



First Session, 38th Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT OF  
DEBATES OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
(HANSARD)

Thursday, November 24, 2005  
Morning Sitting  
Volume 5, Number 9

THE HONOURABLE BILL BARISOFF, SPEAKER

ISSN 0709-1281

**PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
(Entered Confederation July 20, 1871)

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

**FIRST SESSION, 38TH PARLIAMENT**

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
Honourable Bill Barisoff

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Premier and President of the Executive Council .....	Hon. Gordon Campbell
Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations .....	Hon. John van Dongen
Deputy Premier and Minister of Education and Minister Responsible for Early Learning and Literacy .....	Hon. Shirley Bond
Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation .....	Hon. Tom Christensen
Minister of Advanced Education and Minister Responsible for Research and Technology .....	Hon. Murray Coell
Minister of Agriculture and Lands.....	Hon. Pat Bell
Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism.....	Hon. Wally Oppal, QC
Minister of Children and Family Development.....	Hon. Stan Hagen
Minister of State for Childcare .....	Hon. Linda Reid
Minister of Community Services and Minister Responsible for Seniors' and Women's Issues.....	Hon. Ida Chong
Minister of Economic Development and Minister Responsible for the Asia-Pacific Initiative and the Olympics.....	Hon. Colin Hansen
Minister of Employment and Income Assistance .....	Hon. Claude Richmond
Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources .....	Hon. Richard Neufeld
Minister of State for Mining.....	Hon. Bill Bennett
Minister of Environment and Minister Responsible for Water Stewardship and Sustainable Communities .....	Hon. Barry Penner
Minister of Finance.....	Hon. Carole Taylor
Minister of Forests and Range and Minister Responsible for Housing .....	Hon. Rich Coleman
Minister of Health .....	Hon. George Abbott
Minister of Labour and Citizens' Services .....	Hon. Michael de Jong
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General.....	Hon. John Les
Minister of Small Business and Revenue and Minister Responsible for Deregulation .....	Hon. Rick Thorpe
Minister of Tourism, Sport and the Arts .....	Hon. Olga Illich
Minister of Transportation.....	Hon. Kevin Falcon

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Leader of the Official Opposition .....	Carole James
Deputy Speaker .....	Sindi Hawkins
Assistant Deputy Speaker .....	Sue Hammell
Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole.....	Harry Bloy
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly .....	E. George MacMinn, OBC, QC
Clerk Assistant .....	Robert Vaive
Clerk Assistant and Law Clerk .....	Ian D. Izard, QC
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees .....	Craig H. James
Clerk Assistant and Committee Clerk .....	Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms.....	A.A. Humphreys
Director, Hansard Services .....	Anthony Dambrauskas
Legislative Librarian .....	Jane Taylor
Legislative Comptroller.....	Dan Arbic

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS

Abbott, Hon. George (L).....Shuswap  
Austin, Robin (NDP).....Skeena  
Bains, Harry (NDP).....Surrey-Newton  
Barisoff, Hon. Bill (L).....Penticton-Okanagan Valley  
Bell, Hon. Pat (L).....Prince George North  
Bennett, Hon. Bill (L).....East Kootenay  
Black, Iain (L).....Port Moody-Westwood  
Bloy, Harry (L).....Burquitlam  
Bond, Hon. Shirley (L).....Prince George-Mount Robson  
Brar, Jagrup (NDP).....Surrey-Panorama Ridge  
Campbell, Hon. Gordon (L).....Vancouver-Point Grey  
Cantelon, Ron (L).....Nanaimo-Parksville  
Chong, Hon. Ida (L).....Oak Bay-Gordon Head  
Chouhan, Raj (NDP).....Burnaby-Edmonds  
Christensen, Hon. Tom (L).....Okanagan-Vernon  
Chudnovsky, Dave (NDP).....Vancouver-Kensington  
Coell, Hon. Murray (L).....Saanich North and the Islands  
Coleman, Hon. Rich (L).....Fort Langley-Aldergrove  
Conroy, Katrine (NDP).....West Kootenay-Boundary  
Coons, Gary (NDP).....North Coast  
Cubberley, David (NDP).....Saanich South  
de Jong, Hon. Michael (L).....Abbotsford-Mount Lehman  
Dix, Adrian (NDP).....Vancouver-Kingsway  
Evans, Corky (NDP).....Nelson-Creston  
Falcon, Hon. Kevin (L).....Surrey-Cloverdale  
Farnworth, Mike (NDP).....Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain  
Fleming, Rob (NDP).....Victoria-Hillside  
Fraser, Scott (NDP).....Alberni-Qualicum  
Gentner, Guy (NDP).....Delta North  
Hagen, Hon. Stan (L).....Comox Valley  
Hammell, Sue (NDP).....Surrey-Green Timbers  
Hansen, Hon. Colin (L).....Vancouver-Quilchena  
Hawes, Randy (L).....Maple Ridge-Mission  
Hawkins, Sindi (L).....Kelowna-Mission  
Hayer, Dave S. (L).....Surrey-Tynehead  
Hogg, Gordon (L).....Surrey-White Rock  
Horgan, John (NDP).....Malahat-Juan de Fuca  
Horning, Al (L).....Kelowna-Lake Country  
Ilich, Hon. Olga (L).....Richmond Centre  
James, Carole (NDP).....Victoria-Beacon Hill  
Jarvis, Daniel (L).....North Vancouver-Seymour  
Karagianis, Maurine (NDP).....Esquimalt-Metchosin  
Krog, Leonard (NDP).....Nanaimo  
Krueger, Kevin (L).....Kamloops-North Thompson  
Kwan, Jenny Wai Ching (NDP).....Vancouver-Mount Pleasant  
Lali, Harry (NDP).....Yale-Lillooet  
Lee, Richard T. (L).....Burnaby North  
Lekstrom, Blair (L).....Peace River South  
Les, Hon. John (L).....Chilliwack-Sumas  
Macdonald, Norm (NDP).....Columbia River-Revelstoke  
MacKay, Dennis (L).....Bulkley Valley-Stikine  
Mayencourt, Lorne (L).....Vancouver-Burrard  
McIntyre, Joan (L).....West Vancouver-Garibaldi  
Neufeld, Hon. Richard (L).....Peace River North  
Nuraney, John (L).....Burnaby-Willingdon  
Oppal, Hon. Wally, QC (L).....Vancouver-Fraserview  
Penner, Hon. Barry (L).....Chilliwack-Kent  
Polak, Mary (L).....Langley  
Puchmayr, Chuck (NDP).....New Westminster  
Ralston, Bruce (NDP).....Surrey-Whalley  
Reid, Hon. Linda (L).....Richmond East  
Richmond, Hon. Claude (L).....Kamloops  
Robertson, Gregor (NDP).....Vancouver-Fairview  
Roddick, Valerie (L).....Delta South  
Routley, Doug (NDP).....Cowichan-Ladysmith  
Rustad, John (L).....Prince George-Omineca  
Sather, Michael (NDP).....Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows  
Simons, Nicholas (NDP).....Powell River-Sunshine Coast  
Simpson, Bob (NDP).....Cariboo North  
Simpson, Shane (NDP).....Vancouver-Hastings  
Sultan, Ralph (L).....West Vancouver-Capilano  
Taylor, Hon. Carole (L).....Vancouver-Langara  
Thorne, Diane (NDP).....Coquitlam-Maillardville  
Thorpe, Hon. Rick (L).....Okanagan-Westsides  
Trevena, Claire (NDP).....North Island  
van Dongen, Hon. John (L).....Abbotsford-Clayburn  
Whittred, Katherine (L).....North Vancouver-Lonsdale  
Wyse, Charlie (NDP).....Cariboo South  
Yap, John (L).....Richmond-Steveston

## LIST OF MEMBERS BY RIDING

Abbotsford-Clayburn.....Hon. John van Dongen  
Abbotsford-Mount Lehman.....Hon. Michael de Jong  
Alberni-Qualicum.....Scott Fraser  
Bulkley Valley-Stikine.....Dennis MacKay  
Burnaby North.....Richard T. Lee  
Burnaby-Edmonds.....Raj Chouhan  
Burnaby-Willingdon.....John Nuraney  
Burquitlam.....Harry Bloy  
Cariboo North.....Bob Simpson  
Cariboo South.....Charlie Wyse  
Chilliwack-Kent.....Hon. Barry Penner  
Chilliwack-Sumas.....Hon. John Les  
Columbia River-Revelstoke.....Norm Macdonald  
Comox Valley.....Hon. Stan Hagen  
Coquitlam-Maillardville.....Diane Thorne  
Cowichan-Ladysmith.....Doug Routley  
Delta North.....Guy Gentner  
Delta South.....Valerie Roddick  
East Kootenay.....Hon. Bill Bennett  
Esquimalt-Metchosin.....Maurine Karagianis  
Fort Langley-Aldergrove.....Hon. Rich Coleman  
Kamloops.....Hon. Claude Richmond  
Kamloops-North Thompson.....Kevin Krueger  
Kelowna-Lake Country.....Al Horning  
Kelowna-Mission.....Sindi Hawkins  
Langley.....Mary Polak  
Malahat-Juan de Fuca.....John Horgan  
Maple Ridge-Mission.....Randy Hawes  
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows.....Michael Sather  
Nanaimo.....Leonard Krog  
Nanaimo-Parksville.....Ron Cantelon  
Nelson-Creston.....Corky Evans  
New Westminster.....Chuck Puchmayr  
North Coast.....Gary Coons  
North Island.....Claire Trevena  
North Vancouver-Lonsdale.....Katherine Whittred  
North Vancouver-Seymour.....Daniel Jarvis  
Oak Bay-Gordon Head.....Hon. Ida Chong  
Okanagan-Vernon.....Hon. Tom Christensen  
Okanagan-Westsides.....Hon. Rick Thorpe  
Peace River North.....Hon. Richard Neufeld  
Peace River South.....Blair Lekstrom  
Penticton-Okanagan Valley.....Hon. Bill Barisoff  
Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain.....Mike Farnworth  
Port Moody-Westwood.....Iain Black  
Powell River-Sunshine Coast.....Nicholas Simons  
Prince George North.....Hon. Pat Bell  
Prince George-Mount Robson.....Hon. Shirley Bond  
Prince George-Omineca.....John Rustad  
Richmond Centre.....Hon. Olga Ilich  
Richmond East.....Hon. Linda Reid  
Richmond-Steveston.....John Yap  
Saanich North and the Islands.....Hon. Murray Coell  
Saanich South.....David Cubberley  
Shuswap.....Hon. George Abbott  
Skeena.....Robin Austin  
Surrey-Cloverdale.....Hon. Kevin Falcon  
Surrey-Green Timbers.....Sue Hammell  
Surrey-Newton.....Harry Bains  
Surrey-Panorama Ridge.....Jagrup Brar  
Surrey-Tynehead.....Dave S. Hayer  
Surrey-Whalley.....Bruce Ralston  
Surrey-White Rock.....Gordon Hogg  
Vancouver-Burrard.....Lorne Mayencourt  
Vancouver-Fairview.....Gregor Robertson  
Vancouver-Fraserview.....Hon. Wally Oppal, QC  
Vancouver-Hastings.....Shane Simpson  
Vancouver-Kensington.....David Chudnovsky  
Vancouver-Kingsway.....Adrian Dix  
Vancouver-Langara.....Hon. Carole Taylor  
Vancouver-Mount Pleasant.....Jenny Wai Ching Kwan  
Vancouver-Point Grey.....Hon. Gordon Campbell  
Vancouver-Quilchena.....Hon. Colin Hansen  
Victoria-Beacon Hill.....Carole James  
Victoria-Hillside.....Rob Fleming  
West Kootenay-Boundary.....Katrine Conroy  
West Vancouver-Capilano.....Ralph Sultan  
West Vancouver-Garibaldi.....Joan McIntyre  
Yale-Lillooet.....Harry Lali



**CONTENTS**

Thursday, November 24, 2005  
Morning Sitting

**Routine Proceedings**

	<b>Page</b>
Committee of Supply.....	2195
Estimates: Ministry of Children and Family Development ( <i>continued</i> )	
N. Simons	
Hon. S. Hagen	
C. Wyse	
A. Dix	



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2005

The House met at 10:02 a.m.

Prayers.

### Orders of the Day

**Hon. C. Richmond:** I call Committee of Supply — the estimates debate of the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

### Committee of Supply

ESTIMATES: MINISTRY OF  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT  
(continued)

The House in Committee of Supply (Section B); K. Krueger in the chair.

The committee met at 10:05 a.m.

On Vote 18: ministry operations, \$1,111,979,000  
(continued).

**The Chair:** On Vote 18, I recognize the member for Powell River–Sunshine Coast, even though he looks different from this angle.

**N. Simons:** So do you, hon. Chair, so we're both better off, I imagine.

It's a pleasure to be able to ask some questions of the Minister of Children and Family Development, and I thank the staff for being here.

I'm going to start off with some questions before the critic, the member for Vancouver-Kingsway, shows up. If I may, I'll begin with some questions around youth agreements, if that's all right. My first, specifically, is: can the minister tell the House how many youth agreements are currently in place?

[H. Bloy in the chair.]

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Thanks for the question. I just want to introduce my staff before I answer it. I have Deputy Minister Alison MacPhail. I have Assistant Deputy Minister Mark Sieben. I have Assistant Deputy Minister Alan Markwart and Director of Finance Kathy Jones.

The number of youth agreements in place in the fiscal year '04-05 totalled 298.

**N. Simons:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll try and remember that you're in between both of us. Can the minister inform the House whether they have evaluated or assessed the value of the youth agreement program and the criteria required to enter into a youth agreement?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** There was a study done by B.C. Stats in 2004. As a matter of fact, it's available on the

website, but I'm happy to provide the member with the list of everything that they looked at and the types of issues that they looked at.

**N. Simons:** Do youth who enter into agreements under youth agreements...? Does the ministry assume any guardianship role?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** The answer is no.

**N. Simons:** So in fact, the youth under youth agreements are not considered in care?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** That's correct.

[1010]

**N. Simons:** Do youth agreements allow for any post-majority services?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** The goal of youth agreements, as I'm sure the member probably knows, is to assist youth to transfer from children into youth and then prepare them for life after 19. There are no post-majority services provided.

**N. Simons:** Can the minister tell the House what the breakdown of the age categories of youth...? What's the youngest youth agreement for, and what's the oldest age?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'm told that they're 16- to 18-year-olds. We don't have a breakdown of the numbers, but I'm happy to provide those to you.

**N. Simons:** Can the minister inform the House as to whether any evaluation has been done on the effect of youth agreements on youth homelessness?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Apparently, the study that was done did look at the effect of youth homelessness but only with regard to the children who were under youth agreements.

**N. Simons:** I'm wondering if the ministry has any official standardized policy on who will qualify to enter into a youth agreement with the ministry.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'm told that it's set out both in regulation and very comprehensive policy.

**N. Simons:** Can the minister inform the House what discretionary funding is provided to youth who are in youth agreements?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Actually, I appreciate these questions because it's an area that I haven't spent a lot of time looking at. That's one of the benefits of estimates, at least for the minister. I'm told that discretionary funding is approximately \$740 a month, which is sort of a living allowance, but most of the youth are also engaged with youth services from other agencies. They

may have a youth worker assigned to them, depending on their circumstance and their situation.

**N. Simons:** Is the minister suggesting that youth under youth agreements, after food and shelter, receive \$740 a month?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** No. The \$740 a month is to provide them with shelter and other amenities.

[1015]

**N. Simons:** I've been informed that there are a number of youth who are struggling with the amount of funding they receive. I'm simply curious as to whether the minister believes that \$750 a month in today's rental market in most parts of the province is sufficient for a youth to (a) live by themselves or (b) live in an environment that is conducive to them succeeding in school or employment.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'm told that the amount that I talked about is more than the income assistance amounts that are received and almost the same as persons with disabilities receive.

**N. Simons:** I'm just wondering if it's still the ministry's policy to only enter into agreements with youth who are suffering from severe substance abuse issues, significant behavioral or mental disorders, sexual exploitation or involvement in the sex trades, or chronic homelessness.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** That's correct.

**N. Simons:** Are those four criteria referring to the same policies and guidelines earlier referred to by the ministry, those being the...? Let me rephrase that. Only youth who fit into one of these four categories are eligible for a youth agreement?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** That's correct.

**N. Simons:** And what criteria assist social workers in determining what is severe, what is significant, what is exploitation and what is chronic?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'm told that the policy is quite long, and I'm happy to provide a copy of that policy. It involves looking at each individual circumstance to see what the needs are. There's a lot of professional judgment by professional social workers in coming to those decisions.

**N. Simons:** I'm wondering if he can enlighten the House as to whether or not social workers have the discretion to enter into youth agreements or if it requires any other level of approval?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** It requires the supervisor's approval as well.

**N. Simons:** Does the ministry coordinate youth agreements with support to young people who are on

income assistance? Is there any interaction between the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance and the Ministry of Children and Families?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** There is an interministry agreement between the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

**N. Simons:** Mostly the concern that's been expressed to me and to others is that there seems to be a lack of support for young people who are suddenly in a situation where they are not under the direct supervision of an adult and many of whom have come through a foster care system that maybe they've rejected or that somehow has not worked. When they find themselves in situations at the age of 16 without a responsible guardian, other supports are required to support them in their pursuit of employment, skills, training or education.

I'm wondering whether or not these support factors are built into youth agreements?

[1020]

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Apparently, there are a lot of services offered to these youth — youth services, youth workers — to help them. We also work very closely with the Ministry of Advanced Education because, of course, the whole purpose of the youth agreement is to transition the youth and hopefully get them back into school if they've dropped out of school. Youth workers, of course, can help build back their self-esteem — all of those things that are probably reasons for them ending up in a youth agreement.

So I think there is good cooperation between ministries. There are youth services that are available out there that can be pointed out to the youth. We have the same concern that you've had expressed to you about these youth. They're in a very important age as far as their lives are concerned. The objective, of course, is to transition them through and get them back on the road of being able to contribute to society in a meaningful way.

**N. Simons:** I think that the goal is obviously a good goal. I'm just wondering how much support there is for this transition besides the paper a youth agreement provides. In terms of substance abuse, how many FTEs are available in the province for young people with severe substance abuse problems?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** As I'm sure the member knows, youth addictions are administered by the health authorities, but this government just provided an additional \$6 million to health authorities to assist them in dealing with youth addictions.

**N. Simons:** My particular concern was for the youth who are not living with a present guardian and what services are specifically available to youth who are in a youth agreement who are suffering from severe

substance abuse, significant mental disorder, sexual exploitation or involvement in the sex trade, or chronic homelessness.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** As I mentioned before, the addiction services and detox services are administered by the health authorities, and we provided an extra \$6 million this year to the health authorities. Mental health — we added \$12.7 million of new money this year to deal with youth mental health. With regard to sexual exploitation, we added an additional \$2 million this year, and that includes wrap-around services.

[1025]

**N. Simons:** I'm not a mathematician, but if we're talking about 200-plus young people who are under youth-in-care agreements, that's almost a million dollars each, of which they're seeing approximately \$200 a month in order to help themselves.

That being said, I'm wondering if the minister has any statistics on the number of young people who are not succeeding in the current foster home system and who do not qualify under those four criteria, which I must say I believe are quite severe in terms of the young people that I run across as a social worker. In fact, there are a lot of young people who attempt to survive in dysfunctional homes where services to their parents may be minimal and where other options besides couch surfing and living with friends and living in unstable situations take place but don't allow for them to meet the four very severe criteria that exist in the current policy.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Certainly, the objective of the social workers and the ministry is to, first of all, try and support and keep the children in their own family, because I'm sure you agree that studies show that that's the healthiest and the best for the child and the family. Failing that, then the workers will look to the home of a relative, perhaps, and failing that, in care — in addition to the youth agreements for those youth who are maybe a little more independently inclined than others.

As I travel the province talking to social workers, I really am impressed with how they look at dealing with youth and with children. I get the distinct impression that, as you know, they're very dedicated professionals, and I think they really do look at arriving in a position that is the best for the child or the youth. In this case I know you're focusing on the youth.

This can't be easy. I've never done this kind of work. I assume that you have done that kind of work, so you would know the complexity and the difficulties and the challenges far better than I would. But having said that, any of the workers that I've talked to are very focused on what's best for that child or youth.

**N. Simons:** I do agree that the work of social workers is highly valued by everyone in our society, and I do know that they are heartened by comments that support the work that they do. I think it's important

that they are heard because of the fact that they do seem to know exactly what's necessary for young people, especially at a time when there are significant changes taking place in society.

I'd like to just allow my friend from Cariboo South to ask a few questions to the minister.

**C. Wyse:** Firstly, I wish to acknowledge the time extended to me to ask you some questions in order to assist our discussion, minister.

The three questions I have to begin with are around the areas of health authorities and the Ministry of Children and Family Development, so that you have a heads-up. My first question: what protocols exist between each health authority and MCFD covering the transition from hospital to community for youth?

[1030]

[S. Hammell in the chair.]

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Boy, I'll tell you: as a minister you have to be sharp up here, because the Chairs keep changing and....

Interjection.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I didn't realize it was this big of a challenge. It's somewhat unfortunate that ministers can't change when the Chairs change, you know. That would bring some fairness into the whole process — don't you think? Actually, in this ministry, ministers have changed almost as quickly as Chairs.

Anyways, in answer to your first question — sorry — there is an interministry policy requiring the development of protocols between the ministry and the regional health authorities.

**C. Wyse:** I thank the minister. The policy is there; I appreciate being given that information. My question really was: what is that policy? Is it developed? Does it exist?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** There is a policy. The policy exists. The protocol agreements are all in place.

**C. Wyse:** Thank you, Mr. Minister. My next question is of a similar nature. What protocols exist covering the transition of a youth with a mental illness to adult between MCFD and each health authority?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** The policy is identical, and the agreements are in place.

**C. Wyse:** A third question: what protocols exist covering the transition of youth with mental illness between MCFD and the court system?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** There is, apparently, a process in place where the courts will refer cases to the ministry that we then pick up and work with.

**C. Wyse:** My apologies to the minister. The complexity of some of these questions.... I appreciate in that direction, but what about in the reverse direction, in which there is an individual in the care of MCFD with a mental illness who now ends up in a court situation? What protocols exist in that direction?

[1035]

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I guess this would be a very difficult area to have any sort of protocols in, because we don't get to tell the courts what to do. In the case of a child in care ending up in the court system, they would be dealt with by the courts the same way as the courts would deal with youth or children outside of care. However, if the court were to say to the ministry, if this was a child in care, "This child needs psychiatric help or needs help with regard to addictions," or something like that, that would be something the ministry would carry out.

**C. Wyse:** Again, thank you for the information.

Moving into a broader area. So you have an idea that I'm switching context, more in the area of youth homelessness and MCFD, and a bit of information from Cariboo South. I have encountered a number of youth, approximately 15, 16 years of age, that are in the care of MCFD that are moving beyond that age to independent living. It's a series of questions around those, if that gives you an idea where these questions are coming from.

My first question: what is the actual age that an individual begins the transition from foster care to independent living?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** The transition age would be 16 to 19. However, it's important — and I'm sure you do know this — to understand that youth can stay in a foster home until they turn 19.

**C. Wyse:** What financial support is provided for independent living to a youth in transition?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** A youth in care receives the same monthly payment as a youth under a youth agreement — and your colleague asked that — which is \$740 a month.

**C. Wyse:** How long must an individual work before social assistance is provided in such a transition period of time?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'm told that there is no work requirement. If a youth is going to move from a foster home to independent living, then that becomes part of the plan for that youth.

**C. Wyse:** Upon completion of the transition to independent living, how long must an individual work in order to qualify for social assistance?

[1040]

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'm told that there is still no work requirement when a child reaches the age of majority

of 19. We have an agreement, a protocol with the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, and he then moves onto their rolls.

**C. Wyse:** Minister, as they move onto the rolls, an individual in your charge is now passed on to, potentially, another government agency. Their rules, to my understanding, now apply. Therefore, you have the two years maximum out of five to qualify for those situations. There is a gap that exists here in that situation for those individuals, as I have encountered from Cariboo South, in which the individuals lacking the skills for employment and so on and then meeting the employment assistance aspect of it...

I have one more question here in this conversation to conclude. What training is available for foster care to independent living — an individual who is in your charge?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I now understand where you're coming from, and I agree with you. I don't know whether I would call it a gap, but I think we need to do something in that bridging time. In the other ministry they have some great programs for training people ready for work, as you know. We don't have those in our ministry. We don't have the funds for them either, but it's something I'm aware of.

It's something I'm very focused on. I would dearly love to start doing that, because I agree with you 100 percent. I've talked to foster parents who get worried as to what's going to happen, you know, when their foster kids turn 16 or 17. We're very focused on that. It's a question of actually getting something done about it.

**C. Wyse:** I apologize to the minister. I had advised you that I had no more questions, but your response begs one more. What system exists for your influence to be brought to achieve exactly what you have set to get rid of this gap?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I won't agree with the member that there's a gap, but I think there's a need. The youth can transition, you know, onto the welfare rolls. I don't think that's good enough. I don't think we should be in a society where that is sort of the automatic next step. That's why I'm very focused on dealing with the youth we have in that 16-to-18 range.

**A. Dix:** I want to say hello again to the minister and his staff and thank them for all their hard work. I want to ask the minister, first of all, just a question — and I talked to him about this a couple of days ago. I asked him a question in his estimates, before our hiatus, about the Kamloops Youth Clubhouse.

It's not just for me or for a political issue. I know that the hon. Minister of Employment is very interested in this issue. I know that the member for Kamloops-North Thompson is interested in this issue. This youth clubhouse does extraordinary work in Kamloops. I think the minister has some more information, and I

wanted to ask him: (a) is it his understanding that the federal government may step in, in this case, and (b) can the Minister of Children and Family Development step in with bridging funds to make sure that the clubhouse can continue to offer its activities in the short run? Their services are so needed in the Kamloops area.

[1045]

**Hon. S. Hagen:** The member for Vancouver-Kingsway is absolutely correct. The two members from Kamloops, as well as the member, have been on me on this. As you know, this is just one of the programs in the province that was started and funded by a federal government program called SCPI.

I'm sure that the member opposite encountered the same frustrations that I'm encountering now when he worked in the office of the Premier, where the federal government will put money in for a period of time for a program and then, I guess, the understanding is: "We're going to give you some sort of startup money or fund the program for a while, but then you have to find other money." Of course, the first place they look for other money is to the province. It's much like the challenge we have in working with the federal government where they will provide the capital for something, for a program, and then, of course, the program comes looking to us for the operating.

These are challenges that we have to work with every day. This program in Kamloops is one of those. I haven't seen anything officially yet, but I did learn, I think on Tuesday — I think that's when I mentioned it to the member — that there was a rumour that the SCPI funding may be renewed. If that's the case, then we will certainly be contacting the group in Kamloops to make application for those funds. It's a little early for me to make a commitment on providing bridging money because we need to know exactly what the federal government is committed to and what they're promising.

Certainly we're following the issue very closely. It's not because we don't like the program. It's just that this isn't the only one. These programs exist in several places around the province. It would be difficult for us to pick and choose. You know, without having an unlimited budget, it does present some challenges. We're certainly aware of it, and we want to assure that these services are made available as they're needed around the province.

**A. Dix:** I thank the minister for his answer. The clubhouse has, I think, amended its request to the ministry for support. I think it would be very helpful if the ministry could get in touch with the clubhouse and talk about what they might need in advance of getting the SCPI funding in order to keep going, because the cost of shutting down such an agency and then having to meet the needs in the future would be very significant. I think that what we want to see in this case is a successful program — which is meeting some of the ministry's goals, the government's goals and all of our goals — continue on.

I want to ask the minister a few questions in the following three areas over the next short while we have left in estimates. The first is the Woodlands case, the second is issues around special needs children and the third is Community Living B.C. Just for the minister's staff and for their interest, I thought I'd put that forward.

I want to ask him first.... On the Woodlands issue, I think that the stories of courage presented by Woodlands survivors.... A number of them met, came to the Legislature. I know that the minister and his staff have met with Woodlands survivors over the years. They are stories of both horror and courage — horror about what happened in the system, and we all in society have to take responsibility for that, and the courage that the Woodlands survivors have shown to persevere in their lives.

As you know, after the Dulcie McCallum report the government responded to that report with an apology but no acknowledgment of what the report stated, which was that there was systematic abuse. The government responded with a relatively small package — \$2 million — when you consider the number of people. It wasn't just Woodlands in question; it was Tranquille and other institutions. It was a relatively small package which involves only \$400 in compensation, essentially, per resident.

[1050]

In addition, the government not only provided a minuscule package for those former residents, but they also said to those residents: "We're going to tell you how you can spend it. You have to spend it on specific therapies." Now, you know and I know that when you consider the cost of those therapies, \$400 won't take you very far.

I wanted to ask the minister whether he thinks it's acceptable, first of all, that the trust fund was created in 2003.... We're in November 2005. No money has been disbursed, and the government has spent hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars in the meantime both fighting Woodlands survivors in court and trying to figure out how to spend the money.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** As the member knows, there are two issues here. One is the issue of compensation, and the other — which is before the courts, as you know — is the issue of the \$2 million trust fund. If the member opposite is frustrated, you have no idea how frustrated I've been for the last 13 or 14 months.

I also want to clarify something else. The \$2 million trust fund is set up for counselling services and family services. We're not saying what kind of counselling services. We haven't prescribed that, but it is available for counselling services.

Having said that, it hasn't done any good, because none of the money has flowed. I take that point. The reason the money hasn't flowed is that, as you know, there was legal action contemplated because there was dissatisfaction with the makeup of the board, and there were some other issues raised.

The good news is that the legal questions are finished. The board is in place, I think with everybody's

agreement. The advisory committee is in place, and it's composed of former residents. They are now responsible for the time line and for the distribution of the trust. I have been advised recently that they are meeting, actually, this week, and they're meeting again in December.

I am very, very pleased to have this thing finally moving along. We fully expect that funds will start being distributed very quickly, not in November but certainly starting in December. Hopefully, by the end of this fiscal year, March 31, those funds will have been distributed, or at least the applications would have been received.

**A. Dix:** I wanted to ask the minister, though, specifically on the limitations the government's making on the use of those funds. I've met many Woodlands survivors, and many of them are suffering through the most abject poverty, suffering through indignity to this day, suffering through the terrible consequences of what they suffered at Woodlands, which has been described — not by me but by the Ombudsman who did a report into the issue, Dulcie McCallum — as systemic abuse.

Surely, even though the amount of money we're talking about is, I think it's fair to say, totally inadequate and even close to.... Well, I won't characterize it further, but it's totally inadequate. Surely, it should be up to those residents to decide whether they need to spend that money to get an adequate bed or to help themselves in other ways. It should be up to them, not up to the government, to use that money as they see fit, given what they've suffered and given their independent expression of their will — a position supported not just by the We Survived Woodlands group but by the B.C. Association for Community Living.

[1055]

Surely the minister, for that small amount of money, which we hope is just the first of more efforts by the minister and the government to respond to the tragedy at Woodlands — which we are all responsible for, not just the minister but me and everyone else.... Will he acknowledge that Woodlands survivors should be allowed to make their own decisions about how they spend that money?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Well, as I said earlier, certainly with regard to the \$2 million fund, they will be making those decisions, because the advisory committee is now in place. It's composed of former residents who are now responsible for the time line and the disbursement of the trust.

I think where we have a disagreement is that our government disagrees with your statement that there was systemic abuse. That's a position that the government has taken.

However, having taken that position, the government has also said that we will review any individual situation where there is evidence of abuse and provide appropriate compensation. Also, as you know, with regard to the ongoing lives of these people, there are

government programs in place for persons with disabilities and other programs where there is a monthly amount provided.

**A. Dix:** The government of British Columbia did a report. I know members of the House will be interested in the question of systemic abuse of children at Woodlands. I know that's a subject of great interest to hon. members.

I want to ask the minister if he thinks that \$2 million is adequate, because it seems to me that it's not nearly adequate. The Ombudsman did a report. That report said there was systemic abuse. The government really hasn't responded to that report except to suggest that there are only some unfortunate individuals. Again, we're talking about the government and its responsibility to history and its responsibility to all the citizens of B.C. This is not a partisan issue in that sense.

I want to say to the minister that I think it's incumbent on the government to follow through on the recommendations of the Ombudsman in two ways: firstly, to acknowledge that the \$2 million is not nearly adequate and to provide more, either in the context of a court settlement or in some other action; and secondly, to follow through on the other part of the McCallum report, which stated that there should be a second-phase investigation for gathering direct evidence of the abuse from residents. Nobody wants this case to be dragged out in court. It is painful. It will be painful for people to go on the witness stand.

What I think Woodlands survivors are asking of the government is that they engage them directly with respect to a real level of compensation for what they suffered and, secondly, that they follow through on Ms. McCallum's recommendation to have a second-phase review — a recommendation that the government has ignored. That recommendation suggests — and I think it's important — that we need to gather direct evidence of the abuse from residents.

The minister said he didn't agree with my characterization that there was systemic abuse — well, again, that he didn't agree with the assessment of what happened at Woodlands. People of good faith can disagree, but surely that conclusion should follow from a full gathering of the evidence. I think that's what Dulcie McCallum, in her first-phase review, said. She said to the government that there was systemic abuse. She said the government should learn more from Woodlands survivors. Their memory, their courage, all they provide to our society, which is an inspiration to me as an MLA, I think, justifies those actions. I want to ask the minister what he thinks of that.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I would like to repeat on the record that the government does disagree with the finding that there was systemic abuse. Having said that, the government has also said that we will review any individual situation where there are proven instances of abuse and provide the appropriate compensation.

**A. Dix:** I wanted to ask the minister how he thinks people should pursue that. Is he suggesting that individuals hire lawyers and engage the government? I'm telling you: individuals don't have that. One of the reasons why the Woodlands survivors group tried to do a class action is because it's very difficult to engage government. The government has said no. The government has a report before it whose conclusions it denies.

[1100]

I wanted to ask the minister whether, in fact, people should come, I don't know, to the deputy minister's office and line up, to the assistant deputy minister's office and line up, to his office and line up. Surely, a better response is for the government to put together a full package that responds adequately to systemic abuse in this case, or however they want to characterize it, and provide the necessary compensation so that Woodlands survivors can get on with their lives and live their lives as full citizens in this province.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** There are many ways that the former residents can make contact with the government. One would be through CLBC. One would be through Jane Holland's office, the service quality advocate who has been working on this file for a long time. One would be through one of our offices, the offices of the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

I want to repeat — and it's important for people to hear this — that government has said that we will review any individual situation where there is evidence of abuse and provide appropriate compensation. There's an ability through any of the agencies that I just described for former residents of Woodlands to come forward.

**A. Dix:** So what office is there? What budget line is there? Has the minister set aside money for compensation for former Woodlands residents? Hopefully, that money is more than the substantial legal fees that are being spent today to fight Woodlands residents. Have they set aside a pot of money for former Woodlands residents to pay compensation?

Surely it doesn't make sense for the minister to say that we can contact any one of 35 offices around the province and that we can contact here and there and everywhere. This is a serious case. There was a comprehensive report. Where should residents go? Surely, there's one place in the government, and there's an actual program and fund that they can get money from.

If that's the government's response, then it's not that they can contact any number of dozens of offices of his ministry. Surely, what Woodlands residents should be able to do is access a fund that the government has set aside with a specific amount of money in it for compensation for them.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I want to compliment the member for Vancouver-Kingsway because he's actually led me down a path that I wasn't going to go down.

So I'm going to back up. You've done a good job.

But I'm going to back up and remind him that this issue is actually before the courts. I think we should let that progress and, hopefully, come to a resolution, and then I will be happy to have the conversation with the member.

**A. Dix:** Well, something's always before the courts. Let me just say this: I think what the government needs to do is take action to settle the court case. I think people have waited long enough. I think the fact that over the past several years the government has litigated this case, spent perhaps hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees is the wrong approach.

If the minister feels he can't talk about it in this House, that's fine, but my appeal to him is to do whatever he can to go to his colleagues, to go to the Attorney General, to go wherever it takes to make sure that these residents get the compensation they deserve — the former residents of Woodlands. It's well past time that we address this issue. We need to put this issue, I think, to bed — surely, to bed so that people can go on with their lives.

[H. Bloy in the chair.]

With that in mind, hon. Chair, and seeing the hour, I wanted to ask the minister a little bit about services for special needs children. Now, as the minister knows, there is a significant wait-list for services for special needs children in our province — 7,500 children and youth with special needs on wait-lists.

[1105]

Here's what happens. It's an extraordinary situation in this province where you can be on a wait-list for the infant development program, which deals with children from zero to three years old, and you can actually grow through the wait-list. You can be on the wait-list until you get to three, and then what happens? It's your third birthday. You get to go on another wait-list.

I want to ask the minister if he thinks it's adequate that so many children are on wait-lists in this province, whether he thinks that's appropriate? Is it a priority for him to address and eliminate the wait-lists, and how much funding, specifically, is he prepared to allocate to address those wait-lists?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** First of all, let me say to the member for Vancouver-Kingsway that this is one of my priorities. You're actually — and I don't want to insinuate that you're not always correct on the facts — pretty close to being correct on these facts, and it's not good enough.

However, having said that, I can say that it is a file that we're very engaged in — we're very focused on. So the overall new investment to children and youth with special needs over the next three years is \$42 million. Those investments have been targeted to where there is most need: a key focus on reducing critical wait-lists. We've added \$6.2 million for this year to start to address those wait-lists.

Interjection.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Well, one of the challenges.... The member asked the question: to the base? That certainly is a target, but you know, it seems in dealing with this file that the more you address, the more you focus on the wait-lists, the more children enter the wait-lists. It's a challenge, but the money that I talked about is an addition to base funding.

Also, new investments. I'm happy to get into the budget numbers with regard to addressing fetal alcohol syndrome, where we've added \$3 million to the budget this year.

Enhanced investments for children with complex health needs and children with sensory impairments — \$2 million additional this year.

So it's not something that.... It's pretty hard to afford to address it in one year, but certainly, we are focused on it, and we will continue to focus on it until we can actually say that wait-times are now at an acceptable level.

**A. Dix:** Yeah, I had a question following up on that, because it's been estimated that an additional \$30 million in annual funding is required to address the wait-list issue alone. Does the minister agree with that number, which advocates in the area use, and will he be going forward to Treasury Board with a request to meet the challenge of wait-lists for children? As the minister knows, when you fail to meet this challenge for children, it has huge costs for the rest of the system. When someone doesn't get proper services in their infant years, then they're going to be more of a burden and more of a cost on the education system.

Is the minister going to go to Treasury Board, and is he going to fight for that money? Does he need my help in any way to do that, because I've met parents who are on these wait-lists, and it's just awful. They're waiting, they're concerned, they don't know, they're told their children need help, and they can't access that help.

So I want to ask the minister — he talked about making it a priority: will he commit today to making every effort to ensure that adequate resources go into these wait-lists so that agencies are able to provide these services in every part of the province?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** As I've said before, it is a priority. The member opposite asks if there's anything he can do to help.

The fact that you've raised it today actually helps. So I don't have a problem with you raising it.

[1110]

But I want to add something into the record because what I talked about was the money that the Ministry of Children and Family Development is putting into this area. Besides that money of \$42 million, over the next three years, Health will be injecting \$14 million and Education will be injecting \$60 million. So in total there's well over \$100 million over the next three years being put into this issue.

Having said that, we will not veer from our focus of addressing this and trying to address it in as timely a fashion as we can and remain focused on this until we get those wait times down to what I said was an acceptable time.

**A. Dix:** The minister talked about adding some additional funds to address wait-lists in 2006-2007. Can the minister confirm that his ministry has tacked on a 5-to-7-percent administration fee to these additional funds, which MCFD retains?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'm told that there is not an administrative charge, and that we've actually deferred any additional administrative costs to make sure that we got as much money as possible out to the people who need the money.

[S. Hawkins in the chair.]

**A. Dix:** I wanted to ask the minister about what's developed in this area which is a bit of a two-tier system because access to services aren't available in some parts of the province.

I wanted to ask him specifically about payments to professionals — speech therapists and others. One of the fundamental problems I hear from service providers who are in the minister's realm, in the Ministry of Children and Family Development, is that they are not competitive on wages with other parts of the government. What this means is you have openings that are never filled for speech therapists and others in regions of the province. So it doesn't matter if there's any funding. There are no services there to provide for people, sometimes, in places such as Smithers and Terrace and Kamloops and other places around the province. We can't find the people because the minister is being outbid by other ministries.

This isn't a new problem, but I think it's one that the government has to address in a sort of fundamental way in this round of bargaining. I wanted to ask the minister's view on that.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** The member for Vancouver-Kingsway is correct. It is an issue. It's an issue that we're dealing with. I've had meetings with the Minister of Finance. We're working with CSSEA to try and fix this, because it's not good for our ministry and it's not good for the people that our ministry serves. So we want to get this resolved. There are people, I think mainly in the Ministry of Finance, dealing with this. When I go out and meet with advocacy groups, this comes up all the time because it's an issue for them. So we're aware of the issue, we want to solve the issue, and we want to bring it to resolution.

[1115]

**A. Dix:** I think it's a more fundamental issue than that. The government in a whole bunch of areas has worked to limit and indeed reduce wages. We see it for people who are community workers in the community

living sector who are now making, under their contract, \$13 an hour — reduced under this government. The result is, in part, that we can't find enough workers, and we're going to go through a period in community living....

We'll be moving on to there now, just to let the minister know. There are areas in community living where we don't have enough staff because we're not competitive on wages. So the government's policy of cutting wages to community health workers, cutting wages to hospital workers, has had the impact in these sectors of not having sufficient trained staff.

If you've got to go through a two-year program to make \$13 an hour, you will never pay for it. You will never pay for it. It will be about poverty wages the rest of your life, and nobody is going to go through a two-year program. That's why such programs are threatened at institutions such as Douglas and Kwantlen. No one is going into them, because the minister and the government have been cutting wages. Sometimes the market bites back, even against governments that don't want to pay adequate wages for important work. In this case, I'd suggest to the minister and I'd ask the minister to consider whether he thinks the market has bitten back on the government.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** There is a whole bunch of issues here with regard to whether it's shortages or whatever in these various professions, but the other issue is that the economy of the province is coming back so strongly that people will actually now have choices as to where they can work and what they want to do and where they want to work.

Having said that, that doesn't take away from the issue we've got about wage differentials. But the other thing my ministry has done to try and assist in this challenge is that we have received agreement from the Ministry of Advanced Education to extend their reimbursement of tuition costs to include occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech therapists. I think that's a very significant thing for government to do, because it also recognizes that we know there's a challenge there and we know there's an issue.

Besides working to resolve the wage differential, we're also encouraging people to go into the professions where we do have some challenges. We're encouraging them just like the ministry did with doctors and nurses for the north, for instance — which has worked, by the way. We're anxiously waiting to see the results of this move, but this was an issue taken up by my ministry with the Ministry of Advanced Education because we knew there was a challenge there.

**A. Dix:** I wanted to ask the minister about, I guess, the positioning of services for children and youth with special needs. As he knows, parents of special needs children and those who work with them are and have been consistently concerned with fragmentation of services.

These concerns date, of course, many years. They don't just date to this government. They feel very

strongly, and I agree with them, that all services and programs for children and youth with special needs should be under the Ministry of Children and Family Development — not some under MCFD and some life-long services under CLBC. Their view is that Community Living B.C. should be responsible for adults and that MCFD should be responsible for children with special needs and developmental issues.

How does the minister respond to this widely shared view, which I know has been brought to his attention many times?

[1120]

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'm always pleased when the member for Vancouver-Kingsway.... This isn't the first time he has insinuated this — that these are challenges that have existed for a long time through many governments. I'm pleased that he has the confidence in me to put the question to me, to give me the challenge to resolve some of these challenges that are out there. That's actually, not to be coy about it.... It's really the reason that I asked the Premier after the election to put me back in this ministry.

Having said that, over the last couple of months I've had some second thoughts about that, but I still think that the ministry, in the functions that it performs, does a good job, generally speaking. As I've said many, many times, we have many thousands of caring employees in the ministry and contractors that we deal with.

The issue about where children with disabilities should, sort of, fit into is actually an issue that there's a lot of discussion around. I would only disagree with the member to the extent that not all parents believe that the children should be placed in one ministry or the other. I think what we're doing with CLBC — and I assume that we're going to be moving into CLBC; maybe this is a transitional question, I'm not sure....

The importance of the collaboration that's taking place now between CLBC and the ministry is, first of all, to ensure a smooth transition of the delivery of those services. We want parents to see that it's seamless. We don't want anything lost in the transfer. I can tell you this: both the ministry and CLBC are committed to ensuring that the transition is seamless for families and that current services are not disrupted. CLBC will support individuals with developmental disabilities to live, work and participate fully in their communities.

That discussion is taking place over the 18 months of transition going on now in CLBC, and as I say, not all parents are in agreement. It's a topic where there are differences of agreement. We have to try to cope with that and deal with that, but the most important thing is that the parents don't lose the services they need for their children.

**A. Dix:** Well, the minister knows how carefully I listen to everything he says in the House. He'll remember, because it wasn't so long ago, that during the de-

bate on the Community Living Authority Act, he assured the House that all early intervention services, including autism services, would stay with the Minister of Children and Family Development as part of an integrated network of services when CLBC, Community Living B.C., was established.

This past July the ministry finally made public the 2004 children's agreement — it took awhile; these things do take awhile — that formally divided up the responsibility for these services between the ministry and CLBC. Very simply, why did the ministry and the minister not live up to its October 2004 commitment?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** At some point, I'm going to ask you when.... Because, as you know, CLBC is a different vote, so....

Interjection.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** Well, but I have to move the vote; that's the only thing, I do have my staff.... I have Rick Moles with me now, who is the CEO. I'm sure you've met Rick of CLBC.

[1125]

I think your questions actually outline the complexity of what we're dealing with here. The complexity is that we want to continue to deliver the services which are being delivered. They're actually being delivered by exactly the same people. It's just that those people have now moved over to CLBC.

We are in the process of transformation, as I'm sure you know. We want to work through that process of transformation. The most important thing is that we continue to deliver the services so that people don't lose those services. It is a complex area. We will continue to consult with parents and meet with parents and talk to parents. This is not the only area of government where services come from different ministries, and I think the important thing is that the services actually get delivered. It's not always as important where they're delivered from.

**The Chair:** Minister, is it the will of the chamber to move the first vote and move on to the second?

**A. Dix:** These next couple of questions have to do with the transition. They deal with the ministry and CLBC. We can move on to the votes. I'd also be satisfied, because we'll be passing the votes at the end, if we do it all in one place.

As the minister knows, we're in a transition period. We're going back and forth, so we'll treat it like we used to treat the minister's office budget as the lead vote and deal with all those issues under that. We can't reduce it to \$1 anymore, though, minister. Those were halcyon days, I'm sure, for the minister.

Can I ask the minister whether he'll confirm that decisions were made concerning special needs children in order to ensure that the government didn't meet its July 1 deadline to off-load to CLBC? As July 1 approached, I think it's fair to say — I was just coming on

as the critic at that time — it was clear that the reorganization of services for children with special needs under the 2004 agreement was nowhere near ready. It wasn't ready, and surely, we have to acknowledge that.

Can the minister confirm that the solution to this was to hand almost everything over to CLBC to administer after July 1, including autism programs, under a temporary arrangement hastily worked out in June 2005? Will the minister commit today that his government will live up to the agreement to transfer children's services back to the ministry in June 2006?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** The straight answer to your question is: yes, we will live up to the June '04 agreement. But having said that, I just want to reiterate that these issues are complex because the same workers that work with children also work with adults. You couldn't split a person. It's easy to talk about half-time FTEs, but you can't actually do that. The reason for doing it the way it was done was to make sure that nothing fell through the cracks, that files weren't lost and that sort of thing.

I think that this is the way to do it. We will accomplish what we need to accomplish. At the same time, we'll make sure the services that people have been getting and that have been delivered by the same people they've consistently dealt with, that they will continue to get those services and that we will meet the commitments that were made in the June '04 agreement.

**A. Dix:** In the interests of time, I will not go over the challenges the government faces in transitions today but rather to stick to Community Living B.C.. I wanted to welcome, as well, the president of Community Living B.C., Rick Mowles, who is to the minister's left. It's good to see him again, and he will be disappointed to know that estimates are finishing relatively shortly, and we won't have a chance to fully canvass Community Living B.C. in the way that we'd like to in this round of estimates. The good news is that we'll be doing another round of estimates very soon, and I promise him — because I know he's disappointed today — day after day after day of questions in the next round of estimates.

If I can present that Christmas present to CLBC....

[1130]

I just want to discuss briefly some of the issues relating to CLBC, because it seems to me that what the minister said about transitions and the challenges of transitions and the addiction that some people have to bureaucratic restructuring — many of them in this area of government.... Some evidence about the consequences of that can be found in the story of CLBC. He'll recall, and everyone recalls, that CLBC was in part the brainchild of Doug Walls, the ministry of the day and the minister of day. What I think was unfortunate about that context was that there was a sense in which the fundamental problems of serving people with developmental disabilities were put through an outrageous budgetary lens.

We had senior officials of the government saying that if you changed the model, you could reap — in the short term — savings of as much as 20 percent. The information is there. There was a report on it — a Pricewaterhouse report. We can see the e-mails and see what they presented to government. They said: "By changing the model, we can save 20 percent." Their suggestion, by the way, is: you take 20 percent out of the system. It doesn't go back into the system; it goes to general revenue. That was wrong, and it was doomed to fail because no transition model like this, in my experience in government anyway — and, I think, an experience in this area dating back a long time — can yield those kinds of savings in the short run.

So in the absence of a government commitment to funding supports for adults and children with developmental disabilities, we had schemes. The government responded in this area, which can't be more important, with schemes, and we had a failure. We had an extraordinary failure leading up, as the minister will know, to the Pricewaterhouse report in 2003, and significant delays in the government's own schedule to implement Community Living B.C.

I want to ask the minister if he thinks that funding supports are adequate today. Just to go back, a 2003-2004 ministry fact sheet showed that community living services being provided for 9,200 adults plus several hundred children with special needs and care cost a total budget of \$607 million. CLBC's service plan states that as of July 1, CLBC is serving 17,000 adults and children. Its \$390 million budget for the next nine months — because you've got to prorate these things, they tell me — works out to an annual budget of between \$520 million and \$528 million.

My question to the minister is: does he think this reduction in funds in this area of \$87 million is adequate? Does he not think that in fact, by underfunding the community living sector and by underfunding services for adults and children with developmental disabilities, he is dooming this model to a difficult time over the next couple of years?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** First of all, I think the model is the right model. I think it's going to work. What the government fully intends to do is provide the resources necessary to make it work not just for one year but over the succeeding years. My job, as you know, is to fight for that money, which I'm prepared to do.

[1135]

I don't want to get into the budgetary process. You will have to wait until the budget is delivered next spring with regard to CLBC. But we are committed to making sure that this transformation takes place in an orderly fashion, that it takes place so that the needs of individuals that are served by CLBC are met, and that in the future they may be met in new ways — in different ways, in ways that people have asked us for. But as you know, I can't get into the budget discussions for next year. I can talk about this year's budget. This year's budget, I think, will provide for the opportunity for entering the transformation stage.

**A. Dix:** The minister is leading me along, then. Let's talk about this year's budget, because in response to budget cuts, Community Living B.C.... One of the advantages, I suppose, for the government is that they can now do what they do with the health authorities — underfund programs and then push off responsibilities somewhere else.

In response to budget pressures, we know that CLBC is developing wait-lists to ration services, leaving group homes vacant to cut costs and pushing clients into cheaper options that may be entirely unsuitable for them. We're talking about this year.

Does the minister think that is an appropriate situation — a situation, in fact, where desperate clients feel they're being forced out of group homes? They're not able to access group homes, which in many cases are being left vacant to cut costs. Does this meet the minister's instruction to CLBC to ensure consistent levels of quality of service while planning for response to unmet needs?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** In answer to the member's question, I just want to remind him that CLBC is changing the delivery of services. They're moving from block funding to individualized funding. They're working with the individuals they work with to develop individual plans which will differ from individual to individual, depending on their needs. Also, we can't ever forget that the health and safety of these clients is number one. Those needs are always addressed first.

I issued my instructions to CLBC. I expect CLBC to carry out those instructions and to meet the goals that have been set. These are 18 months of transformation where people will actually have more of a say in how they receive the services. The services will be more individualized. We expect success from CLBC.

When the member talked about pushing away responsibility, I'm still responsible for the budget at CLBC. My job is to put the arguments forward, to make sure that CLBC get the resources they need to do their job.

**A. Dix:** The one thing that hasn't been cut under the government's mandate is the slogans. You know, there are five something, three something else and everything else. The decade is some colour. I don't know what it is. They do the slogan thing very well.

So when people talk about innovative solutions and choice, sometimes in this government what they mean is: "Well, do it yourself." I think part of the challenge with the individualized funding model the minister talks about is that it's appropriate for some people, but there are a lot of people it isn't appropriate for. There are enormous growing challenges in the system.

The minister will know this. The number of adults with developmental disabilities is going to grow dramatically in the coming years. People are living longer, and thank God they are.

But what this means is that some people — for example, those who have been supported by their par-

ents, who are 40, 50 or 60 and have had that circumstance all their lives — are facing incredible new challenges. This area is growing and expanding.

[1140]

The government talks about fewer kids in education, so keep that in mind when you're funding. In this area we are talking about an explosion in demand, and I think that to anticipate that explosion in demand by closing group homes and closing services, if choice means fewer options, because this isn't....

We're not talking about a market where you can go from Safeway to Save-On to IGA — wherever you want to go. We're talking about a much more complicated market here, and so it doesn't matter in that market if you have more choice — if the government says you have choice — if there is no choice. They could say to you: "You have the option to do whatever you want — any program you want in a menu of ideas. You can spend that money however you want." But if there are no actual choices to spend the money on, then that's a big problem.

So I want to ask the minister: does he believe that pushing clients into cheaper family care settings meets CLBC's mandate under the act to promote choice and innovation in service delivery?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** As part of the transformation process, the staff has gone through every client's file to determine the needs of that client. The staff work with the individual to make sure they're getting the care that they need. The care that's out there is not only with the government. I mean, there are other community services that can assist in providing the care that's needed. The staff now work because they know the client, because they've done a review of every file. They work with that client to make sure that client is given the advantage of the community services that are out there as well.

I think the member opposite would agree that what's happening now is far better than when people were institutionalized. This is about trying to keep people with families, either in the family or as close to the family as possible.

I'm confident in CLBC, I'm confident in the people at CLBC, and I'm confident that I know each file has been gone through. I think there's a much closer relationship now between staff and individual clients, and we want to make sure, as I've said, that those clients' needs are met.

**A. Dix:** Could I ask the minister how much has been spent so far to create CLBC?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** The total amount of money that has been spent between the ministry and the interim authority totals just under \$10.5 million.

**A. Dix:** I want to ask how much more we're expecting will be required in restructuring costs. One of the things that Mr. Walls suggested, when he was in

charge of this operation for the government, was sort of a special kind of alchemy — that you could magically save money.

[1145]

They often talked about IT. Of course, we had the CareNet fiasco. Many of the principal contractors in the CareNet fiasco are still principal contractors of Community Living B.C. As the minister knows, there have been a series of untendered contracts, even in the last few months. One of CLBC's first actions was to give untendered contracts to companies that were the main service providers to CareNet, which failed and cost the government millions of dollars and a cabinet minister.

I wanted to ask the minister if he thinks that's an appropriate model for contracting computer services. Secondly, how much does he expect in administrative savings that these IT changes will bring about, when will the IT changes end, and how much do they expect them to cost?

**Hon. S. Hagen:** One of the challenges, of course, that CLBC was dealing with was moving from paper files to electronic files and moving to the most updated technology that's available.

The contracts that I think the member opposite is referring to were in the Ministry of Children and Family Development and were then taken over and transferred to CLBC. Just from my limited knowledge, which is very limited about what these contracts were about or what they were supposed to produce, it doesn't seem smart to me that.... If you're moving a system from the ministry to a stand-alone or self-standing system, why would you switch the contractors you're dealing with that are building the electronic system? The answer there is that was a contract that was in MCFD and was transferred to CLBC, and I think it was the right decision — not to start over again from square one to look for somebody else.

Now, having said that, I expect that CLBC will follow the proper tendering processes and that when they go out for contracts, they will be publicly.... It will be on the Net as publicly advertised, publicly tendered and awarded on that basis.

**A. Dix:** Well, in the case of IT contracts, we have an extraordinary situation where companies who are involved in CareNet — which we all acknowledge failed, which required a comprehensive quasi-public inquiry.... Those companies who are contractors for that.... And they're not old contracts; they're new contracts. It was a new tender that Community Living B.C. did on July 8, 2005. Those same companies would get direct-awarded contracts. It doesn't make sense to me.

I hear from CLBC that in one case, they do it from a qualifying list. Do you know how many companies are on that qualifying list — the RFQ list, the qualified company list for that contract? One company. This is the competitive bidding process. It's like they've been inspired by East Germany. This is competitive bidding, East German style, at CLBC. It's got to stop.

This is a sector that has been scandalized, and we're not talking about unimportant programs. We're talking

about money that should have gone to people with developmental disabilities and went to friends and insiders of this government.

This is a serious issue about IT contracts, and now we're talking about spending millions and millions and millions more dollars on IT so that magic will come and the government can spend tens of millions of dollars. Why don't we stop spending money on inappropriate IT contracts and provide the money to people who need it? [1150]

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I know the member has this piece of paper, because we sent it to him. I caught the little comment about friends and insiders. I can say categorically that I don't even recognize the names of these contractors. How he can make that sort of disparaging comment and just float it out there is beyond me.

The other thing is that when these contracts were posted, the number of respondents on the first one, on August 1 — as the member well knows, because he's got the same piece of paper that I'm looking at — is unknown — probably over 100, of which there were 27 qualified bidders. On the tender that went out October 3, the number of respondents was nine, of which there was one qualified bidder.

We can't help that. I mean, if the member opposite would like to start his own company and go into competition and compete for contracts with CLBC, I don't personally have a problem with that. He has the ability to do that; I don't.

On the third one, which was issued February 4, there were 15 respondents, of which one was qualified. I can't help, as the minister, that there was only one that was qualified.

Having said that, as the member well knows, there is a procurement policy that the government has, and CLBC will be following that procurement policy.

**A. Dix:** I appreciate the minister's suggestion that I take up a new line of work. I say to the minister that we have firms that were part of it. When I talked about friends and insiders, I read the report. He read the report. That was all about friends and insiders, not just partisan ones.

Interjection.

**A. Dix:** Well, they're not his friends — not his friends anymore, anyway. But they were the Premier's friends, so it's pretty serious business.

I want to ask the minister about risk assessment. In the Bert Boyd report, his final assessment of readiness about Community Living B.C., he said some risk assessment had been done by the office of the comptroller general. Now, I've tried to get that risk assessment. They tell me I'm a simple Member of the Legislative Assembly, and I'm dealing with the Ministry of Children and Families, so of course I can't get access to such important public information.

Can the minister release the details of that risk assessment today? Can he also release details of the risk

management plans for adults and children whose care was devolved to CLBC? And can the minister elaborate on concerns regarding risk assessment that have been raised, as he knows, in the last little while?

[1155]

**The Chair:** Minister, noting the hour.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I'd like to answer this question, Madam Chair.

The comptroller general's report will be made available to you. I think you've probably got an FOI request in, but we will speed that up. The only thing that has to be looked at is whether there's anything that has to be severed, but that will be made available to you in the next couple of days.

Also, there was a risk assessment report done by CLBC. It identified about 300 individuals that needed to be monitored through the transition that took place. One of the good-news parts of all this was that all of the staff transferred into CLBC, so staff already knew the files. I think that's a positive aspect when you're doing a pretty major transition like has just been completed.

**The Chair:** Member, noting the hour.

**A. Dix:** Yeah, we've got a couple more minutes for the minister, so I'll do one last set of discussions. I know that members opposite want to squeeze out every last remaining moment from this session, as I do. I wish we had a couple of weeks more, I say to the member for Peace River South.

I just want to talk briefly about some examples of risks. Some 17,000 client files were handed over to CLBC on July 1, though the business plan shows that the new agency won't have an information security and privacy plan in place before March 2006. The 2003 Sage report stressed that all CLBC systems should be ready and running from day one before devolution takes place. However, the final assessment of readiness concluded that CLBC was ready to assume responsibility for 17,000 vulnerable individuals without key administrative and management systems in place. The assessment never explains that conclusion.

Hon. Chair, I say in my remaining one minute and 30 seconds that I think the ministry has to respond to these concerns, and it has to respond to two other concerns that I just want to raise very briefly with him. One is that there's an agency called BCANDS, which is an aboriginal agency that deals with disabled people centred here in Victoria. They've raised issues with the minister. I want to raise that to the minister's attention because they are risking going under now, and I know the minister knows about these issues.

Secondly, I want to raise the issue, which I'll discuss with the minister outside the House, about the Saanich native support program, which is also in that position.

With that, hon. Chair, and noting the hour and having squeezed every possible second and minute from these estimates, I leave it to the minister to move the appropriate motions.

Vote 18: ministry operations, \$1,111,979,000 — approved.

Vote 19: adult community living services, \$524,664,000 — approved.

**Hon. S. Hagen:** I move that the committee rise and report resolution of the estimates of the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Community Living B.C.

Motion approved.

The committee rose at 11:59 a.m.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

Committee of Supply (Section B), having reported resolutions, was granted leave to sit again.

Hon. R. Coleman moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

**Mr. Speaker:** This House stands adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The House adjourned at 12 noon.

## HANSARD SERVICES

Director  
Anthony Dambrauskas

Production Manager  
Jill Ainsley

Assistant Production Manager  
Robert Sutherland

Editorial Supervisors  
Janet Brazier, Christine Ewart

Galley Editor  
Heather Bright

Technical Operations Officers  
Pamela Holmes, Emily Jacques

Research  
Jaime Apolonio, Mike Beninger  
Dan Kerr, Cristy McLennan

Editors  
Shannon Ash, Andrew Costa, Heather Gleboff,  
Margaret Gracie, Jane Grainger, Iris Gray,  
Linda Guy, Bill Hrick, Paula Lee, Elizabeth Levinson,  
Marg MacQuarrie, Constance Maskery, Jill Milkert, Lind Miller,  
Lou Mitchell, Karol Morris, Dorothy Pearson, Erik Pedersen, Janet Pink,  
Melanie Platz, Kathleen Prendergast, Robin Rohrmoser,  
Robyn Swanson, Camilla Turner, Heather Warren, Arlene Wells

Published by British Columbia Hansard Services, and printed under the authority of the Speaker by the Queen's Printer, Victoria. Rates: single issue, \$2.85; per calendar year, mailed daily, \$298. GST extra. Agent: Crown Publications Inc., 521 Fort St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 1E7. Telephone: (250) 386-4636. Fax: 386-0221.

**[www.leg.bc.ca](http://www.leg.bc.ca)**

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