couple things that are important to remember. When the NDP were government, they would appoint their friends

and hacks to boards. That's how you got B.C. Hydro's only generation project being built in Pakistan. They got their buddies on there and then quietly sold shares back to their buddies. They didn't actually do anything about enhancing generation in British Columbia, but Pakistan's got a beautiful new dam. Or B.C. Ferries. They put all their buddies on B.C. Ferries, and when their buddies on B.C. Ferries said, "Jeez, that fast ferry thing is probably not a good idea," they fired all their friends and put on some more friends.

We said from day one....

An Hon. Member: They didn't have that many friends.

J. Bray: They didn't have that many friends. That's true. They ran out of them pretty quickly.

[1535]

What we said was that when we got elected, we would be appointing people to boards based on merit — no different than what we brought in with the merit commissioner for the public service. We actually want people on boards who understand the business that the board's involved in, not because they're friends of ours or friends of the NDP or friends of big labour or friends of big business, but because they're actually competent and they can actually manage the business of that board.

Why is ICBC actually being able to improve road safety, reduce claims and increase efficiency? It's because we've got a board in ICBC that knows how to run an insurance company. Why is B.C. Hydro able to run more effectively, more efficiently, and put long-range plans forward? It's because they've got people who understand how to run a utility. And who is going to be on the community living authority? It's people who understand how to run a service-based organization with a budget of \$600 million.

I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell this to the member of the opposition. It is also going to have people.... I believe that we're going to have over 50 percent of those people being family members or those significantly involved in the care of somebody with a developmental disability — over half. In fact, the member's fear is ill-based, but those people are still going to be based on merit. They actually are going to have to be able to operate and make decisions to run a \$600 million operation. That, to me, is basic common sense.

We recognize that it needs to be people who understand the community living sector, and nobody knows that better than family members, caregivers and those that are intimately involved in the community living sector. That's who is going to make up, in my belief, the majority of that board, and that is good news for the community living sector. But it's also good news for the taxpayer, because they know they're going to have a board that can competently manage \$600 million.

Now, we always have to work towards improving services for people with developmental disabilities. We always have to make sure that services fit urban needs and rural needs. We always have to listen to the care-

givers, the family members, who essentially in many cases put their lives on hold to provide care to their loved one who has a developmental disability.

The community living authority provides an avenue to effect positive change on behalf of those with developmental disabilities. What the general public wants to know is: what's in place to protect those individuals? Who's got scrutiny over this activity, who has oversight, and how can we have confidence that the services are being provided, that services are being enhanced and that the taxpayer is being protected? Well, this authority falls under all the oversight that other agencies of government fall under. Certainly, requirements of the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act for public disclosure of financial information are all in place. Just like B.C. Hydro, just like ICBC, the financial operations of the community living authority must be made available to the public.

In addition — and it's important for people to know this so that they have a certain level of comfort — the authority is also subject to freedom of information. So in fact, family members and service providers are going to be governed under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Not only does the public have the scrutiny, but also individuals who are involved in the community living sector — especially clients — have the protection that's afforded by law. That's important, because of course there is a lot of personal information that goes into the provision of service for people with developmental disabilities. It's important that people know that from an accountability standpoint, the Freedom of Information Act applies but also that that personal sensitive information is protected by the same piece of legislation. That's in place, and that's important.

The other thing that's really important is that this does not move away from the need for independent oversight. So the child and youth officer is still responsible for oversight with respect to children. The difference is that when the opposition, the NDP, were in government, they had nine offices overseeing individual decisions. Of course, they had slightly different perspectives, and all that did was provide conflicting reviews, conflicting policy advice and conflicting decisions. The end result for the front-line social worker, for the resource worker and for the policy-makers was utter paralysis.

[1540]

We've actually said we need to have individual oversight, but we need to have it in one place so that professional social workers, professional service providers and the contract providers don't get conflicting messages. The child and youth officer is there to ensure that the services that are provided to children and youth are specifically included in their office. That oversight will be there for children, just as it is for child protection.

The other important issue is that community living B.C. will be included under the auspices of the ombudsman. With respect to fairness, integrity and delivery of service in an administratively fair fashion, com-

munity living — the authority — and community living B.C. will be under the auspices of the ombudsman.

We have the independence that the community has asked for, for the delivery of services for people with developmental disabilities, but we have the structure through the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act, from the ombudsman, from the child and youth officer, and from freedom of information to ensure that both on individual case decisions as well as the larger expenditure decisions, full accountability is there, full public scrutiny is there, and ultimately government will continue to be responsible for that. But the individual decisions for families, for caregivers, for service providers, for communities, for the individual living with a developmental disability will continue to be devolved to the community where it rightfully belongs.

I think that it's a rather sad day when the NDP has nothing else to do but to play politics with the community living sector. It has nothing more substantive in their debate than to worry about time lines that they never stuck to when they were in government, but that we actually ensured were making the right decisions.... If that's all they had to criticize, I find that rather shocking — and to actually criticize, as I said earlier, the number of ministers when they had a revolving door. You may remember that Ed John from Prince George, a perfectly fine individual but not an elected member of this body, became the Minister for Children and Families for a period of time because they'd gone through the gene pool in the NDP caucus and were left without much to choose from.

I'm heartened that several of those NDP bright lights that never made it into cabinet in that revolving door are now seeking nomination and re-election. We'll see their star talent rise again. There are some here in the capital region and around the province. Some of their bright lights are reappearing. I look forward to the campaign when we have Glen Clark's reunion tour happening around the province.

But I certainly think it's unfortunate that the NDP chooses the community living sector as one to play politics. We've never played politics. We've always put the needs of the most vulnerable at the top of the agenda. We've put the families at the top of the agenda and the professionals who provide service at the top of the agenda. They can resort to politics. We're going to continue to resort to good policy, good implementation, and improve lives for those living with developmental disabilities. I fully support this bill.

M. Hunter: Actually, I was quite enjoying that.

I rise to speak in support of the Community Living Authority Act, Bill 45. In doing so, I have to acknowledge that if somebody had asked me three and a half years ago, before I got elected to this place, if I would be standing here to talk about this bill, I would have scratched my head and wondered what on earth we would be talking about. But I have had the benefit of learning much about this whole subject from dedicated volunteers in the Nanaimo Association of Community Living. I have been able to spend time with that or-

ganization, with some of the families whose children, adult children, receive their services. I have worked with that organization to try and understand the challenges that it faces in times of fiscal restraint. I, therefore, am pleased to be able to stand here with at least a modicum of understanding about what this bill is trying to do.

I listened, as well, to the comments from the member of the opposition, the member for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant. I think it was the Hon. John Crosbie who once talked about the nabobs of negativity. I'm sure he was thinking about that member when he coined that phrase, because all I heard were negative comments about a bill whose objectives, in my mind, are both overdue and honourable.

[1545]

You know, to listen to that member talk about revolving doors is just a little bit rich. The member for Victoria-Beacon Hill talked about the number of ministers for Children and Families that the last NDP government had. I also recall that in one year alone, they had three ministers in this one portfolio: Ed John for five months, Gretchen Brewin for a few months and Lois Boone, all in one year. If we are talking about revolving ministry doors, then I would agree that the member for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant knows an awful lot more about that subject than do I or other members on the government side.

She also alleges chaos in the ministry and taking time to do this stuff. Yes, this exercise, this bill has taken probably longer to come to fruition than any of us who have spent time on this subject would have liked. I think it's important that we understand that we are talking about changes in the way in which government provides services to people and families who are in need of those services. I think that to get it right is more important than to do it quickly. I view this bill as being really one more step in a long process in our society in which we have come to recognize and tried to deal with people and families who have problems with developmental disabilities.

I'd just like you to cast your mind back, Mr. Speaker, because I know you're almost old enough to do it, to think about the changes that have occurred over the past half century or even longer. If you just take as a guideline.... I'm sure that like me you have read many of the novels of Charles Dickens of 150 years ago, talking about the way society treated people who were not perhaps as mentally able or as physically able as most of the population. If you just stop for a moment to think about how our society in Canada has progressed from the kind of conditions that Dickens talked about and I'm sure existed in the early years of Canada as a nation. Think about where we were and where we have come. Think about how these people with developmental disabilities, children and adults both, were isolated from society. They were hidden, in many cases, by their families because of the issues they had. Basically, we removed from our society a whole bunch of individuals, and that was the way it was for a long time.

Thankfully, those days are past. Over the past few decades we as a society here in Canada, here in British Columbia, have come to understand that people with developmental disabilities have far too much to offer our society to be hidden away. I have had the pleasure of attending events from my association of community living that I referred to earlier, the Nanaimo association. I've had the opportunity and the pleasure of attending functions of theirs where, with adults with developmental disabilities and their families, I've seen the enjoyment and the sheer joy on the faces of people who are getting attention and receiving the kind of services that we are, as a government, responsible to provide. I think these folks who have developmental disabilities have an awful lot to offer us in terms of the way they behave and the way they respond to stimuli.

We have come to develop both in law and in our day-to-day practice, in the majority of cases, respect for every individual irrespective of their creed, colour, age or in this case their ability. That is a development in our society where I think, without being too dramatic about it, this bill actually moves us forward one more step.

The member for Victoria-Beacon Hill talked about world leadership in this area. I think one of the things that has struck me in the discussions I've had with people involved is the move to create an authority — an authority related to government but acting independently — and disburse a significant budget of taxpayer dollars. We in British Columbia are very much setting new standards and new approaches. We have exhibited here global leadership, and exhibiting that global leadership has created some discussion and debate which has, in turn, caused this very notable event to have been deferred beyond, as I said, the time that many of us would have preferred.

[1550]

You know, most of us in this chamber are able to go about our daily business. We live independently. Well, at least I live dependent. I'm dependent on my family, but we certainly go about our daily tasks and our thought processes in an independent way.

We take that for granted. It's something that I wish everybody could do, but the fact is that they cannot. We have a significant number of people in our society who need the help, and I, for one, am pleased that we are taking this step forward. I believe it is a progressive step forward, through Bill 45, to give those people and their families.... Let's not forget that adults with developmental disabilities, who are going to be the major focus of the agency, are people who really do need our support. It's a daunting task to have an adult child who is reliant on you, your home and your life. We can only imagine as people not in that position how difficult life must be, without thinking about the services we are here to provide.

I think this bill is a very important one. It brings a new, different and world-leading focus on people. Its intent is to improve the services that we as government are responsible for providing. Those services are clearly the services that the people of British Columbia

expect to be provided to those who are less fortunate and, in this case, suffer from developmental disabilities.

The member of the opposition was critical about the consultation process. She talked about how, God forbid, government would go out on the Internet and actually ask people to comment on a bill which was introduced in this chamber some five months ago. A message to the member of the opposition: we have had the Internet around us now for going on ten years. This government has been very progressive in the way it deals with both electronic commerce and electronic means of communicating with its citizens. Every one of us, as members, does that. I think it's a little strange that a member would talk about how she was bemused or critical of a ministry that would actually go to electronic means of consultation.

The fact is that this is a big place that we live in, and it is often much easier for people to sit down in front of their PC and take a look at a document in the comfort of their home, develop some thoughts, type them out and send them in. I think that engagement with people through electronic means has actually improved our ability as government and public servants to deal with people in a more honest and sometimes even more efficient way, although I must say that the volume of e-mails that comes across each of our desks is sometimes a little bit daunting.

I don't get that somebody would be critical of a process of consultation that not only took in the five months of the summer of 2004 but was the subject of consultation with people in the business of community living and provision of services and families with people needing those services. That discussion didn't just start in May; that discussion has been going on for the length of this government. I think it's not fair and certainly not correct to suggest that the consultation process that was employed to get us to the stage where we are — second reading of this bill — was somehow faulty. That doesn't mean that everybody agrees with every little bit of the bill. It would be very unusual, frankly, if they did.

I want to comment a little bit on some issues that have been raised. I think there's been a fear out there that somehow government is relieving itself of the responsibility we have as a society to people with developmental disabilities. That simply isn't true. The bill makes it very clear that government is still responsible. It does set up an agency, an authority, and gives that authority a degree of independence, but there remains government responsibility. There remains the ability for the public to scrutinize how the budget of the authority is developed and how it's used. It gives the public the ability to scrutinize how the provision of services and the development of those services is done. I think that this development, the creation of an authority, is one more example of how this government is being intelligent in the use of public resources.

[1555]

I've had the argument made to me that if you don't have a public servant inspecting this, checking on that

and making sure that a particular service or a particular program gets put in place, then somehow as a society we're all going to go and do our own thing, and there's going to be chaos. I don't subscribe to that theory, quite honestly. I think that if we expect government through various ministries to have civil servants on every street corner as though they were policemen at a football match in the United Kingdom.... I mean, we can't live that way. We all have responsibility as citizens as well as rights, and part of our responsibility is to take note of what's going on around us, to bring to the attention of authorities, including government ministries and civil servants, when things don't seem right.

I much prefer that kind of a society to one where we expect a civil servant — whether it be from the Ministry of Children and Family Development or the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection or the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries — to be checking up on what our people do day in and day out. I don't think society should work that way. I don't think it does work very well that way.

I see the creation of this authority as one more example of where our government is moving responsibility as well as authority to citizenry in a way that retains the fundamental responsibility we have as government, as I've said, for providing these services. I am quite happy with the mechanism this bill proposes for the community living authority.

I know there have been questions raised about qualifications for board membership. I think the most important qualification for the member of any board is merit. It's ability. Can the person do the job that is laid out for that particular board?

One of the reasons I ran for election in this place was that I was fed up with the last government, which simply appointed its friends. If you were in the business community, you couldn't get close to decision-making, never mind get appointed to boards and so on.

This government has changed that. This government has changed to a system where we ask people to step forward with their résumés to say: "Here's how I can serve the public interest of British Columbia. Here's how I can serve on this board or that board. Here are my qualifications. Here's the amount of time I'm able to spend." We are able to take that information, and we are able to ask people to serve British Columbians in many, many ways that affect our daily lives — and some that don't, frankly.

That's what's important about the qualifications for a board. I know there are people in the whole field of community living who would like to see some quotas put on a board or specification qualifications — that there should be a certain number of people or family members dealing with adults with developmental disabilities — and I hope that happens. I hope we can find people to serve on the board of this authority who are in daily touch with the kinds of issues we have to deal with. I really hope that's the case. Most important is that we have people who are able to do the job and do the job on behalf of all of those who are going to receive the services.

To those who have expressed some concern about the issue of qualifications for the board, I note that in this bill there is provision for an advisory committee that will involve people who have developmental disabilities. When you add all that up and look at the structure proposed for the board, what it means is that we're talking about what is, I think, the objective of people who have commented on this particular part of the bill. We are trying to involve people who have developmental disabilities in the evolution of services and programs that affect their lives. That's an important objective, and I expect the structure of the board and the advisory committee will indeed lead to that outcome.

[1600]

Lastly, I want to go back to a theme that I spoke about earlier. It would be nice to make big leaps. It would be nice to take this subject of dealing with people with developmental disabilities and providing services and make big leaps forward. In many respects, I think this bill does that. As I've said, we are exhibiting global leadership — a way of dealing with issues that I believe is unique, certainly in North America and probably in the western world. Most importantly, it represents in my mind one more step in improving the lives of people who have developmental disabilities.

Continuous improvement is a watchword in the industrial workplace — continuous improvement in the way we deal with employees, continuous improvement in the way we deal with product development, continuous improvement in technology. Well, why can't we apply continuous improvement to the way in which we deal with people who are less fortunate than we are and whose families require improved services?

I think that this bill, Bill 45, the Community Living Authority Act, leads very much in that direction, and I am pleased to be able to support the bill.

J. Nuraney: I, too, rise in support of this bill. This bill, again, is a sign of courage, of change, of boldness on the part of this government. Ever since this government got elected, they have taken steps that were considered to be bold, that were considered to be courageous, that were considered to effect change. Every step that this government has taken has been for the betterment of British Columbians. This is another one of those steps that this government has undertaken.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

As we know, people affected by disabilities, developmental disabilities, have been treated in the past with one brush. There was a global concept of how to deal with them. There was a universal structure of institutions to look after them, without regard for their individual needs. This government has taken that extra step to come closer to those people who need our help the most. We are saying: "Let us individualize funding. Let us individualize the need for that person who needs our help."

I think this is a step in the right direction. It is a change; it's an evolution. Our member from Nanaimo pointed out that in the past, society and families tried to hide people with disabilities because they were considered something not to be very proud of. We as a society, in the last decade or two, have come a long way in recognizing that we are dealing with people who are humans, we are dealing with people who have souls, we are dealing with people who need our help, and we should be there when they need it.

I remember two and a half years ago, when the member for Surrey-White Rock tried to initiate this new dialogue among communities and the stakeholders. I remember attending an event where the minister at the time was invited to discuss this matter and to share his vision. This event was one of great emotions. I saw tears being shed by people who were affected, by people who were there in the room, the stakeholders, who saw this new vision of the government and who felt that we were coming closer to them, that we were looking them in the eye and saying: "How can we best help you?" I think this is the model that will implement that vision. It will bring us closer to where we as a government must go.

I commend the minister for bringing this forward. Once again, I stand in support of this bill.

[1605]

D. Jarvis: I rise, as well, to support this bill. I must say that I've always had a lot of concerns with regards to the aspect in children and families with respect to people with disabilities, but this bill certainly has my support — Bill 45, the Community Living Authority Act — which is a move to bring in a new governance model for the delivery of community living services.

Most of the families in the North Shore and in my riding specifically who have children with disabilities face a lifelong service and challenge. Heretofore, the problems have been quite a few. They enter into a world that requires early intervention assistance and effective school programs that they have to look at. Respite assistance is a major problem. Then they also face placement problems.

The respite is the thing that probably caught my attention some years ago. When the member for Richmond East was the critic for Children and Families, I used to go out with her in the evenings to act as her bodyguard when she had to travel through various places in Vancouver. It was a real concern to sit there and listen to these families that had children with disabilities. Some of them had not had any respite for four or five years. It was hard to actually realize there are people who are that dedicated, even though it is their own children. It always amazed me how they were standing up bright and happy and were willing to face the problems that they had before them.

Perhaps the greatest heartbreak and fear of these people was the period that they had to face.... That is the transition planning when the child with a disability is going to enter into adulthood, the age of 19. A very heavy period of life for someone looking after their

child is when that child passes their eighteenth birthday and there is nothing left — no support services — for them. As I said previously, the Ministry for Children and Families, I believe, had.... The adult portion was deficient. Here in this bill, Bill 45, I have a feeling that things have changed now.

When a child goes to 19, the children's services end, along with assistance to the parents. Some have kept their disabled children at home. This becomes a very critical period in their life, as these parents also have aged and reach a point where they know they are going to be unable to look after their child. Heretofore, there has been a deficiency in that end of it. There were concerns out there, as this is a very vulnerable population of our society. I believe that they are entitled to be recognized as an essential service.

I will not go on forever and ever on this subject, but I do say that I am supportive of this bill. I trust that the support and services will follow for those who are indeed in need.

Mr. Speaker, I'm actually quite excited for those parents that I have met — a group of parents that I met less than a month ago in my riding who were so concerned as to what was going to happen to their children and were suddenly realizing that there was not going to be any support for them. All of them, to my surprise.... They weren't expecting the government to do everything for them. They were prepared to look after them. They were prepared to look at the fact that they had to consider insurance and investments for their children as they grow older.

[1610]

Things are getting better. I'm so pleased that this is now happening, so I can go back to the parents in my riding, and I'm sure they will all be in agreement that Bill 45 will be not the answer to all their prayers but certainly of great assistance to them.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I support Bill 45 during second reading.

G. Halsey-Brandt: It gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak in support of Bill 45, the Community Living Authority Act. Just before I make some comments on the particulars of the act, I would like to remind all members that in fact October is Community Living Month in British Columbia, as proclaimed by the Premier of British Columbia. So it certainly is an appropriate time that we're dealing with this legislation.

Just a couple of personal comments before I get into the meat of the legislation. I've had the opportunity every year for the past seven years to attend the anniversary celebrations of the Richmond Community Living Society, and we just had those celebrations this past Saturday in the Richmond Centre Mall. I must admit there were dozens of participants that attended, both members of the society and of course the general public as well. It was a great celebration. Again, it celebrated the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in our broader community. As many of the members have said before me, I think we have certainly made

great strides all throughout our community in the past several decades in really being inclusive, and that's what it is all about — bringing out the best in everybody. There were informative speeches, entertainment, awards and information booths, so it really was a community participation with the Richmond Community Living Society.

Secondly, I would like to recognize the Developmental Disabilities Association, which offers services both in the city of Richmond where I come from and in Vancouver as well. I would just like to mention some of those services that they deliver: job placement and training, residential group homes that they operate, semi-independent apartments, self-help programs, an infant development program, integrated preschool and child care services, children's hospice and respite services, after-school leisure and life skill programs, and family advocacy and support services. Certainly, as I say, over the past decade we've come a long way in bringing everyone inclusively into our society, and these types of programs are there for people with developmental disabilities to avail themselves. I would finally like to thank the family members and volunteers who work with those in our community with a developmental disability. It really is all about inclusion.

The bill itself, the Community Living Authority Act, introduces.... I believe, as other members have said this afternoon, that it is really groundbreaking legislation that will transform how community living services are to be provided to individuals with developmental disabilities in British Columbia. It's really a legislative framework that now allows the community delivery of services that were formerly provided by the government. It's a real step in an ongoing process we've undertaken through this term of our government.

The bill establishes community living B.C. as the permanent provincial authority responsible for providing support to adults and children with developmental disabilities and their families. This bill will enable, as I said, the transfer of services from the Ministry of Children and Family Development to this permanent authority. With this legislation, obviously, the ministry remains responsible for setting the standards, and of course it retains the power to monitor and assess the new authority, but it really gives this community-based authority the power to get on with its work closer to home and closer to individuals.

Earlier this afternoon the member of the opposition that was in the House quoted some material out of the press release from the B.C. Association for Community Living. Not all of it was quoted, and I would just like to add a couple of spots in that press release as well: "With the legislation in place the community can finally get on with the project of creating a service system that reflects the vision of those who use the services, that offers more flexibility and responds to the needs of individuals and families more creatively." I think that really is the nub of this legislation.

[1615]

I think it's really how you look at it. Is the glass half full, or is the glass half empty? I think the government

members are looking and saying: "Look, this glass is getting fuller." It's certainly a step in the right direction.

There were a couple of concerns raised by people with disabilities, and I think we have to face those. The first was the question of funding. Certainly, the decade of the nineties left this province in a terrible economic state that we've been rebuilding over the past three years. As we know, our economy is turning around.

I have the great pleasure to serve on the Finance Select Standing Committee of the Legislature and to tour the province in their prebudget consultation that we're going on with groups throughout 16 communities in British Columbia, asking them what they would like to see in budget 2005-06. We have heard a lot of groups come forward. One that particularly stands out in my mind was the Williams Lake Association for Community Living just last Thursday. I welcome their input and their request, of course, for additional funding. I'm sure, as our economy is improving in the province, that the Finance minister can look at that and can look at these associations and see how we can move forward.

The second concern that was raised was about representation on the board. There are two boards, really, that are set up in the act. The first one: the act requires the board of directors to have skills, qualifications and experience necessary to direct a provincewide agency. As was mentioned earlier, this board will probably manage a budget of more than \$600 million a year. But it requires that a majority of these board members either have a significant personal relationship with individuals who are receiving community living services or are receiving community support services themselves, so there really is a continuity and a touch there with people who are utilizing the services.

The second one, of course, refers to the advisory committee of self-advocates. I understand that the interim authority is currently working with self-advocates to create that advisory committee. Self-advocates have been part of advisory committees for years, and after almost two decades of effective representation on various committees it is now, for the first time, going to be entrenched in legislation. So we really are moving forward.

This legislation gives British Columbians with developmental disabilities and their families better options and more opportunities in their communities. This legislation makes a major step forward. Perhaps it's not perfect, but it is a major step in the right direction. It's close to home, it individualizes programs, and hopefully, as our economy permits, more funding will certainly come their way.

G. Trumper: I rise in support of Bill 45, which I believe is a step in the right direction. This will not make a great difference to these individuals who will come under the Community Living Authority Act — the people who live in our communities, who are looked after by their own families, who maybe live in group homes — as they would see it, but what it will do is enable people to have choices in how they look after the members of their family who need the help.

It will also give those who have disabilities an opportunity, through an advisory committee, to have input into decisions that are made. But it is setting up an authority that, in discussions that I have had with many people — as it, obviously, over the last few months has been a contentious issue.... That would probably be the best way to put it. Most of the people that I have talked to think this is the right thing to do. It's not always easy making change. You can work with change, or you can decide not to work with change. The people I have talked to want to work with the changes to make better lives for the members of their families.

[1620]

One of the things that I have always been somewhat concerned about is some of the inequality of the services that are provided to individuals who need these services. We have a very strong community living association in the community I live in, and they do wonderful things for the individuals they are serving. Out of that particular establishment the staff run a small business that provides work that is done with wood, and they build and provide planters. They used to have an individual who did the most beautifully crafted lamps, which he helped them make and donate to the association so that they could sell them at the appropriate time and make a profit to provide some of the extras that some of these people need.

One of the issues I have found when I have sat with people is that there appears to be an inequality in the amount of service. Some people are able to get a great deal of service for their particular member of the family. They're able to get help on a daily basis for, in some cases, 24-hour coverage in cases where it is needed.

One of the concerns I have had in the past is that there are a lot of people out there who have brought up a child who has mental disabilities, and they've done it on their own. They haven't asked for any assistance through the years. As the child became older and became an adult, maybe there was a pension available. Those parents have been getting older.

I had someone in my office not long ago who was telling me how difficult it was for them to get respite. They are older. They have an adult child who is in their forties or fifties, so therefore they must be in their seventies and eighties. It's becoming more difficult. They want to look after that particular member of their family, but they would like some respite. I think with the changes that are being made and that will be under the community living authority, there will be greater opportunity for those individual needs to be addressed.

I recognize that over the past three years it has been difficult in funding. I sincerely am looking forward to the fact that we understand there will not be any changes negatively in the funding. We can certainly hope — and I certainly will be delivering the message that the previous speaker has delivered to the Finance minister — that as our economy has got better, we can look for some increases and extra support in those particular areas to support those particular people who do need it and to address that very issue of the parent who

is getting older, who is tired. All they're asking is for a day's respite sometime, or a couple of days, so they can do things for all the years they have supported their member of the family through some difficult times, have seen them through schooling and are now looking after them. It's been tough for some of them. We'll certainly be asking some questions at committee stage on those particular issues.

You know, children who have disabilities have a difficult time in the first place. They have a difficult time when they go to school. I see that the direction we are going, which is going to have more community control over those individuals, can only be better for them. We need to work positively. We need to have everybody working positively towards enabling the changes to be successful.

[1625]

There are those who certainly have some reservations about it. I do know that over the last few years, it has been a difficult challenge for the particular ministers as they work towards making these changes. You know, Mr. Speaker, British Columbia and the changes that are being made in this area are seen as being in the front of change in the Commonwealth. I do know that there have been inquiries from other countries as to how we are dealing with this, what we are doing, and they are watching with great interest what British Columbia is doing in this particular area.

I am pleased to support this bill. I believe it is the right thing to do. It is the right thing to do for these individuals, and I hope that everybody will work towards making it work and making it a better world for those people who need the help.

R. Stewart: It's my pleasure to stand today again and to support Bill 45, the Community Living Authority Act. This bill, I believe, talks about a great many of the things that our government has stood for since our election and that our government was elected to do, in fact. This bill talks about the way in which government ought to operate, the way in which government ought to provide services to people and the way in which government ought to fulfil the mandate we have for the people of British Columbia.

Specifically, this act has some language in it that I want to focus on. I want to focus on section 12, for example, which refers to a proposed service plan. The way in which our government has tried to do things is a little bit different. I respect the Premier tremendously for a decision that he made very early on and that I had discussed at length with him and with many of my colleagues: the idea that we would establish service plans and that our service plans — in ministries, for example — would be long.

They would be three years long. People would be able to see where we're trying to get to, see where we are now, and there wouldn't be surprises as much as there would be a lot of planning, in the way any business or non-profit society would do things. It would plan long term to make certain that the public we are going to serve — the shareholder effectively, the tax-

payer, and any other person that's affected — would understand where it is a ministry wants to go. I, of course, have worked on a number of those service plans through the government caucus committee structure and through our caucus and individually. I really believe that service plans are the best method of planning the way a ministry is going to go with a service.

We have seen, for example, the budget announced and have seen people be surprised about something. There really aren't that many surprises in government when you plan ahead; when you actually establish a service plan that will go for a length of time, that will move forward three years, and look at what we're trying to achieve as a government, fiscally or otherwise; when you plan the process of getting there — where it is you are now and where you want to go — and establish the plans, put them in place, to get there.

One of the ways to do that and, I think, one of the most important criteria for the success of a service plan process is mentioned in section 18. This is where the act anticipates the establishment of standards. Our government is very focused on the concept that if we can have a standard and something that can be measured to make certain we are going in the right direction, we have a much better chance of being able to meet the public's expectation — first of all, to describe to the public what our expectation is and that we will be able to meet it because we have set in place a standard for what we're trying to achieve. Bill 45 anticipates the establishment of standards that people will have to meet and that we will be able to measure their success against.

That establishment of standards exists across government now. Within the education system, for example, we are actually trying to make certain that we can establish a level of what constitutes success in our education system so that we can then go back and measure the extent to which we have achieved that success and whether we're making improvements in achieving that success. I think that exists for every level of government.

[1630]

Of course, we're talking about Bill 45 here, but if you look at anything that government does, it ought to be based on establishing a specific standard and then going forward and trying to meet it — measuring our success in our efforts to meet that. That is a key function of a service plan. That is a key function of any methodology that will try to deliver a service — the measuring of the ability we have had, the success we have had in delivering the service.

I know that Bill 45 puts in place those types of standards. I know that Bill 45 establishes the criteria that we want to meet, which we as a government want to meet as we deliver services to the persons to whom Bill 45 anticipates the delivery of services.

The developmentally disabled — the people in our community that need the services of Community Living British Columbia — really need us to focus on how to achieve that. We as a society really ought to be looking at these persons with as much compassion and as

much planning as possible to make certain that we can meet the varied needs of this population, of these individuals.

We look at individuals and their families. We have to really include the family as part of the service delivery structure because as has been pointed out by other colleagues, respite, for example, is one of the key functions of a system that is designed to deliver services to persons with developmental disabilities and other disabilities. How do we ensure that families will be able to have the time to recover, to rest, to rejuvenate themselves in what can be a very challenging task? Putting in place a system that permits the families to feel that their needs are also being examined and taken into account is, I think, really important.

In order to do that, we really have to have the kind of decision-making that is anticipated by Bill 45, the kind of service delivery that is anticipated by Bill 45, the kind of community involvement that is anticipated by Bill 45, the Community Living Authority Act.

We also have to make certain, though, that the structure is done as carefully as possible to ensure that the board that we are appointing or putting in place can serve the function in as businesslike and as effective a manner as possible. There are skills that are required of board members. I have served on many boards over the years, and I think it really is something that often gets overlooked — to make certain that people that serve on boards have the skills, the qualifications and the experience to actually do the work of a board.

I'm looking at section 5(2) right now: "Composition of Board." The language that is used is, again, key to the kind of approach that this government has taken in all agencies, boards and commissions over which we have oversight. This is section 5(2): "All directors must have the necessary skills, qualifications and experience to direct the authority."

[1635]

I want to underline that, and I'm actually going to speak about that for a couple of minutes here, because I think it's really key to the way in which a competent government would approach the delivery of any kind of service. A government would not appoint to a board people that would not be able to function in the capacity of board member. The capacity of board member requires the ability to listen. It requires the ability to do research. It requires the ability to read the reports, to look at recommendations, to analyze those recommendations and to make certain that the decisions of the board are supportable, that the decisions of the board can be supported and can be justified and, as well, that the board is being fiscally responsible and responsible in other aspects of its work. At the end of the day, a board — the same as a corporate board — is responsible to the people who have put it in place. In our case, the board would be responsible to the people of British Columbia to ensure that the agency called community living British Columbia does the tasks and does its mandate in as competent a manner as possible.

I look at that requirement that directors have the necessary skills, qualifications and experience. I have

been involved in some agencies of government at both federal and provincial levels — and, for that matter, the local level as well. Sometimes you're working with a board where the majority of members have the skills, qualifications and experience needed to direct the board they represent. But all too often it does happen in government that a board member really is over his or her head, and we end up with a situation where the board member doesn't have the capacity to do the job well. As a result — nothing against the particular board member.... Every member of society wants to serve in the capacity that they are most capable of doing, and there are some members of our society who are outstanding board members and some members of our society who are outstanding truckers. The challenge we've got as a government is to make certain that the administration of government in every aspect of government is done as competently as possible.

All too often in the past, though, we've seen governments appointing board members for no reason that is obvious, choosing board members for no reason that is particularly obvious. I think that does a disservice to the board and the agency it is designed to administer and to the board member. We end up with the level of competence of our boards not being up to par, not being able to meet the requirements we have put in place for the board and, ultimately, having the board then make decisions that might not be as good as they ought to be.

I'm very pleased with the direction our government has gone on that one question, the question of the competency of members of boards we appoint. I know that our government has gone to great lengths to essentially interview and to get the CVs and résumés of people who we would appoint to serve on boards. The purpose of that, obviously, is to make certain we end up with the skills on a board.

What kind of skills do we need on a particular board? I think that in many cases, the skills are experience with that particular issue that the board will be dealing with. In other cases, the skills are simply the skills of a competent manager. In this instance, certainly, a great many of the skills necessary in a board member will be skills that involve this type of delivery of service. I am pleased to see that is one of the things anticipated by the bill before us.

[1640]

We see that, again, our government has put in place a system that will require that service plans be developed, that board members be competent and skilled at the things they're doing, and that as much planning as possible can go into the development of the service that government is intending to deliver. At the same time as that, though, we are of course still faced with a bill here that is changing things. I've heard from people on both sides of the question as to whether or not that change is appropriate, whether that change is a good or bad idea. I also recognize that while some of those comments are undoubtedly the kinds of comments directed simply at the fear of change — the idea that change necessarily creates uncertainty and creates stresses in a system....

There are a great many people who find change uncomfortable. I understand that fully. I recognize in my own life that when something you've had a certain way for a long time changes, you can feel uncertain about where it is going. I expect that is part of the basis of some of the comments I've heard.

At the same time, I've heard comments that weren't as much based on the fear of change. They were well-informed comments about specific aspects of this direction that government is taking. I understand those concerns and those comments, and I recognize that not everyone will support fully the direction this is taking. I've also heard from people who have taken this bill to heart, have read through it and realized this is the direction government should be heading.

I think that actually applies the reality that there are two sides to these kinds of discussions, these kinds of debates, and that neither side has absolutely all the answers necessarily, but we can have a difference of opinion as to how things go forward. That's ultimately an important part of how our provincial government is actually working. We have seen all kinds of introductions of bills, introductions of changes to the way in which government operates in every aspect of government, and I have heard for and against. Occasionally I will hear from the same person on both sides of the question, for and against, because they aren't necessarily clear as to which is absolutely the best service delivery model or the best governance model.

As I say, I have heard from people in our community who support this model. I have heard from people in our community who are concerned about this model. I want to continue to hear from them, and I want to hear from them as this model is implemented, because I think that only by having an open and frank discussion about the challenges, opportunities and successes of any particular direction of government can we hope to make sure that we continue to improve the delivery of services by government. So we've seen that side of it.

We also see, though, with a lot of things that government does, this concept of misinformation, this spreading of misinformation. I raise it now not so much particularly related to this bill but related to bills in general. I have heard from people across this province about some of the things we are doing. I actually started to make a list at one point about the kinds of things that government has been accused of doing, because some of them were ridiculous.

I have read documents that have accused our government of all manner of things, from the impending closure of all of the hospitals in the lower mainland.... That one was amazing. I couldn't imagine that anyone would come to a suggestion that we were going to close all the hospitals in the lower mainland, but that was one of the things we were accused of wanting to do. Another one of the things we were accused of wanting to do was to sell Mount Baker. The impending sale of Mount Baker as it was described in the e-mail came as a shock to me. I'm not certain whether it came as a shock to the person who wrote the e-mail about the impending sale by British Columbia of Mount

Baker when I replied that British Columbia doesn't actually own Mount Baker. It's in the United States.

Interjection.

R. Stewart: It is a small point, I agree — that we don't own it. I suppose we could try to sell it anyway, but this is an example. I have other examples of some of the e-mail that I have received, some of the letters I have received and some of the information I have seen on webpages opposed to our government that talk and fearmonger about the kinds of things that we're accused of wanting to do.

[1645]

Certainly, it's easy to dispel the idea that we are setting out to arrange for a realtor to sell a mountain in Washington State. That's easier to dispel. Some of the other information that we sometimes get presented with isn't as easy to dispel. It is, bluntly, misinformation. It seems quite apparent to everybody that it is political. It has as its goal a political goal of trying to move public opinion in one direction or another.

I've heard that kind of misinformation about this bill. I don't know how much of it is innocent misinformation; I don't know how much of it is politically motivated misinformation.

Interjection.

R. Stewart: I am going to be generous and disagree with the member opposite and say that perhaps a little bit of it is actually innocent misrepresentation of where we're heading. I suspect, though, that he's actually more right than I in that a good bunch of it is intended by groups opposed to our government to misrepresent the position of this government and to try to influence public opinion in that direction.

I have heard about this bill in that context, and I've heard of many of the other actions of this government in that context. I must say that's a part of politics that disgusts me. I think public policy has to be debated. That's the purpose of an opposition. That's the purpose of a government, for that matter: to put forward public policy, have it debated and then try to choose a public policy based upon what we as a government, we as elected officials, think is best — what we who were elected to represent the interests of our constituents think is best. That debate on the public policy questions has to be framed in as much information as possible rather than misinformation.

I actually have a paragraph that I add to a great many of the responses I type up in e-mail, which talks exactly about that — the idea that the information that prompted this e-mail question to me is not true. I'll start off by trying to inform the correspondent, give them some actual facts, so that we can then have a debate framed in information that's accurate, information that's truthful and information that's complete.

That challenge associated with politics, that frustration I feel in dealing with politics, is, I suspect, a frustration shared by many if not all of my colleagues. All

too often the political public policy debate gets completely set aside in favour of a debate that is dishonest or corrupt or completely without merit. That's a real shame, particularly in cases such as this when we're dealing with the Community Living Authority Act, which is designed, essentially, to redefine the way we're going to be delivering services by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

These services are incredibly important to my community. They're incredibly important to individuals, but they're incredibly important to all of our communities. We should be making certain that the debate over them is framed in as much accuracy, as much forethought, as much care and compassion as we can possibly muster and is not framed in a campaign of misinformation, as all too often has happened in the past three years.

This act that's before us today contains provisions for accountability and for performance, provisions that will improve existing services and ensure that the health and safety of individuals are protected when community living B.C. is established. Yet I have heard the opposite from a great many people. It's not here.

[1650]

I see perhaps a philosophical debate about how services ought to be delivered. Let's have the debate, but let's not create fear among people — fear that is nonexistent or that shouldn't be there.

I want to speak a bit about that fear. One of the things that happened during the election campaign — it was the most disgusting I have seen, actually prior to the spring — was that an ad was taken out by one of my opponents. It described how our government would close an institution that I believe is really important in our community — Riverview Hospital. I spoke about it this morning in a private member's statement, and the Minister for Mental Health and Addiction Services responded about the value of that institution not only to my community but to the people of British Columbia.

The ad purported to describe the future under the B.C. Liberal government. It suggested.... It didn't suggest; it actually said that we were going to close Riverview Hospital and that everybody — all the patients in Riverview Hospital — would be kicked out and would find themselves on the street and have to fend for themselves. That's a horrible, horrible thing to say, first of all, but it's particularly horrible when you consider that there are 600 to 800 readers of these local papers in which these ads were taken out that are patients at Riverview Hospital. These patients had to deal with the accusation, the horrible story that was being created here, that within a couple of years, they would be out on the streets with no support whatsoever.

It's a side of politics that completely disgusted me and disgusts me today — that people, without any concern for the accuracy of a statement, can actually make such an accusation, first of all, against someone else, but make an accusation that so clearly harms a third party, which takes a group of mental health patients who need our support and perhaps are fragile enough that this kind of a horrible story would create

enormous stresses in their lives.... To see that kind of thing happen really made me disappointed. It made me disgusted with politics as some people play it.

In that context, I wanted to comment about the Community Living Authority Act, because I've seen a little bit of the same sort of thing happen related to the work that we are doing with community living — in that we see all too often that in politics, all things are fair. I've heard it actually quite a bit in the last six months — that that's what politics is about, that you have to have a thick skin to play politics, that politics isn't necessarily about the truth. Actually, one of the members of the opposition said to me once that that's what politics is. It isn't about the truth; it's about politics.

It's a reality that I think we should take to heart. We should understand clearly that that's not what public policy debate is supposed to be about. Public policy debate is supposed to be about: "Let's establish what points we are trying to deal with, establish what we're trying to do with the public policy. Let's lay out all of the facts on both sides, and let's have a debate." Let's have a nice, civil debate about those facts, and let's not use fearmongering. Let's not use misinformation. Let's not use the kind of tactics that I think disgust most people — that disgust our constituents, that disgust the public at large when they see those kinds of horrible tactics being used about really important issues.

[1655]

That's why I'm also pleased that, for example, section 9 of the act talks about the meetings of the authority. The board meetings would be open to the public — other than those that, for some particular reason, can't be. The meetings would be open to the public, because that does give the public an opportunity to see the information as it comes directly. One of the things I'm pleased about with this government is the idea that our cabinet meetings.... We have established the first open cabinet meetings, I think, in the British Commonwealth but certainly in Canada. It's the idea that you could stand there and lay out your rationale for a particular decision or a particular implementation of a policy, lay it out before the public and have them understand or at least have them be able to see the information firsthand. We have to do a lot more of that — make sure that information about government policies is available firsthand, that the information is widely disseminated and that the public has access to it.

All too often we're going to see, particularly in the next six months, the idea that perhaps the public opinion will be clouded by misinformation and by the use of information that isn't accurate. That's a real shame, because it frustrates the political process, and it makes it so that public policy decisions won't necessarily be made based on what's right but, rather, will be made based on who has put the most information before the public.

I see that my time is almost up, and so I thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to support the Community Living Authority Act.

Hon. M. de Jong: I move adjournment of debate on Bill 45.

Hon. M. de Jong moved adjournment of debate.

Motion approved.

**Introduction and
First Reading of Bills**

FORESTS STATUTES
AMENDMENT ACT (No. 2), 2004

Hon. M. de Jong presented a message from His Honour the Administrator: a bill intituled Forests Statutes Amendment Act (No. 2), 2004.

Hon. M. de Jong: I move that the bill be read a first time now.

Motion approved.

Hon. M. de Jong: I move Bill 65 in first reading. Let me say, firstly, to all members that the common practice, of course, is to introduce bills at the top of the afternoon sitting. Meteorological conditions prevented that from happening, so I do extend my apologies to members who may be inconvenienced.

This bill supports this government's mountain pine beetle action plan and also meets a key recommendation put forward by the MLA small-scale salvage review committee. This bill enables the creation of a small-scale salvage sub-account from a portion of stumpage costs paid by small-scale salvagers. Moneys from that account can then be directed to help pay for reforestation costs.

The bill will also enable the Lieutenant-Governor by regulation to specify an area of Crown land as a mountain pine beetle salvage area and to enable specific requirements to be included in a forest licence competitively sold within that salvage area. In this way the government will be able to direct harvesting and/or restrict harvesting to priority areas for beetle-kill timber. The overall selling strategy for such forest licences, I can advise the House, will be to try and encourage production of non-traditional products. The bill also makes a number of minor housekeeping amendments to other pieces of forestry legislation.

I move the bill be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 65 introduced, read a first time and ordered to be placed on orders of the day for second reading at the next sitting of the House after today.

Hon. R. Thorpe: I call second reading of Bill 45.
[1700]

Second Reading of Bills

COMMUNITY LIVING AUTHORITY ACT
(continued)

V. Anderson: It's a pleasure to rise and speak in favour of the Community Living Authority Act, which

is being brought forth by the Minister of Children and Family Development. I wanted to stress that it's being brought forward by the Minister of Children and Family Development. One of the philosophies behind this particular legislation is to support families as we live together in communities. In the supporting of families in this particular case, we're talking about certain families who have within their family life persons who have developmental abilities.

[H. Long in the chair.]

I use the words "developmental abilities" rather than "developmental disabilities" because it's been my experience as minister of a church visiting in all kinds of families' homes that every member of the family, regardless of their particular abilities, contributes to the life of that family each in their own unique ways. The family is made up of the combined contributions of all of its members. Each learns from the other; each shares with the other. It's that unity of giving and receiving, of going through joys and sorrows, that develops the personality and characteristics and develops the changing development and characteristics of each and every one of us.

I think it's extremely important that we have a government which recognizes the developmental abilities of the people of our community and recognizes that we provide services to everyone within our community. We provide university education for some. We provide public education for others. We provide the health system, the educational system and road systems that all of us share together. Each person within that system makes their own particular contribution.

It's important that we have a vision. The vision we have here is one that is shared by, I think, all the peoples of our community — a vision that we recognize the particular abilities of each and every one of the members of our family and our community and recognize that a person, whoever they are and whatever their ability, finds their identity to become the person they are because of that family interaction, and that family finds its identity as it interacts within the community. These are inseparable functions.

If we lose our family connections, in order to continue to be a developing person, we have to find a new family substitute connection. No matter how long we live or what part of society we are, unless we move onto an island and become a hermit totally unto ourselves.... That some people choose to do, but for 99.9 percent of us, we find our continuing development of our lifestyle as we contribute with the family and the community unit. The family and the community unit are only as strong as they recognize the abilities of each of their members and share those abilities and help them to develop in ever new and increasing ways.

Hon. Speaker, I wanted to just highlight the goals that are set out for what we're calling today a bill, which is an organizational structure to help us to collectively fulfil those goals. It's not the structure that's so significant, although it is important, but the vision that

we have of a common goal that we're willing to work on together.

Some of the goals are simply this, as they're stated. Community living British Columbia will be responsible for the provision of all community-based services for adults with developmental disabilities and for some of the services for children with special needs and their families. Those are children over six years of age.

One of the goals in transferring services to an independent authority is to enhance services to people with developmental disabilities to encourage choice, innovation and shared responsibility among families, service agencies and government. I stress that it's among families, service agencies and government. The key factor in all of these undertakings is the family unit, which is fundamental to each and every one of us.

[1705]

The goal of the ministry and the interim authority is to promote an environment where youth with special needs and adults with developmental disabilities participate in and contribute to their communities and live a full and valued life.

So what we're talking about here is participation, particularly in unique and very important ways, by people who have developmental abilities. What we're setting in place is a structure that recognizes the contributions of those persons and assists and supports them in the same way that the rest of us are supported by the acts of this Legislature in the fulfilment of our potential within our lifestyle.

We list, as we tend to do in our society, numbers. There are probably 9,000-plus adults who are directly impacted by this because they have unique developmental abilities. There are another 7,000-plus children who currently have developmental disabilities. But each of those 16,000 children and adults are part of a family, and those families are totally involved with those 16,000. So you have at least another 50,000 persons who are involved in interaction with those persons in daily life, forming their opportunities, learning from them and growing with them as we participate in community.

I looked at that figure, and — trying to do quick mathematics, on which I was never that keen — there's about \$600 million set aside to share with these families in this undertaking of the development of these abilities. Now, hon. Speaker, if you add on to that the contribution that is made by the families themselves, then I'm guessing there's probably another \$500 million at least. Having been involved in community volunteer associations that share in this process, there's probably at least another \$500,000 contributed by the community, if not a lot more.

So what we're talking about here is a partnership — a partnership of persons with developmental abilities, with their families, with the community and collectively in our government undertaking. We have a vision here — a vision of coming together collectively to provide a means, which only government can do, to bring together all the elements of this partnership to enable them to make their contribution; to integrate

their services, their care and their resources in order that persons who might not otherwise have the opportunity do have the opportunity to fully become a part of their community.

What we are saying, really, is that we have the utmost respect for the persons with whom we are working who have developmental abilities. That respect is one by one, for each of them has a name. Each of them has a description. Each of them has a family name as well as a personal name. Each of them is unique and different from everybody else, and each of them has a unique contribution to make to the well-being of our society. All of them, even without opportunities that we might be able to share, are contributing to our community. By the very nature of who they are, they are contributing members of society.

[1710]

Many of them are frustrated because they have abilities which they have not been given the opportunity to use. They've not been able to have the opportunity to go out because the circumstances of the community don't provide the ability for transportation. They don't provide the ability for elevators in highrise buildings. There's a whole host of tools and efforts that, if these people can share with us and we with them, can make a very significant difference to their living.

I wanted to just highlight, apart from the technicalities of the legislation, the reason we're involved. The reason we're involved is that every person should have the respect of their family, of their neighbours and of their friends. Every person should have the ability to develop all of their abilities to the most extent possible, and that can only happen for any of us — it doesn't matter who we are — if we share them with one another. All we need to do is look at our own family relationship, and every one of us will remember that we have learned from each other.

I think the most important things I've learned in life I learned from my wife and from my three daughters. Each of them taught me things I didn't in the beginning want to know, but each of them taught me things that made me a finer and a better person because of it. Every person has that kind of contribution to make in their family, and what we have here are family members — brothers, sisters and parents — who are coming together and saying: "Together we can do things that we could not do individually in our family. There are times when we can be independent as a family, but there are times when we cannot be independent as a family, and that's why we need the help of our neighbours and families round about."

That's why we're involved in community and family development concerns within this ministry and why this legislation is so important — because we have a vision, a vision that everyone has abilities to share and that we all will be richer and stronger because of sharing those abilities. What we're trying to find is an organization which makes this possible.

At one point people used to think that if you gave all that responsibility to government, they would solve all the problems. That does not work. Now we are very

much aware that we have to work with the community, be part of the community, be part of family life and work with families. For all the education, and I've had a fair bit of it over my life — university, college and graduate school — I still find that when I go to a family, whoever that family is, their wisdom about that family is far cleverer than all of the education and theory I've been able to discover.

It's the families of the community we're talking about, not just individuals, but families — individuals who live as part of a family unit — so I would stress that the legislation we're passing is fluid. It gives us an opportunity to go. It will grow, be amended and changed, and it will improve as families are part of it, as families make it part of their own, as we listen to the families and take direction from them. That way we can have assurance that every person in our community will have the opportunity to receive and understand respect from each other, to be able to know what their contribution is to the community and that their abilities are being developed to the full. I am pleased to be able to support this legislation as a means in that direction.

R. Hawes: It's difficult to follow the last speaker from Vancouver-Langara. He takes our discussion to a much higher level, and it's something that is appreciated here in the House, as his views always are.

I wanted to talk for a few moments — obviously in support of this bill — about why we're doing this, where it came from, and perhaps just go back a little bit in history. I remember watching on television — I mentioned this before in this House — in 1996 when the then minister of... I think Human Resources and Children and Families were combined in one ministry. The discussion around the Matthew Vaudreuil case came up. The minister of the day from the previous government, Dennis Streifel, was like a deer caught in the headlights. In fact, the current Leader of the Opposition sat in front of him and had to turn around and whisper answers that he could possibly give to get out of his embarrassment. It seemed to me that the previous government since that time lurched from crisis to crisis.

[1715]

The Gove report was delivered, but it was only partially implemented, and this has been a ministry that has been beset with difficulty for a long, long time.

When we formed government, our member for Surrey-White Rock, then Minister of Children and Family Development, entered a great discussion with the community. Those with developmental disabilities — and I agree with the member for Vancouver-Langara that that's not a term that I think that community finds endearing.... He entered a discussion with those that have disabilities around how governance could move closer to the community, how they could be better serviced by government. He did it in a very respectful way. He set up an interim board that was made up of quite a number of people who had direct involvement with those that have disabilities, and he

included on that board some folks that were self-advocates, who themselves have disabilities.

I want to talk for a minute about how that vision really developed through that interim board. This legislation takes the vision of that interim board, takes all of the work they did, which was considerable — thousands and thousands of hours spent by a great number of, basically, volunteers who had some pretty good knowledge.... They came up with a plan that the minister of the day was able to advance in, I think, a very respectful way. Subsequently, our member for Port Moody-Westwood, who followed that minister, carried on with this vision, and the current minister is now bringing it to the fore in the form of legislation but continuing to advance the original vision of that interim board.

I have talked to some of the members. I have talked to Dave Driscoll, who chaired the interim board. He is a former Fraser Valley mayor with a child who has disabilities, and he felt that services that are delivered from Victoria, from a distance, certainly can't be as effectively delivered as they can when they are close to home and when the community takes charge and we start to form partnerships. What hadn't existed before in this province were partnerships. There was never a discussion about a partnership with the community and with that small community of interest, the people that have disabilities, and they know better what their needs are.

You know, from region to region in this province, needs can differ, and it's difficult.... I know from the history of this ministry, going back into the previous government, that they did not recognize that there were differences throughout the province. But the way that the structure now will work, there will be a recognition because individual communities are going to have a lot to say about how services are delivered.

I know that Dave Driscoll, as the former chair of that interim authority — the board that took a look at how this should transition and how we could devolve powers into the community — supports this model. I've talked to Heidi Gluschko, who served on that board. Heidi has a young child that's autistic. I'm not going to go through the litany of difficulties that she has had with her autistic son and the reasons that she was brought to want to serve and to volunteer time to serve on a board like this. She did it with the best of intentions, and she did it knowing that at the end of the day, there was going to be a product delivered by this government that was going to make life for her son and all of the sons and all of the daughters throughout this province that are like her son.... It was going to make their lives better. That's what this was all about for her, and that vision has continued and is embodied in this legislation.

I've talked to Bryce Schaufelberger, who served on that interim board. Bryce is a self-advocate, and his job on that interim board, as he saw it, was to bring discussion down to plain language — to deliver all of the reports of the board in a form that could be understood by people with disabilities, because it's they themselves that needed to know what was happening.

[1720]

Too often in the past, boards have been captured with.... I guess I'll call it "bureau-speak." You know, it's the language often used within bureaucracies that's codified and difficult for those who aren't involved with it to really understand.

Bryce's job, as he saw it, was to bring discussion down to a place that everybody could understand, and the people with disabilities could read minutes and understand exactly what was going on in the kind of language they could understand. Bryce was there for one purpose. As a person with disabilities, he wanted to make sure that life could be made better for himself and for all of those he advocates for. He believes that the transition to this board and to this type of structure is going to result in a much better life for those in this province like himself that suffer from disabilities.

I listened last spring. The process was, in essence, stopped as the legislation was introduced, because the minister wanted to ensure that we got this right. I have to commend her — the former minister — for taking that step to stop and put this out to the public over the summer, to get comment from the public, to let the bill season and to hear particularly what the community that's directly involved with this had to say.

I think that's a great step in democracy. It's one that has been in this House for a long, long time but not one, I think, that was followed by the former government. This government actually listens.

I know there was a lot of input gathered from the community directly affected — those with disabilities. I know that the minister has carefully considered what they have had to say. It's embodied in this legislation.

As we move forward with this, I know we're going to see much, much better service because the money.... There are no cuts in the dollars that are going to flow through the ministry into serving the people here that require this service, but because we're going to see less bureaucracy, the dollars that we do spend here are going to produce.... I'm quite confident, and I think the minister is confident, that we will see more, better and more responsive service from government for people with disabilities because we're making this change.

Most importantly, we are saying to that community: "We trust you, and we want you to be partners. Big Brother here in Victoria doesn't really know better. You know, you are people who matter to us and whom we want as partners."

Bringing this legislation forward now and being prepared to move forward I think belies what the leader of the NDP, Carole James, said on the radio last spring, as well as the current Leader of the Opposition that sits in this House, who said that we have scrapped the process and we have walked away from all of those volunteers. Nothing could be further from the truth.

That was part of the fearmongering that I know one of our members earlier today spoke about. Why can't we be truthful? Why, when we have matters like this that matter to people who are special people and are very easy to frighten...? Why do we have to come out with statements that are so clearly not the facts? That's

basically what we have: politics. I think this is not the type of bill that politics should be played with.

I listened this afternoon to a member opposite speak against.... Well, I'm not sure if she spoke against or for this bill. She spoke for some period of time and said she was in favour of the transition. She was in favour, it sounded like, of the board which would be set up through this legislation, but she's going to have a lot more to say later and a number of suggestions.

[1725]

I would be very interested in hearing those suggestions, because for the ten years that they sat in power, it was just stumbling from crisis to crisis with absolutely no innovation and certainly no real respect paid to those that have disabilities who needed to be serviced by this government — or by Victoria. Unless she's had an epiphany in the last few months, I would suggest there's very little that those in the opposite party could bring forward to this debate that would have any bearing whatsoever on a positive outcome for those that do have disabilities.

I want to really congratulate all of the three ministers that we've had. We've had three ministers of children and families, but not changing over the way the previous government did. All changed for different reasons, all very valid reasons — all highly, highly competent people that I know all of us and, I'm sure, the Premier and those who are serviced by this legislation would have been pleased to see remain where they were.

Our current minister, I know, is going to advance this. I know he's looking forward to an opportunity to transform how we deliver services, particularly to those with disabilities, to a place where service levels are increased and where governance is actually in their hands. I think that's just a huge leap forward.

I know there are a number of people who want to speak to this. I could speak a little longer, but I know one of our members from Vancouver is chomping at the bit.

I'll close, again, by congratulating the minister for bringing this legislation forward. I can't tell you how much I support it. I know that the people in my community that are affected are highly.... They've been waiting for this to happen. They've been e-mailing over the summer. They did hear the comments that were made last spring, which said we were walking away from this, and I know I've been giving them reassurance that we are not and that the transition is going to continue. This is important work, and it's going to be done respectfully. I know that they're going to be thrilled to see this go through.

With that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

L. Mayencourt: It's a pleasure to be back in the House after that long summer vacation.

Interjection.

L. Mayencourt: Well, I didn't quite have a vacation. I was kind of busy, as most members here were.

I'm very proud today to stand and speak in favour of the Community Living Authority Act. There are many reasons for that, but the first reason is that I believe the previous minister and this minister have done an excellent, excellent job of going out and consulting with the community to talk with people with developmental abilities, as the member for Vancouver-Langara referred to it, to make sure that those individuals felt that they were part of a process that was going to affect their lives significantly. The Community Living Authority Act will affect their lives very significantly, so it is important that they feel welcomed to the table — to be able to be there and be part of the solutions to some of the challenges that this ministry faces by not having this out in the community.

I'm very proud of the fact that we spent a long time looking at this particular proposal and that we had an opportunity for members of the public, people with developmental disabilities, people that care for them and people that run non-profit agencies or deliver services to those individuals to make sure that what we are doing here reflects the best wishes of those individuals. I do say, having reviewed this, that for the most part, a very large portion of the developmental disabilities community supports the direction that this government has taken with this particular bill, and that is as a result of that widespread consultation.

Sure, there are some that are detractors, as I heard from the member for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant. But it's very seldom that that member ever stands up and suggests that government is doing anything right, so it's not a surprise. But in this particular case I feel very, very committed to this.

You know, in my riding I have individuals that live with these disabilities, that want to be part of their care plan and that want to be able to look after themselves and have a say in the way services are delivered to them. I very much support that, because I think that's a very empowering thing to do.

At the same time, what we're doing here is creating an authority that is responsible to those individuals but also accountable to the people of British Columbia. I think that is a very important factor here, because we do not want to simply hand this over and not have the services delivered that we have committed to deliver for these individuals.

[1730]

We want to make sure that people understand that with this new authority, we will be moving money into the authority so that they are able to deliver the services and programs we have already made commitments to but also so that they might be able to engage other innovative strategies for dealing with the challenges that people experience. I think this is very important.

I think the idea behind selecting the board is very important. I also want to commend the minister for the creation of an advisory committee. I think that is where individuals with developmental disabilities that want to say something to government, that want to say

something to this authority, will be able to have their voices heard. I think this is a very strong part of this piece of legislation.

You know, when we create a new agency such as this, we're going to be making significant impacts on the community that works with this. We're going to be making an impact on community groups. We're going to be making impacts on families. We're going to be making impacts on individuals. When we do that, we have some challenges in front of us. They all, to me, relate to the issues of accountability.

I think that the first item is developing a sound financial and information framework so that people with developmental disabilities and this authority can tell their story in a complete and clear manner. That means that all organizations, all of these agencies that work together, should adhere to a shared set of financial guidelines. I believe this will be provided for under this work. This sets a clear path in working towards the goals of the Ministry of Children and Family Development in the creation of the community living authority.

It will also allow us, as government, and agencies throughout British Columbia to effectively boil down what is taking place, what is being spent and who is spending those dollars. This is valuable information for all agencies. It requires that they keep track of an inventory completed of all organizations and government agencies that are affected. This might be an onerous task for some, but it's necessary to ensure that all efforts are, again, working towards the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

The second opportunity relates to the growing demand for results-oriented performance information. This is something that is new to British Columbia. It's new to Canada, actually. British Columbia is on the forefront of this. There is more to an agency than the financial records. There is the reason why the agency exists, who they're there to serve, how they're doing it, how they compare to other agencies. All of those sorts of performance measures are very important, and this information is something that focuses more on results, effectiveness and alternatives and less on rules, compliance and the status quo.

This opportunity, as I said, comes at the right time, because there is a consensus growing in Canada on guiding principles for performance reporting. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I've had the opportunity to look at and understand performance reporting in a new way. I've come to believe that it is equal in importance to financial accountability.

We, as a government and as the Public Accounts Committee, were responsible for identifying eight guiding principles for performance reporting. I want to outline these for you today. The first is to explain the public purpose served. Public performance reporting should explain why an organization exists and how it conducts its business, both in terms of its operations and the fundamental values that guide it. This is important to interpreting the meaning and the significance of the performance information being reported.

[1735]

Second, they should link goals to results. Public performance reporting should identify and explain the organization's goals, objectives and strategies and how the results relate to those. It should focus on a few critical aspects of performance. This principle reflects the interest of the audience in the larger overall picture. "Few" means that the number of goals, objectives and particularly performance measures described are limited in number in the published documents that are directed to legislators and to the public. Critical aspects of performance address significance, relevance and the focus on results. What is critical is determined, in part, by what is of importance to the intended user.

Fourth, we should relate results to risk and to capacity. Good performance reporting should report results in the context of an organization's risk and its capacity to deliver on its programs, products and services.

Our fifth principle is to link resources, strategies and results. I believe that public performance reporting should link the financial and performance information to show how resources and strategies influence results. Related to this is how efficiently the organization achieves its results. The principle is directed at understanding the link between financial and human resources and the organization's performance. It views funding as a means to an end — more specifically, an organization's ability to deliver on its plan — but it also recognizes funding as a critical element in an organization's ability to manage its risks and continue operations. Thus linking financial and operational goals, objectives and results is important to any public sector organization.

The sixth principle is to provide comparative information. Public performance reporting should provide comparative information about past and expected future performance and about the performance of similar organizations when it would significantly enhance the reader's ability to use the information that is being reported.

The seventh principle is to present credible information fairly interpreted. This reporting should be credible — that is, based on qualitative and quantitative information that is fairly interpreted and presented, based on the best judgment of those that are reporting.

The eighth and final principle is to disclose the basis for key reporting judgments. Public performance reporting should disclose the basis on which this information has been prepared and the limitations that should apply to its use.

I have put forward a proposal that these guiding principles not only be used by ministries such as the Ministry of Children and Family Development but also be extended to organizations and agencies that flow from government, such as the community living authority. I believe in this. I believe in it because I think it is what people in this province really want to know. They want to know what we're spending, that we're

doing it right and that it has the results we intend. People in British Columbia want to know what we are buying with our tax dollars, and it's fair to ask.

I think what we've done here with the creation of this agency is put the challenge forward to them to be forthright, open and accountable not only on the financial side of things but also on the performance measures for judging them. I think that's a really important part of this.

The third challenge is perhaps a little easier, and that is to move forward with this particular plan. I think the time has come for people all around this province to take a good look at this piece of legislation — understand where we're headed, why we're headed there and how much this is going to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities, service providers who deliver those services to them and to the families who have faced unimaginable challenges with their children, family members who face these challenges — so that we can move forward with good faith, openness, transparency and a view to creating a better environment, a better living situation for all of the people that come to the Ministry of Children and Family Development for their services.

I think we need to make all efforts to ensure that this project is done right and that we continue the work that has been started by the previous minister and followed up on by this minister. I know that it will be worth it as we work towards ensuring that we are doing things right and accomplishing exactly what we set out to do in the first place, and that is to improve the lives of people living with developmental disabilities. I know that we can do it, and I thank you for your time and your consideration in this matter.

[1740]

B. Penner: Before I begin any remarks regarding the bill, I'd just like to say that it's great to be back and to be recovering from my sore back. It was April 14 when my life suddenly changed. That's a few months ago now when I ruptured a disc in my spine and was taken to hospital by ambulance. At that time, I really had a hard time envisioning me being back here in this place standing here the way I am right now. I am very grateful for my recovery to date, and I hope my colleagues will extend me a bit of a break. I'm a little bit slower getting around the stairs. Please don't push me out of the way on those stairs as I try to navigate my way around this incredible building.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

I'd also like to thank those colleagues of mine and members of the Legislature who took time to send me cards, letters, e-mails and in some cases flowers to wish me well in my recovery. That meant a lot to me when I wasn't able to get out and about for about six weeks or so.

Just briefly with respect to the bill that we're debating here today, I'd like to make this observation. I think it's very apropos that we begin this fall sitting of the

Legislature with this particular piece of legislation, given that the government of British Columbia has declared October to be community living services month. So it's very timely that we should be debating this here at the Legislature. I think it's appropriate.

Some statistics that really stood out to me, which I found remarkable. As of March 31, 2004, there were 9,277 adults with developmental disabilities who receive community living support services, including residential resources for 4,905 adults. The number of individuals receiving community living support has grown by 34.6 percent since January 1997 and is expected to continue to grow at 3 to 4 percent per year. That's a very sizable increase in a relatively short period of time, and it indicates just how many individuals out there in the province are counting on support from people outside of their family.

In my own case, I had an occasion this spring after my particular mishap, injury and following surgery to reflect on what it meant to be dependent upon others, because for a number of weeks I was completely dependent upon others. If not for the good graces of friends and family, I'm not sure what I would have done. I was not able to feed myself or, frankly, get to the washroom very easily. It was probably three weeks or so before I was able to make it outside of the apartment at all and then only to the sidewalk and back.

Along the way — in my travels, trying to regain my ability to walk — I encountered many people on the sidewalks in and around the vicinity of Chilliwack General Hospital possessing many physical ailments, many of them permanent — people with walkers, people on little scooters, people with canes and crutches. Because of my new state, I found it very interesting to stop and talk to these people and ask them how it is that they came to be in their current physical situation.

It was a very enlightening experience, a very informative one. I'm not sure it was one I was really looking forward to or really wish to repeat, but it certainly gave me an eye-opening experience and a window onto the world that is the world for many people in our province — being dependent upon others and being very needy, often because of physical ailments that were beyond their control.

This legislation is important. I think we should reflect.... I know the member from Vancouver centre was talking about the taxpayers having a right to know what happens with their money. The community living services budget for this fiscal year, 2004-05, is \$609.6 million, which is a very sizable amount of money. I can also attest to the fact that it's very much needed. I'm confident that with this new model going forward, there will be a greater accountability.

Just in passing, I would like to note that the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act will apply to this new entity. The public will have the same rights to access the authority's records and have personal information protected, as for any public body.

The child and youth officer, whom I believe is a statutory officer of the Legislature, will continue to ensure that services provided to children and youth are under their purview. That's pursuant to section 3 of the Community Living Authority Act.

As well, the ombudsman, another statutory officer of the Legislature, will have jurisdiction, pursuant to section 10 of the Ombudsman Act, to investigate a complaint regarding a decision, recommendation, act, omission or procedure by an authority that aggrieves or may aggrieve a person. There are a number of protections built in. It is a fairly transparent and accountable regime that's being put in place here by this legislation.

[1745]

I know that throughout the province there are people awaiting the next step — that is, the regionalization efforts that have been discussed and planned for some time. I hope, as one legislator, that this legislation is one further step towards that goal of greater regional local input. As my colleague the member for Vancouver-Langara pointed out, it isn't just government that does things. In order to succeed in helping individuals in the community, we need that community support — whether it's friends, family or just individuals who realize how important it is to volunteer their time to help others that are less fortunate. We really need all that local input to make this new model work successfully.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Children and Family Development closes debate.

Hon. S. Hagen: I'd like to thank my colleagues for their illuminating comments on this bill and for their thoughtful and well-articulated support of this bill, Bill 45, Community Living Authority Act.

Having said that, I close debate.

Motion approved.

Hon. S. Hagen: I move that the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House to be considered at the next sitting of the House after today.

Bill 45, Community Living Authority Act, read a second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole House for consideration at the next sitting of the House after today.

Hon. G. Abbott moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

Mr. Speaker: The House is adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 5:47 p.m.