



3rd Session, 37th Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT OF

DEBATES OF THE  
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

(HANSARD)

Tuesday, April 9, 2002

Afternoon Sitting

Volume 6, Number 2

THE HONOURABLE CLAUDE RICHMOND, SPEAKER

ISSN 0709-1281

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

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR  
Honourable Iona Campagnolo

3RD SESSION, 37TH PARLIAMENT

SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
Honourable Claude Richmond

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Premier and President of the Executive Council.....	Hon. Gordon Campbell
Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations.....	Hon. Greg Halsey-Brandt
Deputy Premier and Minister of Education .....	Hon. Christy Clark
Minister of Advanced Education .....	Hon. Shirley Bond
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.....	Hon. John van Dongen
Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations.....	Hon. Geoff Plant
Minister of Children and Family Development.....	Hon. Gordon Hogg
Minister of State for Early Childhood Development.....	Hon. Linda Reid
Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.....	Hon. George Abbott
Minister of State for Community Charter.....	Hon. Ted Neibling
Minister of State for Women's Equality .....	Hon. Lynn Stephens
Minister of Competition, Science and Enterprise .....	Hon. Rick Thorpe
Minister of State for Deregulation .....	Hon. Kevin Falcon
Minister of Energy and Mines.....	Hon. Richard Neufeld
Minister of Finance .....	Hon. Gary Collins
Minister of Forests .....	Hon. Michael de Jong
Minister of Health Planning.....	Hon. Sindi Hawkins
Minister of Health Services.....	Hon. Colin Hansen
Minister of State for Mental Health.....	Hon. Gulzar S. Cheema
Minister of State for Intermediate, Long Term and Home Care.....	Hon. Katherine Whittred
Minister of Human Resources.....	Hon. Murray Coell
Minister of Management Services.....	Hon. Sandy Santori
Minister of Provincial Revenue.....	Hon. Bill Barisoff
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General .....	Hon. Rich Coleman
Minister of Skills Development and Labour.....	Hon. Graham P. Bruce
Minister of Sustainable Resource Management.....	Hon. Stan Hagen
Minister of Transportation.....	Hon. Judith Reid
Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection.....	Hon. Joyce Murray

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Deputy Speaker.....	John Weisbeck
Leader of the Opposition .....	Joy MacPhail
Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole .....	Harold Long
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly .....	E. George MacMinn
Clerk Assistant .....	Robert Vaive
Clerk Assistant and Law Clerk .....	Ian D. Izard
Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees.....	Craig H. James
Clerk Assistant/Committee Clerk.....	Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Sergeant-at-Arms.....	A.A. Humphreys
Director, Hansard Services .....	Anthony Dambrauskas
Legislative Librarian.....	Joan A. Barton
Legislative Comptroller .....	Peter Bray

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.

Internet: [www.legis.gov.bc.ca/hansard](http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/hansard)

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS

Abbott, Hon. George (L)	Shuswap
Anderson, Val J. (L)	Vancouver-Langara
Barisoff, Hon. Bill (L)	Penticton-Okanagan Valley
Bell, Pat (L)	Prince George North
Belsey, Bill (L)	North Coast
Bennett, Bill (L)	East Kootenay
Bhullar, Tony (Ind L)	Surrey-Newton
Bloy, Harry (L)	Burquitlam
Bond, Hon. Shirley (L)	Prince George-Mount Robson
Bray, Jeff (L)	Victoria-Beacon Hill
Brenzinger, Elayne (L)	Surrey-Whalley
Brice, Susan (L)	Saanich South
Bruce, Hon. Graham P. (L)	Cowichan-Ladysmith
Campbell, Hon. Gordon (L)	Vancouver-Point Grey
Cheema, Hon. Gulzar S. (L)	Surrey-Panorama Ridge
Chong, Ida (L)	Oak Bay-Gordon Head
Christensen, Tom (L)	Okanagan-Vernon
Chutter, Dave (L)	Yale-Lillooet
Clark, Hon. Christy (L)	Port Moody-Westwood
Cobb, Walt (L)	Cariboo South
Coell, Hon. Murray (L)	Saanich North and the Islands
Coleman, Hon. Rich (L)	Fort Langley-Aldergrove
Collins, Hon. Gary (L)	Vancouver-Fairview
de Jong, Hon. Michael (L)	Abbotsford-Mount Lehman
Falcon, Hon. Kevin (L)	Surrey-Cloverdale
Hagen, Hon. Stan (L)	Comox Valley
Halsey-Brandt, Hon. Greg (L)	Richmond Centre
Hamilton, Arnie (L)	Esquimalt-Metchosin
Hansen, Hon. Colin (L)	Vancouver-Quilchena
Harris, Roger (L)	Skeena
Hawes, Randy (L)	Maple Ridge-Mission
Hawkins, Hon. Sindi (L)	Kelowna-Mission
Hayer, Dave S. (L)	Surrey-Tynehead
Hogg, Hon. Gordon (L)	Surrey-White Rock
Hunter, Mike (L)	Nanaimo
Jarvis, Daniel (L)	North Vancouver-Seymour
Johnston, Ken (L)	Vancouver-Fraserview
Kerr, Brian J. (L)	Malahat-Juan de Fuca
Krueger, Kevin (L)	Kamloops-North Thompson
Kwan, Jenny Wai Ching (NDP)	Vancouver-Mount Pleasant
Lee, Richard T. (L)	Burnaby North
Lekstrom, Blair (L)	Peace River South
Les, John (L)	Chilliwack-Sumas
Locke, Brenda (L)	Surrey-Green Timbers
Long, Harold (L)	Powell River-Sunshine Coast
MacKay, Dennis (L)	Bulkley Valley-Stikine
McMahon, Wendy (L)	Columbia River-Revelstoke
MacPhail, Joy (NDP)	Vancouver-Hastings
Manhas, Karn (L)	Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain
Masi, Reni (L)	Delta North
Mayencourt, Lorne (L)	Vancouver-Burrard
Murray, Hon. Joyce (L)	New Westminster
Nebbeling, Hon. Ted (L)	West Vancouver-Garibaldi
Nettleton, Paul (L)	Prince George-Omineca
Neufeld, Hon. Richard (L)	Peace River North
Nijjar, Rob (L)	Vancouver-Kingsway
Nuraney, John (L)	Burnaby-Willingdon
Orr, Sheila (L)	Victoria-Hillside
Penner, Barry (L)	Chilliwack-Kent
Plant, Hon. Geoff (L)	Richmond-Steveston
Reid, Hon. Judith (L)	Nanaimo-Parksville
Reid, Hon. Linda (L)	Richmond East
Richmond, Hon. Claude (L)	Kamloops
Roddick, Valerie (L)	Delta South
Sahota, Patty (L)	Burnaby-Edmonds
Santori, Hon. Sandy (L)	West Kootenay-Boundary
Stephens, Hon. Lynn (L)	Langley
Stewart, Ken (L)	Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows
Stewart, Richard (L)	Coquitlam-Maillardville
Suffredine, Blair F. (L)	Nelson-Creston
Sultan, Ralph (L)	West Vancouver-Capilano
Thorpe, Hon. Rick (L)	Okanagan-Westside
Trumper, Gillian (L)	Alberni-Qualicum
van Dongen, Hon. John (L)	Abbotsford-Clayburn
Visser, Rod (L)	North Island
Weisbeck, John (L)	Kelowna-Lake Country
Whitred, Hon. Katherine (L)	North Vancouver-Lonsdale
Wilson, John (L)	Cariboo North
Wong, Patrick (L)	Vancouver-Kensington

## LIST OF MEMBERS BY RIDING

Abbotsford-Clayburn	Hon. John van Dongen
Abbotsford-Mount Lehman	Hon. Michael de Jong
Alberni-Qualicum	Gillian Trumper
Bulkley Valley-Stikine	Dennis MacKay
Burnaby North	Richard T. Lee
Burnaby-Edmonds	Patty Sahota
Burnaby-Willingdon	John Nuraney
Burquitlam	Harry Bloy
Cariboo North	John Wilson
Cariboo South	Walt Cobb
Chilliwack-Kent	Barry Penner
Chilliwack-Sumas	John Les
Columbia River-Revelstoke	Wendy McMahon
Comox Valley	Hon. Stan Hagen
Coquitlam-Maillardville	Richard Stewart
Cowichan-Ladysmith	Hon. Graham P. Bruce
Delta North	Reni Masi
Delta South	Valerie Roddick
East Kootenay	Bill Bennett
Esquimalt-Metchosin	Arnie Hamilton
Fort Langley-Aldergrove	Hon. Rich Coleman
Kamloops	Hon. Claude Richmond
Kamloops-North Thompson	Kevin Krueger
Kelowna-Lake Country	John Weisbeck
Kelowna-Mission	Hon. Sindi Hawkins
Langley	Hon. Lynn Stephens
Malahat-Juan de Fuca	Brian J. Kerr
Maple Ridge-Mission	Randy Hawes
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	Ken Stewart
Nanaimo	Mike Hunter
Nanaimo-Parksville	Hon. Judith Reid
Nelson-Creston	Blair F. Suffredine
New Westminster	Hon. Joyce Murray
North Coast	Bill Belsey
North Island	Rod Visser
North Vancouver-Lonsdale	Hon. Katherine Whitred
North Vancouver-Seymour	Daniel Jarvis
Oak Bay-Gordon Head	Ida Chong
Okanagan-Vernon	Tom Christensen
Okanagan-Westside	Hon. Rick Thorpe
Peace River North	Hon. Richard Neufeld
Peace River South	Blair Lekstrom
Penticton-Okanagan Valley	Hon. Bill Barisoff
Port Coquitlam-Burke Mountain	Karn Manhas
Port Moody-Westwood	Hon. Christy Clark
Powell River-Sunshine Coast	Harold Long
Prince George North	Pat Bell
Prince George-Mount Robson	Hon. Shirley Bond
Prince George-Omineca	Paul Nettleton
Richmond Centre	Hon. Greg Halsey-Brandt
Richmond East	Hon. Linda Reid
Richmond-Steveston	Hon. Geoff Plant
Saanich North and the Islands	Hon. Murray Coell
Saanich South	Susan Brice
Shuswap	Hon. George Abbott
Skeena	Roger Harris
Surrey-Cloverdale	Hon. Kevin Falcon
Surrey-Green Timbers	Brenda Locke
Surrey-Newton	Tony Bhullar
Surrey-Panorama Ridge	Hon. Gulzar S. Cheema
Surrey-Tynehead	Dave S. Hayer
Surrey-Whalley	Elayne Brenzinger
Surrey-White Rock	Hon. Gordon Hogg
Vancouver-Burrard	Lorne Mayencourt
Vancouver-Fairview	Hon. Gary Collins
Vancouver-Fraserview	Ken Johnston
Vancouver-Hastings	Joy MacPhail
Vancouver-Kensington	Patrick Wong
Vancouver-Kingsway	Rob Nijjar
Vancouver-Langara	Val J. Anderson
Vancouver-Mount Pleasant	Jenny Wai Ching Kwan
Vancouver-Point Grey	Hon. Gordon Campbell
Vancouver-Quilchena	Hon. Colin Hansen
Victoria-Beacon Hill	Jeff Bray
Victoria-Hillside	Sheila Orr
West Kootenay-Boundary	Hon. Sandy Santori
West Vancouver-Capilano	Ralph Sultan
West Vancouver-Garibaldi	Hon. Ted Nebbeling
Yale-Lillooet	Dave Chutter



## CONTENTS

Tuesday, April 9, 2002  
Afternoon Sitting

### Routine Proceedings

	Page
Introductions by Members.....	2667
Introduction and First Reading of Bills.....	2668
Pets in Rental Housing Act (Bill M202) J. Kwan	
Public Sector Management Remuneration Allowances and Perquisites Act (Bill M203) J. Kwan	
Statements (Standing Order 25B).....	2668
Holocaust remembrance V. Anderson	
Ethanol industry in B.C. B. Lekstrom	
Esquimalt Neighbourhood House A. Hamilton	
Oral Questions.....	2670
Funding for inner-city schools J. Kwan Hon. G. Hogg	
Effectiveness of referendum on treaty negotiations J. MacPhail Hon. G. Abbott	
Mental health plan funding I. Chong Hon. G. Cheema	
Mountain pine beetle action plan P. Bell Hon. M. de Jong	
Petitions.....	2672
W. Cobb J. Kwan	
Second Reading of Bills.....	2672
Sustainable Resource Management Statutes Amendment Act, 2002 (Bill 22) Hon. S. Hagen J. MacPhail	
Transportation Statutes Amendment Act, 2002 (Bill 25) Hon. J. Reid J. MacPhail	
Criminal Injury Compensation Amendment Act, 2002 (Bill 24) Hon. R. Coleman J. MacPhail	
Committee of the Whole House.....	2683
Gaming Control Act (Bill 6) Hon. R. Coleman J. MacPhail M. Hunter L. Mayencourt	

Reporting of Bills.....	2688
Gaming Control Act (Bill 6)	
Third Reading of Bills.....	2688
Gaming Control Act (Bill 6)	
Hon. R. Coleman	
Second Reading of Bills.....	2689
Health Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2002 (Bill 18)	
Hon. C. Hansen	
Health Planning Statutes Amendment Act, 2002 (Bill 19)	
Hon. S. Hawkins	
J. MacPhail	

### **Proceedings in the Douglas Fir Room**

Committee of Supply.....	2692
Estimates: Ministry of Children and Family Development ( <i>continued</i> )	
J. Kwan	
Hon. G. Hogg	
Hon. L. Reid	

TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2002

The House met at 2:04 p.m.

### Introductions by Members

**Hon. G. Collins:** I hope the House will bear with me for a moment. I have a number of introductions on behalf of the government and then a comment I'd like to make today as well.

[1405]

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Mr. Tan Kee Yong, chief executive of the Singapore Land Authority, and his delegation. They're visiting British Columbia to gain insight into our experiences and legal approaches to land titles, strata property and land use. They're meeting with officials from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management and the Ministry of Transportation. Would the House please make them most welcome.

As well, I have the honour to introduce to the House the Rt. Hon. Lord George Penrose and Lady Penrose. Lord Penrose is visiting us from Scotland, where he sits as a member of the High Court and is currently heading a British government inquiry into the near-collapse of the British life insurer Equitable Life. Lord and Lady Penrose are in British Columbia to celebrate the birth of their grandson, Scott George Brown, who was born to their daughter Susan Brown and her husband, Mark, in Vancouver. I hope the House would also make them very welcome.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have the distinct pleasure to introduce a number of veterans with us today in the gallery: Jack Cockrell, a World War II veteran; Russ Murphy, who served in Korea; Charlie Watkins, World War II; Alan Wardell, World War II; Gordie Quan, who served in Burma and India and was a World War II demolitions expert; Ms. Nita Walsh, World War II, served in England; Boots Gree — I doubt his parents named him that — who served in the navy in World War II; Bob Burrows, a World War II veteran; Vic Mumford, Korea; and Denis Young, a World War II veteran as well.

I want to introduce them and welcome them here today, because today is a special day in Canadian history. Today is the 85th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. I have a few comments I'd like to make on behalf of the government as well.

Mr. Speaker, 85 years ago today a force of 100,000 Canadian troops set out under a creeping barrage of artillery through a no man's land of barbed wire, craters and death at a place called Vimy Ridge. They faced down their fears, and by stepping onto the battlefield, they stepped onto the pages of history. The Canadians defeated an entrenched German enemy that had believed the ridge was impregnable.

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was a pivotal turning point in World War I and turned the momentum in favour of the allies. For Canada it was much more than a battlefield victory. The world learned that Canadians

were a cohesive, courageous and determined people, capable of great innovation, unencumbered by class distinction, and ready and able to take their place among nations.

The great innovator at Vimy Ridge was Major General Arthur Currie. In the words of one historian, he was "plucked from obscurity by the onrush of history." Prior to the war, Currie was a struggling real estate and insurance broker from right here in Victoria. He rose in rank and prominence based on his merits and for his uncompromising stance to neglect nothing in the preparation for battle. He went on to lead the entire Canadian corps.

Currie was joined by 8,000 other British Columbia troops at Vimy Ridge. Their presence was bolstered by the battlefield presence of non-combatant personnel such as nurses, doctors and chaplains. Battalions representing British Columbia include the 7th and 16th Battalions of the Canadian Scottish; the 47th Battalion and the 29th Battalion, known as Tobin's Tigers, from Vancouver; the 54th Battalion from the Kootenays; the 72nd Battalion, the Seaforth Highlanders, from Vancouver; and the 102nd Battalion, known as Warden's Warriors, from northern British Columbia.

Many of these men returned home to a dynamic emerging nation across the Atlantic from war-torn Europe. And many stayed behind, their names etched in limestone at the base of Canada's great monument at Vimy Ridge.

I thank the veterans in the gallery for joining us today to honour this occasion, and I would ask all hon. members to take a moment sometime today to remember the Canadians who fought on our behalf at Vimy Ridge 85 years ago.

[1410]

**Hon. G. Halsey-Brandt:** It gives me great pleasure today to introduce two special visitors from Richmond: Leonard and Joyce Lewis. Leonard and Joyce have been in Canada for nine years now. This is their first visit to Victoria and their first visit to the Legislature. Will the House please make them welcome.

**V. Anderson:** I ask the House to join me in welcoming Susan Bluman. She is the grandmother of Mike, our LA, whom most of you know. She's here today as a part of our Holocaust remembrance. Susan Bluman is a survivor. Along with her are two other survivors, Sidi Schaeffer and David Schaeffer. Accompanying these folks are Leona Beutel, Josh Beutel, Robert Goldschmid and Richard Kool. Will the House please make them welcome.

**R. Lee:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce Dr. George Bluman in the gallery today. Dr. Bluman is the head of the department of mathematics at the University of British Columbia. He was my thesis supervisor and my professor at UBC. He is also the uncle of our legislative assistant, Mike Schroeder, and the son of Mrs. Susan Bluman, who was just introduced by my

colleague from Vancouver-Langara. Would the House please make him welcome.

**A. Hamilton:** It's my pleasure to introduce Julie, who sits up in the balcony. Julie is the executive director of the Esquimalt Neighbourhood House. Would the House please make her welcome.

### Introduction and First Reading of Bills

#### PETS IN RENTAL HOUSING ACT

J. Kwan presented a bill intituled Pets in Rental Housing Act.

**J. Kwan:** I move that the bill be introduced and read a first time now.

Motion approved.

**J. Kwan:** People live healthier and happier lives with pets. Studies have proven that seniors live longer and fuller lives with pets. This bill acknowledges that currently pet owners in British Columbia are discriminated against in their search for rental housing. It provides B.C. renters the opportunity to have pets in rental premises within reasonable limits. The bill allows landlords to remove pets if the animal is noisy, aggressive, destructive or flea-ridden. Landlords also do not have to admit dangerous dogs, such as pit bulls or bull terriers. However, it should also mean that responsible pet owners are not judged guilty and denied housing before they have the opportunity to prove otherwise.

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

Bill M202 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.

#### PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT REMUNERATION ALLOWANCES AND PERQUISITES ACT

J. Kwan presented a bill intituled Public Sector Management Remuneration Allowances and Perquisites Act.

**J. Kwan:** I move that the bill be introduced and read a first time now.

Motion approved.

**J. Kwan:** This act will bring a greater degree of accountability and openness to the process that determines what we pay those government employees who serve at the pleasure of the executive council. Too often politicians seek to justify only after the fact what they have done behind closed doors. Too often, when it

comes to personnel matters, the public and indeed the rank and file of the public service are the last to know how salaries and benefits of the most senior members of the public service are determined. This bill will open that process up to a tripartite committee that will include a member of the public to ensure that British Columbians are confident in the job that senior managers are doing and that they're being paid adequately and appropriately for their performance.

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

Bill M203 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.

[1415]

### Statements (Standing Order 25B)

#### HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

**V. Anderson:** Today we participate in the annual legislative recognition of Holocaust Memorial Day, Yom ha-Shoah. Yom ha-Shoah is recognized internationally as a day of reflection and commemoration of the six million innocent Jewish children, women and men whose lives were inexcusably cut short between 1933 and 1945 in a planned undertaking to exterminate a people.

For years after the Second World War there was little or no discussion of this catastrophe. Yet, as time passed, it was clear that in our failure to remember, we risked repeating these events in later years. With great difficulty and courage, the survivors of the Holocaust were encouraged to tell their stories for the benefit of future generations. We thank them for sharing with us these extremely difficult experiences.

The Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society for Remembrance and Education, in my constituency of Vancouver-Langara at 41st and Oak, was opened November 1994 for education and remembrance. The centre is dedicated to speaking and spreading the truth about the past and breaking down the walls of prejudice and intolerance for present and future generations.

The centre's many programs, like the Geshar project's "Images of the Holocaust," contribute important new perspectives on the Holocaust's devastating impact on survivors and their children. Yet, at the same time, the Geshar project's moving exhibition of artwork from first- and second-generation survivors is irrefutable evidence of the resilience of the community and its commitment to ensure that the Holocaust and its lessons are never forgotten.

Hundreds of people of all ages and backgrounds visit the centre throughout the year. Classes of school children are often given the opportunity to hear from survivors who, as children themselves, faced the murder of family and imprisonment at Nazi camps.



It is our privilege to have come to share with these survivors and have them share with us this day. Let us, in our own prayerful silence, remember and appreciate these folks and share with them a rededication to build a world where there is peace and respect for all. Thank you.

#### ETHANOL INDUSTRY IN B.C.

**B. Lekstrom:** Renewable fuel ethanol is an opportunity for British Columbia. Not many people know that Henry Ford built the first Model-T to run on pure ethanol. Production of ethanol creates new permanent jobs in British Columbia, which will benefit all of us in the future as we strive to improve our economy and diversify our industries in our province today.

Ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions, toxic air and water pollution and, as well, will not contaminate our groundwater. Ethanol eliminates the need for the use of MTBE and MMT at our refineries.

Canada, the United States and the European Union are all moving to adopt mandatory renewable fuel standards. As well, British Columbia will be there in the future. There are now 61 producing ethanol plants in the United States, with another 13 under construction. Of these 74 plants, 33 are owned by farmer cooperatives. In the United States, with all of these plants including the new ones coming on line, the production will be over 10 billion litres a year, twice the annual gasoline consumption in British Columbia.

British Columbia is now the only province west of the Maritimes that does not have a producing ethanol plant. In Dawson Creek, on Saturday, April 27, 2002, I wish to invite all of my colleagues to attend a conference called An Ethanol Industry Opportunity for Your Community. This event is being sponsored by the Peace River regional district and presented by Bill Vanderland, president of EnerGreen Power Inc.

I'm pleased to announce that my colleague the hon. Minister of Energy and Mines, Richard Neufeld, will be the keynote luncheon speaker at this event. This event will also feature expert ethanol speakers from the oil industry, agriculture and government. We invite you to hear how British Columbia-developed technology will convert incinerated forest residues into valuable products. These products include specialty sugars like xylitol for food and lignosulphonate for concrete and electricity.

[1420]

I would encourage all of my colleagues, if the possibility is there for them, to attend and learn what we can do to diversify and enhance our industry in British Columbia.

#### ESQUIMALT NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

**A. Hamilton:** The town of Esquimalt has many strengths: a strong sense of community, a tradition of helping one another and working hard. However, we also have some families and individuals who need occasional support and encouragement to help them

overcome difficult times and work towards making a number of positive changes in their lives, such as finding work, being good parents, having healthy babies or staying in school.

This afternoon I would like to speak about Esquimalt Neighbourhood House, which has worked in our community for over 25 years, offering a continuum of integrated services and mobilized resources that promote health, education, employment, well-being and positive social change. People come to Esquimalt Neighbourhood House because it is a warm, welcoming, non-judgmental environment where they can get information or resources or participate in the many activities that support healthy families and individuals.

Much of Esquimalt Neighbourhood House's funding comes from the provincial government. However, this is augmented through fundraising, enterprise and sponsorships. The programs provided actually save money in the long term by helping people get back to work, keeping kids out of ministry care, helping students stay in school and out of the criminal justice system, and supporting families through difficult times before they become crises. Esquimalt Neighbourhood House also helps people develop their own supportive networks in the community, leading to independence from formalized programs.

Among the many services that Esquimalt Neighbourhood House offers are the following. They provide Best Babies nutritional and life skills counselling, services for young moms and their babies, preschool parent-child drop-in support and parenting skills. Esquimalt Neighbourhood House offers counselling for preteens, teens and their families for individuals who cannot afford regular counselling services. They have youth and family counsellors at four local schools, employment and pre-employment training programs, a job search centre and a computer lab to assist those searching for work. Esquimalt Neighbourhood House also offers the community low-cost clothing and household goods and volunteer opportunities through their thrift shop.

These are just a few examples of the great community service that Esquimalt Neighbourhood House offers. Again, I recognize Julie Holder, the board, the staff and the volunteers for their dedication.

**Mr. Speaker:** That concludes members' statements. The member for Vancouver-Burrard seeks the floor.

**L. Mayencourt:** I seek leave to make an announcement.

Leave granted.

**L. Mayencourt:** Mr. Speaker, it seems that during the introductions we've neglected to do something very important. We want to extend our very warm wishes to the Minister of State for Community Charter on the occasion of his birthday. Thank you very much for joining me in that.

## Oral Questions

### FUNDING FOR INNER-CITY SCHOOLS

**J. Kwan:** The Ministry of Children and Family Development has received the report of the committee appointed to develop a funding formula for programs that serve at-risk children in the 110 inner-city schools across the province. The committee recommended that the current level of funding be maintained and guaranteed for three years. That was two weeks ago.

To the Minister of Children and Family Development: does he agree with this recommendation, and when can we expect the report to be released?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** The terms of reference of the report that was received were to look at the socioeconomic modelling that exists across the province for the provision of services to those children in schools who may need socioeconomic support. It did not make recommendations with respect to funding to inner-city schools at all. That was not part of the terms of reference. It did just look at if the modelling were to remain the same, if the service were to remain the same, if the dollars were to remain the same, how they would best be distributed, consistent with updated information around the socioeconomic needs. It was not a report on recommending the services for this year or in future years.

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

**J. Kwan:** The Vancouver school board is meeting tonight to determine how it will deal with a \$25.5 million shortfall. It will be looking at the demand from the Ministry of Children and Family Development that it cut programs for inner-city school funding.

[1425]

Schools such as Lord Roberts Elementary in Vancouver are already overcrowded. Children are forced to share their education space with adult strangers. Facilities are old and insufficient for the number of students. Parents are stressed. Teachers are stressed. Children are stressed. Inner-city school programs are not a luxury; they are a necessity if we provide all children with equal access to education.

Can the minister assure us that children who need early literacy, early intervention and prevention programs, and families who need translation, multicultural workers and outreach workers will not be abandoned to budget cuts?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** In fact, this government has made a large commitment to early childhood development as it expanded the funding to early childhood development specifically because of that drive and that need.

This government recognizes and appreciates the information and work that has been done by researchers around this world — from Fraser Mustard, who's been a consultant to this government, to Clyde Hertz-

man and the work that he's done locally. This government has looked at, is managing and is focusing on the recognition that those early childhood years are the most important years in terms of learning. A focus of energy and support in that area will ensure that we have children better prepared to attend school, better prepared for support at school and better prepared to learn. That's the focus that this government is taking, using evidence-based research to put funds where they're most effective at driving the services and needs of children across this province.

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

**J. Kwan:** The inner-city school funding has proven to be effective. Parents are calling for this government to reinstate the \$5.4 million that they have cut. Today workers at the Richmond Youth Service Agency are to be told that their contract with the Ministry of Children and Family Development will be discontinued at the end of June. This agency has been providing necessary services to some 500 elementary school-age children over 12. Their contract was to extend to March 2003 — yet again, another broken contract. The Richmond Youth Service Agency helps children deal with social, emotional or behavioral challenges, real challenges that affect their ability to learn.

Will the minister now accept his challenge? Will he stand up today for the children faced with these cuts and call on his government, his own colleagues, to ensure that the funding is in place for this agency?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** This government is going through a review of some 15,000 contracts and is reviewing those based on a set of principles that look at and address evidence-based research that suggests what is the most effective way of providing services to children across this province.

This government does not want to provide programs for programs' sake. We want to provide programs for people's sake, programs that make a difference in terms of the lives of the children that we're dealing with. That is the focus that we're taking. That is the direction we're going in. That is what the people of this province expect and will receive.

We are committed to providing quality programs for children and families across this province, and that's exactly what this government will be doing.

### EFFECTIVENESS OF REFERENDUM ON TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

**J. MacPhail:** Yesterday the Minister of Aboriginal Services said that the signature requirement for the referendum is covered under the Recall and Initiative Act. Today he knows that he's wrong. Under the Recall Act, signatures must be witnessed by a registered canvasser. In this referendum there's no such requirement, opening up the process to forgery and abuse. Never before have ballots been treated like junk mail. British

Columbians are paying millions for a deeply flawed election process that would not meet the test of fairness in Florida.

Will the Minister of Aboriginal Services stand up and admit that this referendum is so bungled that whatever the results and no matter how many ballots are returned, it's essentially a meaningless waste of millions of dollars?

Interjections.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon. G. Abbott:** First of all, I've got to say that it's a huge relief to see that at least one of four million British Columbians is still reading David Schreck's website, where one gains these absolutely fabulous insights into the psyche of British Columbians.

[1430]

The fact of the matter is — unlike the New Democratic Party, apparently — we don't believe that British Columbians set out to manipulate, cheat and distort. They just want to have their views expressed.

If the hon. member has allegations of fraud or forgery she'd like to make, go ahead and make them. Clearly, what we are offering in British Columbia for the first time is an opportunity for British Columbians to state their views on principles which should guide us in that very important process of treaty-making.

That government had ten years to make the process work. It was a dismal failure; it was half a billion dollars and no treaties. We're going to turn that around, and we're going to turn it around on the goodwill and common sense of British Columbians.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition has a supplementary question.

**J. MacPhail:** I note that the Minister of Aboriginal Services did not answer my question and continues to misunderstand the law that applies.

The fact of the matter is that this referendum process is open to abuse. Yes, that is exactly the allegation. Today we heard from letter carriers who are telling us that hundreds of ballots are being returned because Elections B.C. data has errors and addresses are now outdated. Thousands of people haven't received their ballots, and thousands more have received ballots that aren't theirs. Particularly British Columbians in neighbourhoods where there's a high turnover in occupancy have been disenfranchised by this process.

Again, to the Minister of Aboriginal Services: how can British Columbians have any confidence in the process where thousands of British Columbians are receiving ballots that don't belong to them?

**Hon. G. Abbott:** If I was forced to take my chances with either David Schreck or Elections B.C., I'll take my chances every time with Elections B.C.

If there are concerns with respect to the process or specific ballots, they should be forwarded via the 1-800

number or any other mechanism to Elections B.C. to ensure that this is conducted properly.

Again, to go back to the point, why do these two members assume that British Columbians would set out to manipulate, distort, cheat and frustrate a system that has been put in place so we can canvass the people of British Columbia about the treaty process? We want the opinion of the people of British Columbia on the treaty process. We're going to get it. And notwithstanding the suggestions of the members opposite, it is going to be a fair process, and it's going to be an opportunity to celebrate democracy again in British Columbia.

**Mr. Speaker:** The member for Oak Bay-Gordon Head.

Interjection.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. The member for Oak Bay-Gordon Head has the floor.

#### MENTAL HEALTH PLAN FUNDING

**I. Chong:** Last Thursday during the estimates debate for the Ministry of Health Services, the Leader of the Opposition said the NDP had funded the mental health plan. However, during their term in office mental health advocacy associations were very specific in voicing their displeasure at the fact that the last government failed to fund the mental health plan.

Can the Minister of State for Mental Health clear up the confusion and outline what funding has been directed by this government to the mental health plan?

**Hon. G. Cheema:** The \$125 million plan is designed to increase the community services for people who have serious and persistent mental illness.

In 1998 and 1999 about \$10 million was spent on the plan. From 1999 to 2001 there was no allocation by the NDP government for the mental health plan — none. There was zero allocation.

[1435]

In 2001-02 we've funded over \$15 million towards the mental health plan. In this year's budget we have invested over \$17 million more as part of our commitment to the mental health plan. We have also committed an additional \$138 million over the next five years for the capital projects. This is a total commitment of \$263 million for the mental health plan.

**I. Chong:** The opposition has also claimed that while they were in government, they increased funding for adult mental health. Again, can the Minister of State for Mental Health tell us if those dollars were directed towards the mental health plan?

**Hon. G. Cheema:** Any funding increase during the past year was primarily due to the wage compensation increases, population and demographic increases, and inflation. Let's be very clear. There was no money for the mental health plan by the NDP. They did not bene-

fit the patient, no matter how hard the leader of the NDP wishes they did.

#### MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE ACTION PLAN

**P. Bell:** The mountain pine beetle epidemic in the northern interior of the province has been growing exponentially over the past few years. Currently, there's an estimated 70 million cubic metres infested, and it's estimated that this year's flight could add an additional 100 million cubic metres to that.

Can the Minister of Forests give us an indication of the progress of the action plan from this past winter?

**Hon. M. de Jong:** The member will know, because he participated in the process last fall, that we took data and a number of recommendations from a panel of MLAs and a technical group headed by R&S Rogers into an action plan to attempt to better combat the pine beetle infestation.

Those recommendations that were acted upon included the appointment of a beetle management coordinator — the beetle boss, as he's become known; the designation of special emergency management zones; amendments to the Forest Practices Code regulations to deal with an expedited processing procedure that would allow us to get at infested wood more quickly; and, also, encouraging the purchase of infested woods by processors from smaller entities like woodlot licensees.

The report is positive in this sense. I think we enjoyed good success in directing the harvest of infested wood. The vast majority of the wood harvested was beetle-infested wood. The bad news is the weather did not cooperate, and the infestation has continued to spread. That poses an ongoing, serious dilemma for us and is something we're going to pursue as we move forward in the weeks and months ahead.

**Mr. Speaker:** The member for Prince George North has a supplementary question.

**P. Bell:** Clearly, as the minister indicated, with the warmth of this past winter the mountain pine beetle epidemic is going to worsen. I'm wondering if the minister can give us an indication of what his intentions are as we move forward and what further steps we can take.

**Hon. M. de Jong:** One of the assurances we gave the stakeholders in that part of the province most directly impacted was that at breakup at the beginning of May of this year, we'd come back and do a detailed assessment of what parts of the action plan worked, what didn't, where the results were positive and where they weren't. We're going to follow through on that in the first week in May in the Prince George area.

Beyond that, I think we need to follow through on some proposals around the possibility of summer haul of infested wood. I think we need to continue to pursue with the federal government sources for funding for

things like research. There are notions for log storage that I think could be of assistance.

The bottom line is this: the infestation, sadly, is continuing to spread at an alarming rate. There are untold millions, possibly billions of dollars in timber value that are put at risk. The challenge is still there for us.

[End of question period.]

**W. Cobb:** I seek leave to table a petition.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please proceed.

#### Petitions

**W. Cobb:** I would like to present a petition I received from the recreation society in my riding.

Collectively, they received 169 signatures from Cariboo South constituents. The petition urges the B.C. government to reconsider the closure of Trumpeter Mountain to snowmobilers.

[1440]

**J. Kwan:** I rise to table a petition. I have a petition here with 57 names, calling on the government to continue its support for inner-city school funding that provides money for early literacy and prevention programs, in-school counsellors, academic support and resources, recreation programs, multicultural workers and translators, early intervention initiatives and outreach support to families. These 57 names are added to the earlier petition that I tabled, which contained 523 names, bringing it to a total of 580.

#### Orders of the Day

**Hon. G. Collins:** In Committee A, I call Committee of Supply. For the information of members we'll be examining the estimates of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. In this House, I call second reading of Bill 22.

#### Second Reading of Bills

##### SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

**Hon. S. Hagen:** It is my pleasure to address the principle of the bill that proposes amendments to the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act, the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act and the Water Act, which are consistent with the government's new-era commitments and its focus on red-tape reduction and elimination of burdensome legislative requirements. The bill also underscores government's goal of reducing expenditures and bolstering the economy while simultaneously continuing protection of the province's resources.

The Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act establishes a management framework for 6.3 million hectares of wilderness land in northeastern British Columbia

that was identified for protection and special management for the Fort St. John, Fort Nelson and Mackenzie land and resource management plans. The act established an approval process for the planning and management of Crown land and natural resources in the management area with shared approval of responsibilities amongst officials within the resource ministries. With responsibility for land use planning now residing in this ministry, there is no need for one minister or designated ministry official to be involved in approvals.

The act amendments, along with the minor amendments to the Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act in this bill, streamline the approval process for the Muskwa-Kechika, giving the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management the sole responsibility for enacting landscaping unit objectives, oil and gas pre-tenure plans and recreation plans. The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection will have sole responsibility for park management plans and wildlife management plans.

Advising on natural resource management in the Muskwa-Kechika management area is a very capable and dedicated group of volunteers who comprise the Muskwa-Kechika Advisory Board. The board is headed by a chair who, like the other members of the board, contributes considerable free time to the work of the board. Although the original intent was that the board members not be paid, it is now clear that the duties of the board are such that the chair is required to expend a very significant amount of time on board functions. For that, it was decided that the chair should be remunerated. The legislation will reflect that the chair can be paid for the important and time-consuming work done respecting board functions and management.

[1445]

From a financial perspective, the government makes a significant contribution to the Muskwa-Kechika trust fund each year. The act establishes a two-part trust fund. One component is the general account out of which the trustee — the minister — may make expenditures regarding research, mapping, training, advisory board expenses, administration and staffing. Bequests and contributions and fundraising revenue are deposited to the general account unless the gift of appropriation specifies otherwise.

The second component of the trust fund is the project account, from which the trustee may specifically make payments for the purpose of a project but not for administration, travel or services related to the operation of the trust fund or of the advisory board. The project account accepts donations from third parties wishing to contribute directly to the achievement of the M-K management objectives. Third-party contributions are matched by the government up to a certain amount. Government is currently legislated to top up the general account of the trust fund to restore the balance to \$3 million each year.

In times of fiscal restraint those are high costs. Core review direction determined that a smaller contribution to the trust fund can be made while still ensuring that the important planning and research tasks con-

tinue. This bill reduces the required annual funding provided to the general account of the trust fund by \$2 million, resulting in an annual appropriation of \$1 million. However, the legislation also makes it clear that there is an opportunity for government to pay more than the required \$1 million when and if it can do so.

This bill also emphasizes government's commitment to establish funding partnerships with the private sector and foundations. At present, government is only able to match third-party contributions to the project account of the trust fund up to a maximum of \$400,000. This bill increases the incentive for more partners to commit funds directly to the MK trust fund by increasing the amount from \$400,000 to \$1 million that government will be required to match. These financial changes ensure that the Muskwa-Kechika trust fund will continue to have sufficient resources to fund the necessary planning, research and conservation work required to manage and sensitively develop this magnificent area.

The Muskwa-Kechika management area is one of the most impressive wilderness areas in North America — and in the world. It is rich in wildlife, mature and old-growth forests, spectacular geology formations, lakes, rivers and streams, waterfalls and hot springs, rolling subalpine and alpine areas. It is also rich in natural resources, with outstanding subsurface resource values including extensive oil and gas potential. These resources are critically important to the northern economy and also to the health of the provincial economy. The Muskwa-Kechika management area also has tremendous cultural and heritage significance to first nations, who continue their traditional use of this land, known as Dena Keyih by the Kaska Dena people, for hunting, gathering and fishing.

The proposed amendments to the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act demonstrate this government's continued commitment to the values of northern British Columbia and particularly to the special management of the Muskwa-Kechika area.

Now turning our attention to the proposed Water Act amendments, one of the tenets of this government is that a number of regulatory processes now in place require streamlining and greater efficiency. Our new-era vision included reducing government cost through increasing efficiencies, reducing red tape and the regulatory burden, and providing for faster approvals respecting access to Crown resources. This bill strives to achieve all of these. While we certainly have an obligation to protect our precious water supplies and ensure that they are utilized as efficiently and respectfully as possible, we also have an obligation to those who need convenient access to water to carry on their day-to-day business operations.

The proposal of the amendments are threefold. First, it establishes more flexible notification procedures for licensing decisions. Second, it introduces a de-permitting system for the short-term use of water in appropriate circumstances. Finally, it ensures that employees of Land and Water British Columbia continue to have valid authority in legislation.

In order to make notification procedures more flexible, the bill accelerates access to water resources by streamlining processing time for many applications, reducing turnaround time and making the decision-making process more responsive to clients' needs and circumstances. It also provides for reducing operational expenditures for government and reducing the regulatory burden and costs borne by clients.

[1450]

The act currently provides that water licences can be amended in a variety of ways, such as by transferring the place of use to another parcel of land. For various types of amendments, when the licence is amended, the act requires notice be given, but these notice requirements vary according to the type of amendment. Some are very time-consuming or excessively thorough. Others are overly prescriptive about how notice must be provided. Further, there is little, if any, rationale for the variability of these requirements. In short, they constrain the decision-maker from exercising discretion as to when notice is warranted and what is appropriate in the circumstances.

Government also has the authority to cancel or suspend licences. Currently, when a licence is to be cancelled, notice of the proposed cancellation must be sent by registered mail or published in a newspaper each week for four consecutive weeks. We are changing that so that there is no longer a requirement that the mail be registered, and we are reducing the publication period from four weeks to three weeks. This provides adequate opportunity for those affected or those who have indicated an interest in the licence to respond.

Ultimately, officials will have greater flexibility while still having the responsibility to ensure that people's rights are protected. We are therefore amending this act to allow for this discretionary judgment regarding notification requirements. This will improve flexibility and provide operational efficiency without jeopardizing the rights of others.

Next, the bill provides for significant reductions in red tape for short-term users of water. As noted above, under the Water Act the property in and right to use water in a stream is vested in the government. In turn, government issues water licences to allocate specific amounts of water to persons who wish to divert and make beneficial use of it on an ongoing basis for domestic, agricultural, industrial and other purposes. Those intending to use water on a short-term basis, a period of 12 months or less, apply for written approval rather than a licence from the appropriate officials.

The current statutory process for issuing approvals for short-term use of water is time-consuming and seasonally intense, during the spring particularly. Regional offices are often preoccupied with other pressures at that time — for example, pesticide permits in freshet — and yet must deal with the applications on an urgent and case-by-case basis. Delays can impede businesses such as road maintenance contractors, who require water on a temporary basis for various activities including bridge washing and dust control.

As well, the current statutory process requires that each applicant pay the required approval fee to the appropriate regional office. The cumulative application charges can be significant to small businesses, particularly those with wide-ranging operations such as highway maintenance.

Currently, the Water Act does not authorize the making of regulations relating to approvals for short-term use. This bill will add that regulation-making authority. New regulations would then permit the short-term diversion or use of water without written approval, provided the use or diversion was undertaken in the prescribed manner for specified sources. Any diversion or use not in accordance with the regulations would still require written approval. In cases where approval is not required, there would still be a requirement to notify the regional water manager to provide contact information and pay rental fees for one year. As noted earlier, however, the approval fees would not apply.

The proposed regulations will only apply where short-term withdrawals would have no negative impact on existing water users or in-stream needs. In other cases, a written approval would still be required, and the approval fee as well as the rental fee would be charged.

Enforcement will involve monitoring records on a random-audit basis, issuing tickets for offences and responding to complaints. Offences will include failure to comply with the proposed regulation governing short-term water use. A detailed compliance strategy will be prepared as part of the implementation plan for these amendments.

In 1999-2000, approvals for short-term use were issued primarily for mining, road work, power, pipeline testing and flushing in camps. Corresponding revenues were approximately \$60,000. Both the number of approvals issued and the associated revenues have been declining over the last six years, but the figures may rise again as resource industries recover economically. On average, over the last six years approximately 250 approvals were issued annually, with a value of approximately \$80,000. If the proposed amendment is enacted, a portion of these revenues would be forgone, offset in part by increased workload efficiencies.

Finally, the bill will address issues surrounding the authority of statutory officials. Specifically, provisions will ensure that these officials have valid authority to carry out their duties. Changes have been made as a result of government reorganization, and this bill recognizes that the statutory officials named in the Water Act are now employees of a government corporation, Land and Water British Columbia, rather than employees of government.

Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read a second time.

[1455]

**J. MacPhail:** I rise to make some comments about Bill 22 that will guide the minister on questions I'll be raising at committee stage as well.

I want to, just for moment, go back to the original Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act, which is amended by this legislation today. The Muskwa-Kechika Management Area Act was really a breakthrough in land use planning in this province and was recognized as that worldwide — a breakthrough in land use planning. In fact, then opposition members, now government members, particularly from that area, acknowledged that it was really breakthrough legislation that could form the model of future land use planning. It covers 4.4 million hectares of unspoiled wilderness that has huge ecological significance in the northeastern part of British Columbia that's now known as the Muskwa-Kechika.

The bill had four parts to it and dealt with the fact that even though it was widely recognized as the equivalent of the Serengeti of the North, one of the last large intact predator-prey ecosystems south of the 60th parallel, it also contained considerable oil and gas reserves and valuable mineral deposits. Careful exploration and development would have major social and economic benefits for all British Columbians, the government of the day recognized. That's why more than three million hectares of the Muskwa-Kechika area were put into what are called special management zones, where resource development would be allowed to continue.

There were four major components to the legislation. The first established the Muskwa-Kechika management plan and allowed that all management activities in the Muskwa-Kechika, both for development and for protection, must be consistent with the locally developed management plan. The next component ensured that planning must occur prior to certain activities so that industrial and recreational development is orderly, efficient and integrated with other uses.

The third part of the act established an advisory board to provide a public oversight role for the Muskwa-Kechika and to make recommendations for expenditures from a special trust fund that was established in the act. Then the fourth part of the act established that the trust fund was to assist with planning and research in the Muskwa-Kechika. Then there was a legislated requirement that the provincial government fill the coffers of that trust fund at the beginning of each fiscal year to \$3 million.

Here's what Bill 22 does to that groundbreaking act creating the Muskwa-Kechika management area. I think what we've got is a little bit of a grab of money, or let's just say a taking away of money from actually managing that world-class area of our province.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, there was a legislated requirement that the provincial government fill up the coffers of that trust fund every year to \$3 million. In fact, the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management acknowledged that during his estimates, when my colleague the member for Vancouver–Mount Pleasant was asking him about that trust fund. The way it was established, just so we know how the trust fund used to work, is that the grant of up to \$3 million was made each year. Then the local community or the environ-

mental community or the development community could raise \$400,000 of their own money, and the provincial government would match those funds up to another \$400,000.

[1500]

The Muskwa-Kechika fund, in any one year, could have \$3.8 million in it, of which \$3.4 million was provided by the provincial government. What this legislation now does is say: "Oh, sorry. We're only going to put \$1 million into the trust fund."

"But don't worry," says the minister. "The community can raise another million dollars out of their own funds, and we'll match those dollars." A total of \$3 million is eligible to go into the trust fund, of which a maximum of \$2 million will be provided by this government, as opposed to \$3.4 million previously. In fact, the community has to more than double their fundraising efforts to get that maximum amount of money.

I'm not quite sure why the minister felt the need to underfund this world-class management area trust fund that was working extremely well, that was lauded by members of the current government, industry and the environmental community and that really put British Columbia on the map of doing proper land use planning with this trust fund. Anyway, that's gone now, but we do have a hint of where the minister is going on this from his comments in estimates. He's saying the matching funds could primarily be raised from U.S. foundations and industry. I'll be curious in committee stage to know what insight the minister has into what those U.S. foundations are and what industry will actually do that massive increase in fundraising for this very important land use area.

There are other amendments, particularly to the Forest Practices Code. Once again, we see the shift in terms of responsibility for environmental protection going from the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection who is the only advocate in this government, the only person responsible for advocating on behalf of environmental protection. The minister herself doesn't actually see that as her role, but if you were to look anywhere else in government about policing the environment and protecting the environment, it should be with the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection.

We now see the shift of responsibility for ensuring proper environmental sustainability under the Forest Practices Code from the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection over to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management, who freely admits he's an economic minister. He's there to develop. He's there to cut, cut, cut. It is disturbing once again to see the shift away from environmental sustainability in a way that in any way keeps the environment at a par, let alone more highly protected than those who would use our forests solely for economic interests.

I worry about this. It is not as if the shift of the Forest Practices Code responsibility is there in a way that is then balanced back to give the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection equal authority. Her authority is gone completely under this amendment to the Forest Practices Code. I do worry about that greatly. I will be

questioning the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management very, very carefully about the effect of the lessening of all of the principles of sustainability by this shift to his responsibility.

I also have concerns about whether indeed the amendments to the Water Act are simply as minor as the minister has made out in his opening comments under section 22. Of course, the amendments to the Water Act now allow a diversion or use of water on streams for a term not exceeding 12 months. For the very first time we are now permitting a diversion of water on streams for a term not exceeding 12 months.

[1505]

I worry about two things. First of all, what does that do to salmon habitat? Wild stock spawn in streams. What will that mean when someone is allowed to divert a stream for up to 12 months? What if there's a dam on a stream that's a spawning ground for our wild salmon stock? That is of extreme concern to me. Is it to help out independent power producers who have been asking for this? Where are the protections for riparian zones? Where are the habitat protections? As we know, this government has already made amendments that in fact do away with any sort of habitat protection for salmon — for finfish — in this province at all. This is just a continuation of that.

Independent power producers. Have they been lobbying this government to such an extent to say: "Hey, give us those streams"? Where is there anywhere in here a protection to restore the streams after the 12 months? What's the role for the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to protect the environmental integrity of streams during this process?

Mr. Speaker, I must say that I will have many questions about stream protection, about regulations flowing from this and about possible reasons the minister has for the short-term diversion that will have long-term consequences for salmon habitat — again, a great deal of concern.

I will also have questions about whether indeed this government is committing a full \$1 million, even though it's \$2 million less than used to be committed to the trust fund for the Muskwa-Kechika, because the legislation says that the government will provide up to \$1 million.

Again, this is a bill that raises perhaps more questions than it answers and certainly moves in a direction that is pro-development and anti-sustainability.

**R. Stewart:** I ask leave to make an introduction.

Leave granted.

#### Introductions by Members

**R. Stewart:** I met a few minutes ago with some very nice people from my alma mater, Our Lady of Fatima Elementary School in the Maillardville area of Coquitlam. It was only a few years ago that I attended that school. [Laughter.] I haven't changed a bit.

Today we welcome 39 grade 5 students from both the French immersion program and the regular program, along with their teachers, Ms. Kate Copley and Mr. Tim Bouchier, and four parent chaperones from Our Lady of Fatima Elementary School in Maillardville. I ask the House to please make them welcome.

#### Debate Continued

**Mr. Speaker:** The question is second reading of Bill 22.

Motion approved.

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

Bill 22, Sustainable Resource Management Statutes Amendment Act, 2002, 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. M. de Jong:** I call second reading of Bill 25.

#### TRANSPORTATION STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

**Hon. J. Reid:** I move that the bill now be read a second time.

Bill 25 includes amendments to three statutes: the Ministry of Transportation and Highways Act, the Ferry Corporation Act and the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act. Bill 25 also provides authority to repeal the Ferry Act, which applies to inland ferries.

[1510]

The most significant amendments contained in this bill allow for a new part to be created in the Ministry of Transportation and Highways Act to provide for inland ferry administration. These amendments are in accord with the ministry's service plan released in January.

Inland ferries have been serving local residents and businesses at some locations for decades. Budget reductions have required the Ministry of Transportation to look for ways to reduce costs. At a time when the province is facing a \$4.4 billion structural deficit, we need to ensure that ministry resources are being properly managed to meet the transportation needs of all British Columbians. User fees will allow the ministry to protect and maintain these inland ferry services while also ensuring more equitable ferry service delivery across the province.

These changes fall into four basic categories. First, the hours of service will be reduced on most routes to 17 hours a day beginning May 15. The exception will be the Arrow Park cable ferry, which will be reduced to 15 hours a day from 18 hours. Where we are reducing hours, there will be a call-out procedure in place for emergency responders to access the ferry outside of



regular service hours. This emergency response has been in place for ferries that have been operating less than 24 hours a day in the past.

Reaction ferry services will remain at the current levels, except for the Usk ferry, which will be reduced to 17 hours from the 18 hours presently. There will be no change of service for the Adams Lake ferry at this time. Three reaction ferry services that have alternative roads available will be offered to the communities in the private sector this year without government subsidy. They are the Marguerite, McLure and Little Fort ferries. To date, we have already received nine expressions of interest regarding these ferries.

A toll structure will be developed in consultation with communities, and the tolls will be implemented by the end of the year. It is only fair that inland ferry users help cover some of the costs of that service by paying tolls, just as coastal ferry users do. This will level the playing field for all British Columbians and help the ministry meet its budget objectives.

Amendments respecting inland ferries include the provision of a regulation-making authority to establish fares, safety guidelines and the direction of passengers and vehicles at terminals and on vessels; establishing that it is a duty of vehicle drivers and passengers to pay the required fares; and establishing that non-payment of fares is an offence and subject to penalty.

The Ferry Act will be repealed, as it does not support the new inland ferry business model, and certain of the authorities in that act are also already provided for in other legislation.

Bill 25 also amends the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act to address an issue raised by the auditor general with respect to the accounting treatment of provincially owned SkyTrain assets which are leased to TransLink. The amendment clarifies section 5 of the act to allow the current leasing arrangement to be treated as an operating lease, as opposed to a capital lease, for accounting purposes. This amendment is supported by the auditor general, the comptroller general, the Ministry of Finance, B.C. Transit and TransLink.

A streamlining amendment is also included in Bill 25. Currently, there is a provision in the Ministry of Transportation and Highways Act which requires the ministry seal be affixed to contracts. This requirement results in delays and costs to the private sector, as contracts must be sent to Victoria to have the seal affixed. Removing the seal requirement streamlines the contracting process and saves time and money. In addition to removing the seal requirement, a transitional provision is included in Bill 25 which retrospectively validates any contracts entered into without the ministry seal.

**J. MacPhail:** I'm responding to Bill 25. We'll be voting against it.

I was looking, actually, for the member for Nelson-Creston to see whether he was going to be speaking to this piece of legislation. Of course, he has taken a very strong view against the massive cuts to the inland ferry

system, privatization and imposing user fees — and with absolutely good reason. These cuts to the inland ferries, the privatization and the imposition of user fees severely harm the communities who relied upon these inland ferries.

[1515]

Of course, it came as a big surprise. I don't think any new-era commitment said: "Hey, we're going to privatize your ferries, cut service, cut your community off and impose user fees." I don't think that was a new-era promise, but it's one that this government has managed to put through in legislation, despite the fact that they know how harmful it's going to be to communities.

I'll quote from what the Nelson-Creston MLA actually said. I expect, given this is what he's been saying, that he will actually join with me and my colleague to vote against Bill 25, because all of his words say he disagrees with everything that's in this legislation.

Let me quote from the member for Nelson-Creston. This would have been on March 20 of this year — last month: "Local residents have every reason to be upset. When the dams were built in the sixties, they were promised free ferries until the bridge was built here. They're now being told that there's no free ferries, and there's no bridge." Wow, there's a brave MLA. He joins with the member for West Vancouver-Capilano to bring to the attention of his government harmful changes their government's making to their local communities.

What's the context of that comment? I want to be fair to the member for Nelson-Creston. Here's what the context is, and here's what this government is ignoring in this community. The Arrow Lakes ferry is one of the inland ferries for which this minister is going to charge user fees, cut service and cut off communities from their ferry. The Arrow Lakes ferry was provided after the then B.C. Hydro flooded the area in the 1960s as part of the Columbia River negotiations. Then-Premier W.A.C. Bennett promised a free ferry until a bridge could be built. The communities used to be accessible by land until the Columbia River was dammed. Mr. Bennett, the Premier of the day, said: "Free ferry until a bridge is built." There is lots of evidence that that was the promise made. Never once did this Liberal government say to that community: "Oh, you know, that promise that was made way back when, and we don't agree with it. In fact, we're going to cut your ferry service and charge you more."

In fact, the mayor of Nakusp told the now Minister of Transportation that that promise was made, and the Minister of Transportation said that if the community can find evidence of this promise, they would get their bridge. Of course, in this particular case it's the mayor of Nakusp who's being written off as being wrong in quoting the minister. The minister now denies ever making that promise.

Today here we have the people who are the losers in this government, the community represented by the MLA for Nelson-Creston. Let's see what else the mem-

ber for Nelson-Creston wrote. This was on March 8 of this year:

"I will be meeting with community leaders and the public to develop creative ideas to minimize the impacts to residents. Lower rates for local residents, users and low-income seniors is something I'm exploring for each ferry. In the Arrow Lakes area there may be a better case for special consideration in light of the promises made surrounding the Columbia River negotiations."

Oops. The MLA for Nelson-Creston has been convinced of the promises made to the community back in the 1960s. I wonder if he's going to stand up in the Legislature and tell the Minister of Transportation what he's found out and that his community deserves either a bridge or free ferry service.

[1520]

What are the consequences of these cuts the minister is making to inland ferry service? Well, let's look at what some people in the community are saying. Let me just quote from what is called the Harrop-Procter ferry community, which are the two small but nevertheless viable communities that will be very negatively affected by these cuts to their ferry service.

"When the government cuts ferry service to the rural communities of Harrop and Procter, residents will have to 'shove off' from the rocky shores of Kootenay Lake and make the half-kilometre water crossing in the dark, starting April 1. The government announced plans to shut the ferry from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. on February 20, 2002. The ferry is the only access in and out of the two communities for the 600-plus permanent residents.

"The ministry staff told us that shift workers and other residents who travel by ferry at night can park their cars on the side of the road and pull their boats up on the shore, as long as they aren't in the way of ferry,' says committee chair Rick Morley. 'The ministry said they might consider installing a phone and possibly an outhouse for the people stranded on the shore when the ferry is no longer running. This is not an acceptable solution.'

"The Harrop-Procter ferry has been in existence since the 1920s and has been on 24-hour, on-demand service for close to 30 years. The announcement that the service would be cut has united the community, left shift workers high and dry and raised community concerns about how reduced ferry service will affect their access to emergency service among other things.

"With only three weeks until nighttime ferry service is cut, the residents are scrambling to find a solution. 'Without ferry service at night I might have to quit my job,' said Kristen Bompas, a 28-year-old mother of two who took the night shift so she could be with her two young children through the day and earn money to pay her taxes. 'I might have to park my camper on the side of the road and start sleeping in it.'

"Nurse Patty Miller, 53 years old, is in the same boat. 'I work at least ten late shifts a month. I don't get to the ferry until 11:30 at night. How will I get home? Am I supposed to sleep in my car? I don't own a boat, and even if I did, it's dark, the water is cold, and the waves can be big. What does the minister expect me to do?'

"Procter resident Laurie Summerville has had to turn down \$1,200 in shift work in April because of the uncertainty of the ferry schedule. 'That's a lot of income to lose,' says Summerville.

"Like these three residents, the rest of the community is wondering if free parking and use of an outhouse is really what the Minister of Transportation meant when she said in a CBC radio interview that 'we want to be able to find ways of accommodating them.'

"Late-night shift access in and out of their communities is just one of the many concerns. Small business operators are worried tolls, to be implemented at the end of the year, will affect their business. Residents are outraged that a curfew has been imposed on them.

"Without night-time ferry service, road crews won't be able to clear the winter roads. Poor driving conditions will make it even harder for the volunteer firefighters and first responders to get to an emergency. If the emergency is on the other side, there will be a further delay while emergency crews wait for the ferry driver to arrive and start the ferry before making the five-minute crossing.

"Since the government announced cuts to the entire inland ferry system, residents in Harrop and Procter have formed a committee and are working to keep their ferry running day and night.

"We met with our MLA from Nelson-Creston, who offered no support. We've asked for a meeting with the minister and have received no reply. It appears that she has no intention to meet with us,' says Morley. 'She needs to know that it's not acceptable to implement this policy which affects our lives, our access to emergency services, our freedom of movement, our local economy and our property values on such short notice with no consultation or input.'"

That was the end of the news release from the Harrop-Procter ferry committee, Mr. Speaker.

Let me read another letter. This is a letter from a resident of Nelson, Gerry Kalinski. He is a retired business person. This letter was written March 13, 2002, to the Minister of Transportation.

[1525]

"Dear Minister:

"My name is Gerry Kalinski. I am a retired businessman recently relocated to British Columbia from Alberta. I'm a director of the Kootenay Lake hospital foundation. I also sit on a committee with a group of community leaders that is trying to help the community manage impending change in health care in rural areas. I am also a resident of Harrop-Procter.

"I reach the conclusion that your office and your ministry has made up your mind about the implementation" — he's talking about the Harrop-Procter ferry service cuts — "regardless of the conflicts in our statistics, regardless of the outcome of our cost-benefit analysis, regardless of our safety concerns for our shift workers, our seniors, our sick and our children, and regardless of any statements that you have made to our citizens and to the press regarding talks with affected communities.

"I find your response very puzzling. You are aware that there is no other route out for these 600 permanent residents in British Columbia; aware that our acute health care review report has been delayed by this very government, so we don't know how far we have to transport our emergencies; aware that we don't know yet the results of cuts to ambulance and even to whom they will report; aware that your ministry employees have not done an appropriate emergency response plan, or if they have, they have not communicated it to us; aware that we have 100 or more shift workers who will either have

to risk their lives or quit their jobs and end up on government payrolls; aware that when people quit their jobs, they will not easily find another job, given the number of other cuts in the area; aware that these people could have trouble with unemployment insurance for quitting their jobs; aware that we have firefighting issues on both sides of the water; aware that we have people here with existing illnesses that would be put into increased danger because there is no adequate emergency response plan yet."

Mr. Kalinski, a retired business person, goes on and on. He ends with:

"I have a problem. When I look at this from a business point of view, I cannot understand all this added physical risk and increased financial burden to these British Columbians. I cannot understand how it is justifiable to save your ministry \$25,000. Budgeting human life as acceptable collateral damage in your war to balance your budget is unacceptable to me and many other Canadians.

"Please respond yourself this time, as it is important for myself and community members to hear from you directly."

That was the letter to the Minister of Transportation.

Here's another one from the same community, but these are children. This letter is to the Premier, to the Minister of Transportation and to the MLA for Nelson-Creston — to all those three — dated March 14:

"As the grade 4-5 teacher at Redfish Elementary School, my job entails discussion of current events in the classroom. No issue thus far this school year has affected the students in my class as profoundly as the reduction of hours and addition of tolls of Harrop ferry — not 9/11, not the teachers' job action, not the bombing of Afghanistan.

"Although my inclination is to protect the students from bad news, this past month their minds have been consumed by anxiety about how the ferry changes would affect them, their families and their friends. The children's words for how they feel are 'worried,' 'mad,' 'upset,' 'helpless,' 'confused' and 'bewildered.'

"Here are a few excerpts from their writing." These are quotes from grade 4-5 students. "I don't think this idea should happen, because many of the kids at Redfish live in Procter, so they will have to pay every time they get on the ferry, and it's going to cost so much. The late workers won't be able to get to their houses on the other side. If you go on with this idea, then everyone will move."

"Another one: 'My friends will move away. It won't work for my mom. We'll have to pay.'"

"Another one: 'You wouldn't get very much money from the tolls because everyone would move. Don't disrupt people's lives. All the people in Procter are upset and worried and angry too. Some of our moms and dads work early and late.'"

"Another one: 'I am worried because the school bus would have to pay and because people will move away. If your mom or dad had to go to work and the ferry is closed, they'll have to quit.'"

"Another one: 'I think a toll would be stupid because we already pay for our ferry in our taxes. A toll wouldn't be good for Redfish school, because people from Harrop and Procter will move and go to a different school. I think less hours for the ferry to run is stupid, because my dad won't be able to go to work.'"

That's nice. That's what grades 4 and 5 students are having to discuss in their school. It goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Let me read another letter to the editor of the *Nelson Daily News*, dated Monday, March 25. It's from a group of seniors. It's an open letter to the Minister of Transportation.

[1530]

"To the Editor:

"Because our MLA for Nelson-Creston has expressed little or no interest in our problem, I am writing as a senior resident of the Harrop-Procter area to express my dismay for the decisions you have made regarding the Harrop ferry.

"To reduce the operating time of this ferry from 24 hours to 17 hours is troubling. As you know, this ferry is the only road access we have from our communities. Many find it callous and arrogant that you have chosen to restrict our freedom of travel by seven hours each day. To limit our road access in this manner is rank discrimination and, we believe, a restriction of our freedom.

"You have created conditions of uncertainty and fear for many seniors, who are frightened by decisions that have not taken their needs and concerns into account — for example, rapid-as-possible access to emergency care during the small hours, when seniors are the most vulnerable. This is on top of the anxiety created by the unknown decisions pending regarding our hospital in Nelson and the care — or lack of — that will be available to them.

"Also, we have been made aware that tolls will soon be placed on ferry use. Even a minimum charge of \$2 each way could amount to hundreds of dollars each year for even casual use. Trips for shopping, visits to doctors and other professionals are weekly occurrences.

"No other citizens are being treated in this high-handed fashion. With few exceptions, all other mainland residents have no such restrictions on access to their homes."

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on. That letter is an open letter from a senior, Agnes Marley, to the *Nelson Daily News*.

The local MP, Jim Gouk, the MP for the Nelson-Harrop-Procter area, also wrote a letter to the editor, dated Monday, March 11, 2002. It was an open letter from the Member of Parliament to the Nelson-Creston MLA.

"The West Kootenay and Boundary area has been particularly hard hit, with closures to courthouses and forestry operations and expected hospital closures. Now I have been informed that there will be significant curtailment of the schedules for the Kootenay Bay, Harrop and Glade ferries.

"I must question the wisdom and fairness of such a decision. In the case of the Kootenay Bay ferry, this is a primary winter alternative for those concerned with their safety travelling over the Salmo-Creston portion of Highway 3, with its high avalanche risk. It is also the only route available during times that Highway 3 is closed in the winter, either as the result of an avalanche or for avalanche control. It also presents some unreasonable hardships for some Balfour and Kootenay Bay residents who need to travel during the potential shut-down periods for employment purposes. The Harrop and Glade ferries are in an even worse situation.

"Aside from the potential employment problems mentioned above, there is the matter of public safety caused by the lack of access to and from these isolated areas. This would restrict the ability of residents to leave their homes for medical emergencies or to provide access for police, fire and ambulance services. One also has to consider what would happen if an unexpected traffic problem prevented a resident from reaching the ferry for the last trip, and they were stranded away from home. Are any of these situations fair? I think not.

"As I said at the opening of the letter, I recognize the fact that there are problems which must be addressed. Viable solutions must not simply create new problems. I realize that a number of small solutions add up. However, in the grand scheme of things, the potential savings from altering long-established ferry schedules is not worth the disruption and hardship it would cause.

"I am sure that you are well aware that we work for the constituents, not the party. Occasionally, that places us in a conflict position. When that happens to me, the choice is clear: the constituents come first. I trust you feel this way also."

That's an open letter from the local MP, Jim Gouk, to the MLA for Nelson-Creston.

It's quite clear that this legislation is going to do unprecedented harm to communities served by the inland ferries. It is astounding that this government, when these announcements were made in February as budget announcements, continues to proceed with these horrendous cuts — never announced, by the way, during the election. Frankly, no one is relieved by the privatization of these inland ferries; no one is relieved about them.

[1535]

Let me just look at some other areas where there's been reduced service and the potential for privatization of the ferries that serve the communities of Little Fort and McLure. Who knows what will happen when that occurs? Let me read how that community views changes in their ferry service. This is from an article in the *North Thompson Times* by Ann Piper: "Valley Ferry's Future in Doubt." This is where this bill confirms their worst fears that there will be privatization, imposed user fees and cut service. In fact, these may be some ferries that are actually cut — gone, sayonara.

"For the communities of Little Fort and McLure, continued ferry service is a matter of concern. At Little Fort, the volunteer fire department depends upon the ferry to carry fire trucks and firefighters to the east side of the river when duty calls, and a substantial proportion of the community's tax base is there as well. Police and ambulance personnel also rely upon the ferry for quick access in emergencies. At both Little Fort and McLure the ferry serves a first nations reserve on the far side of the river. Without a ferry, those on the far bank face a long alternate route to services available since pioneer times via the ferry."

Wow! There's a new era: back to the pioneer days. That's this government's definition of "new era" for Little Fort and McLure. This is an area where this government should have had a sober second look and should have said: "We are not serving the residents in rural British Columbia well by these ferry cuts, and we should not proceed with them."

You know, this government... It's so funny. I sit here in question period, and I hear government back-bench MLAs from the rural areas lobbying soft questions to these ministers over here every day. "Oh, please tell us what you're doing to our rural communities." Why isn't there an MLA standing up here, saying: "Why the heck are you cutting our inland ferry service to harm rural communities? Why are you attacking rural communities?" And yet not one. I don't hear one government MLA stand up and ask that. The member for Kamloops-North Thompson, whose ferries are being adversely affected by this, could stand up, instead of lobbying one of his soft questions, and ask a real, legitimate question on behalf of his community — but no, dead silence and skating over the issues.

The Minister of Transportation continues to refuse to answer the questions of these rural communities about why she is doing this and frankly, more to the point, why she didn't tell anyone before they had a decision about what choices to make about the future of their community. Why didn't her government even raise a peep of a hint that they were going to so adversely affect communities like Little Fort, McLure, Harrop, Glade and Procter? No, this minister decided to just issue a news release and then refer people where they.... They don't actually publish this. You've got to go on line and find out what the details of these cuts are.

Mr. Speaker, there it is. The cuts are drastic. The imposition of user fees is huge — unprecedented proportionately. Communities will be ill-affected to an unbelievable degree by all of these changes. Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. The McLure and Little Fort ferries are going to be cancelled, as is the Marguerite ferry north of Williams Lake. Those communities have not had any success from their MLAs in defending their interests.

[1540]

My colleague from Vancouver-Mount Pleasant and I will be voting against this legislation. It's unnecessary; it's ill-advised. It particularly targets for harm rural communities. Those are three reasons why, at a minimum, every MLA who represents these communities should vote against this legislation. Particularly the MLA for Nelson-Creston should vote in defence of his community and against this bill.

[1545]

[The bells were ordered to be rung.]

Second reading of Bill 25 approved on the following division:

YEAS — 61

Coell	Hogg	L. Reid
Halsey-Brandt	Hawkins	Whittred
Cheema	Hansen	J. Reid
Bruce	van Dongen	Barisoff
Nettleton	Roddick	Wilson

Masi	Lee	Thorpe
Hagen	Collins	de Jong
Stephens	Abbott	Coleman
Chong	Jarvis	Anderson
Orr	Harris	Nuraney
Brenzinger	Belsey	Bell
Chutter	Mayencourt	Trumper
Johnston	Bennett	R. Stewart
Christensen	Krueger	McMahon
Bray	Les	Locke
Nijjar	Bhullar	Bloy
MacKay	Cobb	K. Stewart
Visser	Lekstrom	Brice
Sultan	Hamilton	Sahota
Hawes	Kerr	Manhas
	Hunter	

NAYS—2

MacPhail Kwan

**Hon. J. Reid:** Mr. Speaker, 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 25, Transportation Statutes Amendment Act, 2002, 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. Collins:** I call second reading of Bill 24.

#### CRIMINAL INJURY COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I move that the bill be now read for a second time.

Mr. Speaker, the Criminal Injury Compensation Amendment Act, 2002, amends sections of the Criminal Injury Compensation Act. Members of this Legislature will remember that the new Crime Victim Assistance Act was passed last year. The new act transfers responsibility for criminal injury compensation from the Workers Compensation Board to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

It is designed to make services to victims more efficient and responsive. It enhances the benefits to victims of crime by strengthening and increasing the range of benefits provided. These benefits include medical and dental care; vocational rehabilitation for victims of crime and members of the victim's family; income support for the victim or their family for lost or reduced income; counselling for the victim or their family; counselling for the witnesses of crime; protective measures to ensure the safety of a victim; travelling expenses for a victim or their family; and compensation

to the victim's family for the loss of love, guidance or affection.

However, the act is not yet in force. Proclamation of this act is expected early this summer. In the meantime, these amendments are an interim measure that makes pain and suffering awards consistent between the old and the new programs.

The Criminal Injury Compensation Amendment Act, 2002, will remove pain and suffering awards in respect of applications received on or after April 16, 2002. Applicants will still be entitled to all other benefits under the act.

[1550]

Pain and suffering awards are being removed for significant policy reasons. Specifically, our experience shows that they are inconsistent and unfair. The awards create delays in adjudicating criminal injury compensation and generate most of the reviews and appeals. No doubt similar programs in other provinces face these problems, as most of them eliminated pain-and-suffering awards a decade ago after the federal government reduced some cost-sharing agreements for criminal injury compensation.

We are going to make the enhanced benefits under the Crime Victim Assistance Act as retroactive as possible. Our goal is to make sure that victims of crime who apply for benefits in the interim period will get the enhanced benefits that would be available under the new program. People are deeply affected when violent crime touches their lives, and we have a responsibility to help quickly. This amendment and the new Crime Victim Assistance Act show that we are committed to ensuring faster access to improved support services that help not only the victims but also their caregivers, children and spouses.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 24.

**J. MacPhail:** Let's be clear about what Bill 24 does. It removes the ability of a person who is criminally injured at work from claiming pain and suffering as a victim of crime.

I remember the introduction of the amendment to this legislation in the early nineties, so I went back and researched the debate around the time when the Criminal Injury Compensation Act was amended to now include pain-and-suffering awards to individuals criminally injured on the job. I just went back to review it and see what the then opposition said about that.

I just want to make it clear that in June of 1995, the then government introduced an amendment that added pain-and-suffering awards to individuals criminally injured on the job, who receive all but pain-and-suffering benefits under the Workers Compensation Act and Government Employees Compensation Act of Canada.

Really, the intent of this, as the then Attorney General said when this amendment was introduced, was so that those who are criminally injured while working are eligible for pain-and-suffering benefits under the act. Although these individuals may receive benefits from the Workers Compensation Act, they do not re-

ceive pain-and-suffering awards under that legislation. In effect, this amendment corrects a disparity between those criminally injured while at work and those criminally injured away from work. Now that disparity, which had been corrected in 1995, is being reimposed by this Liberal government.

What did the then opposition say? Well, the Liberal critic said: "To start, the official opposition and I congratulate the Attorney for bringing this bill forward. It is long overdue.... The amendments to the Criminal Injury Compensation Act are unfortunately long overdue, and I must pay some recognition to the too many victims we have all been in contact with and are well aware of."

Mr. Speaker, the then Liberal critic went on and on in page after page from *Hansard* to support the changes to the legislation that brought it into line, saying that just because you're criminally injured and you happen to be at work, you should be no less compensated than if you were away from work. There was universal support for this amendment on the very basis that it corrected a disparity that there was no basis for: that people who are injured on the job through a criminal act should have less access to benefits for pain and suffering — which is real — than those who were not criminally injured at work.

I'd be happy, having done my own research, to give the Solicitor General the debate from June 20, 1995, on all of the discussion around the awarding for pain and suffering through the Workers Compensation Act that was absolutely appropriate. There was complete agreement around that.

[1555]

I don't know why the minister feels the necessity to once again impose such a disparity. He says that there will be other programs to make up for it, but there can't be. The test for pain and suffering is a real legal test with a wealth of law attached to it about who gets it. It's not open to abuse, because it's an independent body that awards it. It's for the individual. It's for the individual to make up for being a victim of crime in which he or she was criminally injured.

There is no replacement program that the Solicitor General could possibly offer in this area that would make up for the reimposition of this disparity. I'm not quite sure why this government feels the necessity once again to attack working people. That's what this legislation does. We had legislation this morning to favour corporations. We've got legislation this afternoon to attack working people.

That's what this government is all about: take from those most in need, most deserving, and give to those who are already the wealthiest in this province. Bill 24 is a perfect example of that. Once again, let me be very clear. This opposition will be voting against the Criminal Injury Compensation Amendment Act for those very reasons.

**Mr. Speaker:** On Bill 24, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General closes debate.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** First of all, through to the member's comments, pain and suffering was allowed in for

workers in 1995. We're removing pain and suffering for everyone, not being disparaging against whether they're working people or non-working people as victims of crime.

We're trying to develop a program that actually meets the needs of victims quickly, one that is there for them with counselling services, loss of income and the things that affect these people. The protective measure issues, the travelling expenses issues were not there before in the old act but were all tied up into a large bundle of money that went to pain and suffering that was tied into long tribunals. People were revictimized through the system, sometimes up to 18 to 24 months, when they should have got the services and the counselling they needed immediately when they were victimized or traumatized by being a victim of crime.

[1600]

I think we're moving in the right direction here by bringing it back over from the Workers Compensation Board so the ministry can react quickly, deal with issues around victims of crime, do it the same for everyone and do it fairly for everyone. Having said that, I move second reading of Bill 24.

[The bells were ordered to be rung.]

Second reading of Bill 24 approved on the following division:

YEAS — 61

Coell	Hogg	L. Reid
Halsey-Brandt	Hawkins	Whittred
Cheema	Hansen	J. Reid
van Dongen	Barisoff	Nettleton
Roddick	Wilson	Masi
Lee	Thorpe	Hagen
Collins	de Jong	Stephens
Abbott	Coleman	Chong
Jarvis	Anderson	Orr
Harris	Nuraney	Brenzinger
Belsey	Bell	Chutter
Mayencourt	Trumper	Johnston
Bennett	R. Stewart	Hayer
Christensen	Krueger	McMahon
Bray	Les	Locke
Nijjar	Bhullar	Bloy
MacKay	Cobb	K. Stewart
Visser	Lekstrom	Brice
Sultan	Hamilton	Sahota
Hawes	Kerr	Manhas
	Hunter	

NAYS — 2

MacPhail

Kwan

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I move that Bill 24 be referred to a Committee of the Whole House for consideration at the next sitting of the House after today.

[1605]

Bill 24, Criminal Injury Compensation Amendment Act, 2002, 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. Collins:** At the request of the opposition, I move that the House recess for 15 minutes.

**Mr. Speaker:** There will now be a 15-minute recess. We'll reconvene at 4:20.

The House recessed from 4:05 p.m. to 4:23 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I call committee on Bill 6.

### Committee of the Whole House

#### GAMING CONTROL ACT

The House in Committee of the Whole (Section B) on Bill 6; T. Christensen in the chair.

The committee met at 4:24 p.m.

Sections 1 to 6 inclusive approved.

On section 7.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I'd like to move the amendment to section 7 that is placed with the Clerk.

[SECTION 7(1), by deleting the proposed paragraph (j) and substituting the following:

(j) must do other things the minister may require and may do other things the minister may authorize.]

Amendment approved.

[1625]

Section 7 as amended approved.

Sections 8 to 12 inclusive approved.

On section 13.

**J. MacPhail:** Under section 13 and I think it might be 14 as well, I am curious to know a couple of things about the amount of revenue that will be flowing in through gaming. One is on the question of expansion. Section 13 talks about...Net income from the Lottery Corporation, other than from casino gaming and from bingo, must go into the consolidated revenue fund.

The next section I will speak to in a moment, if so directed, says that the balance of net income in each fiscal year goes into the consolidated revenue fund.

Basically, between those two sections, the net revenue goes to the government — the consolidated revenue fund.

How does the government restrict the flow of revenue so that there is no expansion of gaming, as they promised during the election?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I guess the difference is between your net revenues and your gross revenues and what you do. We made a commitment during the election to stop the expansion of gaming as it existed relative to this sector. There was a decision made at a cabinet meeting in January to recognize some facility operators that had gone significantly down the path, based on legal opinion and information that we received that they should be allowed to continue down the path to receiving either their maximum allowable amount of slots or be permitted to move to a community that might accept them for slots because they had made some significant moves. After having done that, because we felt that was the exposure of government, we've said no more expansion of gaming.

**J. MacPhail:** Let me quote from a *Times Colonist* article of October 21, 2001. It's a quote from the article, so I'd like the minister to respond to this. Jacee Schaefer, whose company manages six casinos from B.C. Lottery Corporation, says the Solicitor General told her he wanted to explore "just what was meant by expansion." That's the end of the article. Schaefer told *Times Colonist* columnist Jody Paterson she was hopeful that would mean casinos would be allowed to "transfer licences from anti-slot communities and reopen slots in more welcoming environs."

Can the minister tell me whether that promise has been delivered upon?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I'm not about to comment on the comments of an individual in a particular newspaper article. However, whatever comments may have been interpreted by this individual with any meeting I may have had with them, the reality is that we took forward a decision to cabinet. The cabinet decision was done in public, like we said we'd always make these decisions, in an open cabinet in Fort St. John. We've made the decision, and the sector will be managed by the B.C. Lottery Corporation under those guidelines for the future.

**J. MacPhail:** The minister may know that when I was minister responsible for gaming, I introduced an exposure bill. I've been comparing the two, and it's fair enough. I'm just trying to find in the Solicitor General Act where it has any say or regulation about when licensees apply to move, there will not be an expansion of gaming.

[1630]

**Hon. R. Coleman:** Maybe I could refer the member back to section 6(1), where the minister may issue written directives to the Lottery Corporation as a matter of

general policy. The Lottery Corporation is to comply with those directives. General policy is set by cabinet and has been set by cabinet. It's very clear that every non-slot casino in British Columbia is not going to be permitted to move. That is very clear as per the open cabinet decision.

Therefore, whether someone wants to apply or not, they can go ahead and apply, and the answer will be: "You're not eligible to move and get slot machines." The movement, of course.... We've turned the management of this sector over to the B.C. Lottery Corporation, because we feel the management of gaming and the decisions day to day on the business cases of how that sector is managed should be handled by an arm's-length corporation and not at the whim or decisions of the minister. Therefore, the corporation will handle any relocations within the parameters of the decisions of cabinet in January, and those were pretty clear.

**J. MacPhail:** That's exactly why I'm asking the questions. The policy of no expansion of gaming has to be made by the government. There's nothing in this legislation, where policy has become legislation, saying there will not be an expansion of gaming. It's all very well and good that the B.C. Lottery Corporation administer the policy set by the government, but the minister points me to the very clause that gives me concern. It says the minister may issue written directives to the Lottery Corporation on matters of general policy, and then he defines as general policy about the relocation of licences about whether they can expand or not.

How will the ordinary citizen, who may have missed that open cabinet meeting...? God forbid, I don't think there's many British Columbians who would have missed that open cabinet meeting. I know I certainly, if I'm about to miss it, try to tape it and play it over and over again, but I'm not sure every British Columbian is as dedicated as me. If they happen to miss that great cabinet meeting, how will they know that there won't be any expansion of gaming through relocation of licences?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** The intent of the piece of legislation is to set the parameters of how the gaming sector in British Columbia will be managed. There's not the intent for the legislation to bind future governments by policy. Policy is set by cabinets and by the government of the day. The policy that exists today is pretty clear. There's no expansion of gaming in British Columbia.

In January we said there were seven casinos in British Columbia that did not have slots. We said we felt that two of those had gone significantly down the road to make an investment and move towards relocation, and they should be allowed to continue down that road. The two others that didn't have their full complement of slot machines, who were looking to relocate and had gone significantly down the road, should be allowed to relocate. The other five would not be allowed to relocate, unless at some point in the future they could prove to us that they'd made significant

steps we weren't aware of as a government and may have been in some situation for us to look at relocation.

The fact of the matter is that we're not relocating every casino without slots in British Columbia to a slot-friendly community. That's the policy. That's the policy of the government, and that will be the policy as long as this government is government.

**J. MacPhail:** It will be interesting to see how people can monitor that. I'm sure the minister will keep the public informed on how he's enforcing that policy.

Did the minister meet with the city of Vancouver relating to the Gaming Act and expansion of gaming and revenue-sharing on March 20?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I don't have my schedule in front of me, but I did meet with the mayor of Vancouver with regard to some of the concerns their staff had put forward and dealt with those concerns at that time. Frankly, I think most of the concerns were administrative rather than legislative.

[1635]

**J. MacPhail:** We could save a lot of time then, if the minister would just update me. I won't bother to ask the questions on behalf of the city of Vancouver, my riding. They had concerns about expansion of gaming. They're a non-slot community. They also had concerns that the legislation was silent on honouring the memorandum of agreement from 1999, the revenue-sharing agreement between the Union of B.C. Municipalities and the provincial government. The minister can just tell me. Those were the two questions they discussed at their own council meeting, so the minister can just update me on what answers and reassurances he gave to the city of Vancouver.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** With regards to the slots, frankly, the mayor was told that the policy existed as it had existed with the previous government, that we will not at any time force slot machines on a local government that doesn't want them. That would be their call.

With regards to the expansion or the issue around UBCM and the memorandum of understanding, that's still in place. With regards to the city of Vancouver on the revenue-sharing, they have a 20-year contract. There are nine years to run, with a ten-year renewal. We felt we didn't have to put that in legislation. That is part of the management of gaming, and I assured the mayor that contract was still in place.

**J. MacPhail:** Just to be clear. The UBCM memorandum of agreement with the provincial government on revenue-sharing, signed in 1999, remains in full force and effect?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** That's correct.

**J. MacPhail:** The other concern, then, that the minister said was addressed was that the council had concerns that under the government's proposed Gaming



Control Act, municipal consent for changes to gaming activities was only required in cases of substantial change to the type or extent of casino gaming. They were concerned that the act didn't define what "substantial" was. Could the minister tell me what reassurances were given and how they were received?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I think we've covered off local government approval in section 19(1), but for the member, it is basically that a substantial change is "to use or operate a facility, other than is permitted under section 18(2), as a gaming facility, relocate an existing gaming facility or substantially change the type or extent of lottery schemes or horse racing at a gaming facility, unless the Lottery Corporation first receives approval, in the prescribed form and manner, of the municipality, regional district or first nation that has authority over the land use planning of the place...."

That's what I referred the mayor to. They seemed comfortable with that. It's very clear that consultation has to take place before anything can happen. Obviously, with the way we've structured it, we're not looking at substantial change taking place in the sector, with the exception of those that we felt we had some responsibility to because of the process which they had entered into before the election of 2001.

**The Chair:** I note we are dealing primarily with sections 18 and 19 now. Does the member have a question in respect of section 13?

**J. MacPhail:** Yes, Mr. Chair, I note that too. I will ask my questions on that matter further when we get to sections 18 and 19. I'm just going to go back to the issue of revenue-sharing now.

Well, I'm reassured that the minister has said that the memorandum of agreement between UBCM and the provincial government dealing with revenue-sharing from gaming from 1999 remains in full force and effect. I'm sure that will reassure my municipality as well as other municipalities.

I'll save my other questions for further sections.

[1640]

Sections 13 to 17 inclusive approved.

On section 18.

**J. MacPhail:** Could the minister please advise me what dispute resolution mechanism there is when there is disagreement about location, relocation or substantial change?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** My understanding is that we require it in law and that it's to be worked out by the corporation, the UBCM and regulation.

**J. MacPhail:** Sorry, Mr. Chair. I note, again, that in section 21 — and I'm not there yet — it says dispute resolution as to the location or relocation of gaming facility. I think that meant when an individual objects

to the location. Is the minister saying that it will be by regulation if a municipality disagrees with the application of what substantial change is and their input? It's by regulation that that dispute resolution mechanism will be set up?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** The dispute resolution that's described in section 21 actually deals with a neighbouring municipality that has a dispute over one being relocated in a municipality next to them. We're putting it in law that that has to occur. The dispute mechanism will be defined by the parties. I think that's the explanation for the member. I'm trying to bounce back between your relocation and substantial change and over to your dispute mechanism. I just want to make sure which one we want to talk about first.

**J. MacPhail:** I read section 21 the way the minister has described. What I'm asking for is a dispute resolution that is between a municipality and the provincial government that may involve a municipality saying: "Hey, whoa. Wait a minute. That's expansion of gaming that we don't want and we have no control over." That would be around the minister allowing for a licence that he would determine is not of a substantial change, and the municipality may say it is of a substantial change. What dispute resolution is there for the municipality and/or the provincial government with the municipality?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** Under section 19, basically, by law the municipality has a veto power, which means we can't relocate a facility within their region or first nation unless we first receive their approval in the prescribed form. I think we pretty well have covered that in law. There is no dispute mechanism, because we just can't do it unless we have an agreement.

Section 18 approved.

On section 19.

**M. Hunter:** I do have a question for the minister with respect to the term that appears in this section and in some subsequent sections: first nation. Could the minister explain to me what a first nation is in the context of this legislation?

[1645]

**Hon. R. Coleman:** First of all, it's the commonly used definition. It refers, basically, to first nations that had the land use planning over their lands, just like any municipality who should be consulted for input if it's either going in an adjacent municipality or something's being relocated or located in their municipality. This section would also preclude that relocation taking place by law without their permission.

Then section 21, relative to a neighbouring municipality, would mean that they would have input if they didn't want that. They would have that input just like any other municipality.

**M. Hunter:** That's helpful, but it leads me to other questions.

I understand what we're trying to do in this legislation, and I understand where the authority of a municipality or a regional district is derived. They are derived from statutes.

First nation is a commonly used definition. But I think it's important, if we're relying on first nations to participate in decisions with respect to location or relocation of gaming facilities, that I at least need to understand: what authority do these first nations have? From what legislation is that authority derived, and what institutions allow the first nations community to make those decisions on their behalf?

I want to be sure that we are in fact referring in this legislation to a body politic and a legal institution, not just a collection of individuals who happen to be first nations, which in the research I've done on other pieces of legislation seems to be pretty loose. Here I think we're talking about a very important public policy initiative, and I'd like to understand what the authorities of these first nations are and where they are derived in the mind of the minister, if they're going to have a say in very important aspects of our gaming policy.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I think it is very clear. It says: "...first nation that has authority over land use planning at the place where...." And then it goes on to the subsections where a location may take place. I think that's pretty clear.

It's not as broad as the member described, because we're dealing with actual land use planning that they have the authority for on a prescribed piece of property either in the municipality where the relocation is taking place or in the neighbouring municipality as we go to the next section. Somebody may want to relocate next door.

Obviously, there's not going to be a whole mess of relocations under this government. The fact of the matter is that when you define it, whether it be the municipality or regional district or first nation that has authority over land use planning, I think you have it covered.

**M. Hunter:** Would it be fair, then, to interpret the phrase in 19(1)(a), "first nation that has authority over land use" as currently today, without any jeopardy being suggested with respect to interpretations of future authorities that first nations might have that the only first nation governance that could currently act in this capacity would be a band council under the authority of the Indian Act? Is that a fair interpretation?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** The authority over land use planning is one of those ever-evolving things. To draw that parallel and draw it backward to other.... You could have two municipalities decide to amalgamate and become one, and now have the authority under a specific council instead of two councils. The same thing could happen relative to lands.

Let's be clear. This affects approval for gaming facilities that are coming in and being established in a community. It's not with respect to ones that already exist within communities. So this is to do with the future and the present. I don't think you can bind the future, because you don't know what the land base will be — that people will have authority for land use planning over 15 or 20 years from now. What it comes down to is that you have to have the authority of the land use planning in order to engage in this process.

**M. Hunter:** I don't want the minister to misinterpret my question. What I asked was: right here today, if this act were in force, would the first nation be limited currently to a group of aboriginal people who had authority to make such decisions on land use, which I understand to be only those band councils authorized under the Indian Act? That's my question today, and it's without prejudice, of course, to future developments and future governance arrangements.

I just need to understand what the term "first nation" means. And if it means, here today, a band council under the Indian Act, then I understand. If it's something else, I need to understand that too.

[1650]

**Hon. R. Coleman:** That was my understanding when I checked with our drafters.

Sections 19 to 29 inclusive approved.

On section 30.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I move the amendment to section 30(2) that sits under my name on the order paper.

[SECTION 30, by deleting the proposed subsection (2) and substituting the following:

(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council, by order, may delegate to the general manager the discretion under subsection (1) to license persons to conduct and manage gaming events in British Columbia.]

Amendment approved.

Section 30 as amended approved.

Sections 31 to 40 inclusive approved.

On section 41.

**J. MacPhail:** This is a section that deals with the ability of the corporation to award grants to eligible organizations. This is the opportunity for the minister and me to discuss what was a commitment to give at least \$125 million annually to eligible charities from gaming revenue.

Now, in the fall of last year — it could have been at the cabinet meeting that I had taped; I'll go back and revisit it tonight — the Solicitor General announced that any charity control of gaming would be gone and that the Lottery Corporation was taking over bingo.

Many charitable organizations offered bingo gaming. Then, of course, the Lottery Corporation expanded electronic bingo, and the charities felt that that hurt them. The charities that were eligible for sharing in that \$125 million were very concerned that the government would not continue to pay those grants to the charitable organizations.

What conversations has the minister had with charitable organizations regarding this act? I note that the charities said they were not consulted on this act. What reassurances has the Solicitor General given to charities that they will continue to get their minimum \$125 million worth of grants from gaming?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** First of all, I met with the B.C. Association for Charitable Gaming on Saturday. I talked to them about the issues in and around gaming. They were quite happy with the changes that we've made. My staff have also met, as I have, with the B.C. Bingo Council early on in this process. A number of things that were done were done for the benefit of charities, not for the disadvantage of charities.

The concern we had, after looking at the entire structure of gaming last summer, was that the \$125 million the member refers to was actually broken up into two blocks of money. One is a substantial amount of money which just goes out in what we call the facility level guarantee or the top-up to bingo halls, basically guaranteeing to charities a guaranteed profit whether an operation is viable or not — a subsidy to bingo halls. The second part of it went into a program called direct access, which was a program for granting that groups could apply to.

Our hope, as we move forward, will be that by having the corporation having some seamless management within the gaming sector and bringing a high level of professionalism to its management, we can actually reduce the amount of money that has to go into the top-up into bingos over time, as we actually look at how the sector should be operated. If the member were aware of my estimates, she would know that in my budget I have retained all the money for the charities for this year.

**J. MacPhail:** At the conclusion of the meeting this past Saturday, was the association satisfied?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I would say that they were. I guess you have to gauge it by.... I gave a speech to the organization, and I did a question-and-answer for a substantial amount of time. I actually put them well over time and dealt with all their questions in a forthright manner. After that, the acting director of the gaming policy enforcement branch, Derek Sturko, who's to my left — I should have introduced him earlier — also spoke to the group and took questions. As well, the president of the B.C. Lottery Corporation, Vic Poleschuk, did.

[1655]

The feedback I've gotten from the organization, from the executive director and people who were at the

meeting, is that they were quite pleased that somebody had finally woken up and understood the needs of charity relative to how they can spend their money, how they can do things in their community and how in the long term we can build a program together for these funds so that they would apply to them in addition to what some of those funds have been applied to in the past — things like capital projects.

I think we're going to have a very long-term, successful working relationship with the charities to make sure we get maximum use of the dollars back in the community.

Sections 41 to 82 inclusive approved.

On section 83.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I move the amendment to section 83(1) standing under my name on the order paper.

[SECTION 83 (1), in each of the proposed paragraphs (a) and (b) by deleting "money derived from a lottery scheme or horse racing" and substituting "money derived from a lottery scheme or horse racing or received as a grant under section 41 (1),".]

Amendment approved.

Section 83 as amended approved.

Sections 84 to 88 inclusive approved.

On section 89.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I move the amendment to section 89 standing under my name on the order paper.

[SECTION 89, by deleting the proposed subsection (3) and substituting the following:

(3) A person must not sell, offer for sale, purchase for resale, or do anything in furtherance of selling, offering for sale or purchasing for resale, any lottery ticket to a minor, unless the person is a licensee acting under conditions of the licence that are prescribed under section 105 (1) (b).]

Amendment approved.

Section 89 as amended approved.

On section 90.

**L. Mayencourt:** Could the minister confirm that the intention of section 90 is to provide a fully licensed environment so that British Columbia can benefit from the full and active involvement of private sector in the resale of lottery products owned by the B.C. Lottery Corp?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** Thank you to the member for being quick off the mark. I think it would be appropriate if I move the amendment to section 90, because it actually clarifies the member's concern relative to or-

ganization outside the Lottery Corp being licensed to sell lottery tickets in B.C.

I move the amendment that's on the order paper now.

[SECTION 90, by deleting the proposed section 90 and substituting the following:

Unauthorized sale of lottery tickets prohibited

90 A person must not sell, offer for sale, purchase for resale, or do anything in furtherance of selling, offering for sale or purchasing for resale, any lottery ticket, whether it originates inside or outside of British Columbia, unless the person is

(a) the lottery corporation,

(b) a person authorized by the lottery corporation, or

(c) a licensee acting under conditions of the licence that are prescribed under section 105 (1) (b).]

Amendment approved.

On section 90 as amended.

**L. Mayencourt:** I wonder if the minister could please talk for a moment about that amendment and what it allows people to do. Also, if the intention is to allow for others to resell those lottery products, will there be some sort of consultation with those reputable firms that do that business so that they can develop regulations that will allow them to do their job and meet the regulations that the ministry needs to put forward?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** This has been one of those issues this member has spent some time with me on.

This amendment allows for the organizations that are presently doing it in British Columbia, under licence by us, to continue to sell product from outside British Columbia — their lottery tickets. Basically, as we develop regulations we will sit down with those organizations, set up the licensing process for them so that they continue the business that they're doing today.

Section 90 as amended approved.

Sections 91 to 104 inclusive approved.

On section 105.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I'd like to move the amendment to section 105(1)(u), which adds the regulatory power of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to define "financial interest," to be amended.

[SECTION 105, in the proposed subsection (1) by adding the following paragraph:

(u) defining "financial interest" for the purposes of the definition of "associate" in section 1 (1).]

Amendment approved.

Section 105 as amended approved.

On section 106.

[1700]

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I move the amendment to sections 106(1) and (2) as on the order paper.

[SECTION 106, by deleting the proposed subsections (1) and (2) and substituting the following:

(1) Each of the Provincial Secretary and Minister of Government Services, the Attorney General and the Public Gaming Control Branch is conclusively deemed to have been at all times between May 27, 1986 and the end of March 31, 1987, under a delegation made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, an authority having the discretion under section 30 to license persons to conduct and manage gaming events in British Columbia.

(2) The British Columbia Gaming Commission is conclusively deemed to have been at all times between March 31, 1987 and the end of January 11, 2002, under a delegation made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, an authority having the discretion under section 30 to license persons to conduct and manage gaming events in British Columbia.]

Amendment approved.

Section 106 as amended approved.

Sections 107 to 112 inclusive approved.

On section 113.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I'd like to move the addition of section 113(1), which repeals the Pacific Racing Association Act, as one of the repeals brought on by this act:

[SECTION 113.1, by adding the following section:  
113.1 The Pacific Racing Association Act, S.B.C. 1993, c. 60, is repealed.]

Amendment approved.

Section 113 as amended approved.

Sections 114 to 121 inclusive approved.

Title approved.

**Hon. R. Coleman:** I move that the committee rise and report the bill complete with amendments.

Motion approved.

The committee rose at 5:01 p.m.

The House resumed; Mr. Speaker in the chair.

### Reporting of Bills

Bill 6, Gaming Control Act, reported complete with amendments.

### Third Reading of Bills

**Mr. Speaker:** When shall the bill be read a third time?

**Hon. R. Coleman:** By leave, now, Mr. Speaker.

Leave granted.

Bill 6, Gaming Control Act, read a third time and passed.

**Hon. C. Hansen:** I call second reading of Bill 18.

### Second Reading of Bills

#### HEALTH SERVICES STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

**Hon. C. Hansen:** I move second reading of Bill 18.

This bill makes several minor amendments to the Hospital Insurance Act and the Medicare Protection Act. It is our government's goal to improve the delivery and management of health services in British Columbia, and this bill is an important part of that initiative.

Mr. Speaker, let me first deal with the proposed changes this bill will make to the Hospital Insurance Act.

Currently, the Hospital Insurance Act has rigid eligibility requirements that must be met by patients if they are to receive general hospital services in British Columbia. To be eligible to receive care in a hospital, patients must meet a residency requirement and have to serve a waiting period. However, the criteria that patients must meet if they are to receive medical care in the office of a physician or other health care practitioner are much more flexible. Under the Medicare Protection Act, the Medical Services Commission can grant coverage to individuals who would not otherwise be eligible for medical services — for example, individuals who are close to meeting residency requirements.

This leads to an inconsistency. As it stands right now in British Columbia, some patients with valid CareCards may be able to obtain health care benefits at the office of a physician or health care practitioner but could find themselves classified as ineligible for care in one of our hospitals. The amendment I am proposing today ensures consistent eligibility requirements for patients seeking care either in a hospital setting or in a physician's office.

As a result of this change to the Hospital Insurance Act, a single body, the Medical Services Commission, governed by a single set of regulations will determine questions of eligibility and the effective date of coverage for patients.

[1705]

The other amendments included in this bill pertain to minor changes to the Medicare Protection Act. Three amendments relate to the administration of the Medical Services Plan, and three other changes concern the powers of the Medical Services Commission, the tripartite body that is responsible for the administration of the Medical Services Plan.

In regard to the changes that affect the plan itself, currently people on premium assistance are entitled to coverage for supplemental services under the Medical Services Plan to a maximum of ten visits per year. However, in some cases, service providers charge more for these services than is covered under the Medical Services Plan. The amendment I am proposing will

permit private insurance companies to provide coverage to patients for the difference in cost.

Another amendment will allow non-medical staff to inspect medical records for the purposes of adjudicating claims. Under the existing legislation, only medical practitioners are supposed to inspect medical reports. However, auditors, rather than physicians, are often the ones responsible for ensuring claims made to the Medical Services Plan are appropriate, and in some cases they must examine medical or clinical records to process claims. This amendment would provide express authority for non-medical staff to review medical records when necessary. However, it should be mentioned that an inspection of medical reports is only required in about 2 percent of claims, and only a portion of the patient's medical record is in fact required.

The next change deals with the configuration of the Medical and Health Care Services Appeal Board. Currently, three board members must be appointed to each panel to render decisions on appeals related to rulings made by the Medical Services Commission, such as determining the eligibility of an MSP beneficiary. However, some matters forwarded to the appeal board are not considered complex enough to warrant three members to render a decision. The proposed amendment will improve the efficiency of the Medical and Health Care Services Appeal Board by allowing panels of one person for minor issues.

Now, in relation to the three amendments affecting the Medical Services Commission, the first will repeal legislation that allows the commission to de-enrol physicians from the Medical Services Plan at age 75. Legislation to de-enrol physicians at age 75 was proclaimed in January of 1998 in keeping with the former government's efforts to implement a physician supply plan, a plan that was ultimately struck down by the courts in September of 1999.

This proposed amendment would allow practitioners over the age of 75 to continue to practise, a move that has the support of both the Medical Services Commission and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. There is also concern that forced de-enrolment could be challenged in the courts as a Charter violation.

Another amendment will allow the Medical Services Commission to order interest charges on inappropriate or fraudulent billing by medical practitioners retroactive to the billing date. Currently, if a physician has been found making fraudulent or inappropriate claims, interest is only charged on the amount owing after the official repayment order has been issued.

The final amendment will limit the time an MSP beneficiary has to proceed with an appeal of a decision by the Medical Services Commission to suspend or terminate benefits. Currently, a decision to suspend or terminate MSP benefits is stayed upon appeal, and if a beneficiary does not pursue an appeal in a timely manner, they continue to receive benefits even if they may ultimately be found to be ineligible. This amendment will allow the appeal board to dismiss an appeal if it has not been acted upon within 12 months of the original decision.

Mr. Speaker, these minor amendments will assist our government in its goal to improve delivery and management of health services in British Columbia. It gives me great pleasure to move second reading.

Motion approved.

**Hon. C. Hansen:** I move that the bill be referred to a Committee of the Whole House for consideration at the next sitting of the House.

Bill 18, Health Services Statutes Amendment Act, 2002, 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. C. Hansen:** I call second reading on Bill 19.  
[1710]

#### HEALTH PLANNING STATUTES AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

**Hon. S. Hawkins:** Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 19 be now read a second time.

Bill 19 amends a number of acts. The acts affected are the Name Act, the Health Professions Act, the Health Emergency Act, the Hearing Aid Act, the Seniors Advisory Council Act, the Survivorship and Pre-emption of Death Act and the Vital Statistics Act.

The proposed amendments to these seven acts will strengthen public safety, improve the governance of health professions, modernize or eliminate outdated regulations and use our resources more efficiently. All the savings realized for making these changes will be directed to protecting patient care.

The first amendment I would like to deal with pertains to the Name Act. The amendment I'm proposing to the Name Act will ensure that people with criminal records cannot adopt a new identity without notice to police agencies. The current legislation and process for a legal name change do not adequately protect public safety. Police are not notified when a person with a criminal record changes their legal identity. The current legislation requires applicants only to publish their intent to change their name in a newspaper, in the *B.C. Gazette*. Police then have to scan classified ads on a regular basis to be alerted to the possibility of a change of name by a criminal.

The amendment I'm proposing will require all adult applicants seeking a legal name change to also provide documentation for a criminal record check. Upon approving that name change, the Vital Statistics Agency will forward the information to the RCMP who will check it against the national database of criminal records, ensuring that criminals do not slip through the process undetected.

This legislation will make British Columbia one of the first provinces in Canada to enhance public safety by ensuring that police are notified when people with criminal records change their name. I can also reassure the public that their personal information will be pro-

TECTED. They will submit their authorization for a criminal record check in a sealed envelope that will not be opened by the Vital Statistics Agency.

This bill also introduces amendments to the Health Professions Act to eliminate the Health Professions Council in favour of a more streamlined and cost-effective process. The Health Professions Council is an arm's-length advisory body established in 1991 to investigate applications by practitioner groups seeking designation as a health profession. It also considers any matters referred by the ministry involving any health profession.

During the last ten years the council has reviewed applications by more than 20 practitioner groups and has largely completed its work. In March 2001 the council released its 1,400-page report titled *Safe Choices: A New Model for Regulating Health Professions in British Columbia*, detailing its findings and recommendations. With the completion of the remaining work, the role of the council can be assumed by the Ministry of Health Planning. We believe it would now be more cost-effective to shift this responsibility and work to the Ministry of Health Planning.

This bill also makes changes to the Health Emergency Act that will dissolve the Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board and will establish a new college that regulates emergency medical assistants. The majority of emergency medical assistants are employed by the province through the B.C. Ambulance Service. However some, referred to as first responders, are employed by police and fire departments.

The creation of a new college of emergency medical assistants, which will be established pursuant to the Health Professions Act, will strengthen the emergency medical assistants profession with a dedicated, full-time, self-regulating college, giving emergency medical assistants the authority to effectively regulate their own profession. The college structure will be particularly beneficial in ensuring consistent standards and appropriate accountability of emergency medical assistants and will give emergency medical assistants equal regulatory status with other health professions.

At present, the cost of registering emergency medical assistants is absorbed by government. In future, emergency medical assistants will be required to pay an annual registration fee.

The Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board is currently composed of three members appointed by order-in-council. To streamline the transition, the ministry has asked the existing board members to sit on the new college board. Additionally, the work of the licensing board is presently supported by a registrar and five administrative staff. The staff will be transferred to the new college under the same terms and conditions of employment to which they presently are subject.

Bill 19 also includes a provision to repeal the Hearing Aid Act, which will eliminate the current Board of Hearing Aid Dealers and Consultants. This board has regulated and licensed hearing aid dealers. As with the emergency medical assistants, hearing aid dealers and

consultants will be regulated in the future under the Health Professions Act.

[1715]

The new governance structure will be consistent with governance of other health professionals. To ensure consumer protection, a committee will be established within the new structure to resolve any consumer complaints. Consumer complaints may also be taken to the Ministry of Solicitor General.

Also as part of Bill 19, this government is repealing the Seniors Advisory Council Act. This repeal will eliminate the Seniors Advisory Council. This council consists of a chair and about 14 members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council for a term of up to three years. By repealing the act and disbanding the council, we will eliminate government costs associated with staff and administrative support for the council.

The Seniors Advisory Council was established before the creation of the Minister of State for Intermediate, Long Term and Home Care, who now acts as a voice at the cabinet table on issues that affect seniors. To ensure that seniors' concerns are heard, our government has created a position in the Ministry of Health Planning for a special adviser responsible for seniors' concerns in the ministry. The adviser will work with all four Health ministers, including the Minister of State for Intermediate, Long Term and Home Care, as well as with other seniors groups.

We will continue to seek advice and input from major provincial seniors organizations and provincial centres on aging at the University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University. We will also continue to listen to seniors' interests and current concerns, represented by many groups who advocate on behalf of seniors across the province.

This bill will also amend both the Survivorship and Presumption of Death Act and the Vital Statistics Act. The amendments will introduce a simplified process for families and executors who are required to conclude the personal and business affairs of a person who is presumed dead but whose body can't be found. In this circumstance the families must ask the B.C. Supreme Court to find that their loved one is legally dead and issue a presumption-of-death order.

The current legislation does not allow the Vital Statistics Agency to register the death or issue a death certificate in these circumstances. Without a death certificate, the family or executor is required to present the court order as they go about concluding the person's affairs. Due to their uncommon nature, use of these court orders requires considerable explanation by the family and executor.

These amendments harmonize the registration of presumption-of-death orders with regular death registration processes. Families with a presumption-of-death order from the court will be able to register the death of their loved one and receive a death certificate. Although the circumstance is uncommon, one can imagine that a large natural disaster could result in a large number of missing persons whose bodies are not recovered.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a further amendment to the Vital Statistics Act will see fathers whose paternity has been declared by the courts have their particular information registered on their child's birth registration. Currently, mothers have in effect a veto power over whether or not a father's name is included on a child's birth certificate. A mother can deny a father's desire to have his name and information included. This can lead to quite a vexing situation for the father in some circumstances concerning a child's custody. For instance, a father may wish to travel out of the country with his child, and although the father has legal custody of the child, he might find it difficult, particularly in this day and age of heightened security, to transport the child across the border. This amendment will allow the director of vital statistics to alter a child's birth registration to include information about the father where there is a court order declaring the child's paternity, unless the court orders that this information not be included.

As well, a redundant requirement for the director of vital statistics to provide a list of recent deaths to the district registrar of voters and to local government officers will be repealed from the Vital Statistics Act. The chief electoral officer already performs this duty.

All these amendments will ensure that all health- and safety-related acts are efficient and up to date and that they genuinely meet the needs of British Columbians. I will conclude my comments. I understand there are other members that wish to speak to this.

[1720]

**J. MacPhail:** I just want to make note for the minister of areas of concern, areas of exploration that I will have during committee stage, so that she can be prepared. I wish to explore the new move to a different model to replace the Health Professions Council. I also will have questions about the new college for emergency medical assistants and on the Seniors Advisory Council. Those are the areas that I will be exploring. It's more appropriate to explore them in detail during committee stage, which I will do in those three particular areas.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question is second reading of Bill 19.

Motion approved.

**Hon. S. Hawkins:** 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 19, Health Planning Statutes Amendment Act, 2002, 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. Collins:** I know that the little House has about 25 minutes or so left of debate in the estimates,

so I would just move this House recess until about 5:45 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** This House will stand in recess until a quarter to six.

The House recessed from 5:21 p.m. to 5:46 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the chair.]

Committee of Supply A, having reported progress, was granted leave to sit again.

Hon. G. Collins moved adjournment of the House.

Motion approved.

The House adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

## PROCEEDINGS IN THE DOUGLAS FIR ROOM

### Committee of Supply

The House in Committee of Supply A; G. Trumper in the chair.

The committee met at 2:48 p.m.

#### ESTIMATES: MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT (continued)

On vote 18: ministry operations, \$1,558,430,000 (continued).

**J. Kwan:** Earlier I was asking questions of the minister regarding foster care issues. We were just getting into some of the changes that were brought forward around inconsistencies relating to foster care support.

Could the minister please advise the amounts to the foster parent payment structure? What are the rates right now for one child in a level 1, level 2 and level 3 foster home? What is the rate for two children in the respective levels, and then that in comparison to the changes that have taken place?

[1450]

**Hon. G. Hogg:** For restricted family care, ages zero to 11, the rate is \$701.55 a month; for ages 12 through 19, it's \$805.68. For regular family care for ages up to 11, it's \$701.55 and \$805.68 for ages 12 through 19. For level 1 family care, ages up to 11, it's \$1,059.57 per month and, ages 12 through 19, \$1,163.70 per month. For level 2, one child, it's \$1,741.95 up to age 11 and \$1,846.08 up to age 19. For level 3, ages up to 11, \$2,418.21 and, ages 12 through 19, \$2,522.34.

I'll do some math to figure it out, but the request of the member is the difference in terms of the inequities.

In the application of using level 2, as an example, in some areas of the province the \$1,846.08 for ages 12 through 19 has been applied for the first child, the second child and the third child placed in the home, whereas the agreement which was developed in 1992 said there was a service rate in existence that existed as part of the payment for the first child, and because the service rate was met and there was a diminishing need for the core services to be provided, the rate for the second child was less, as with the third child. That was implemented in 1992 and, over the past number of years, has not been applied consistently. The strategy now is to bring that into consistency across the province to ensure that everyone is receiving the rates as per the policy. That does mean, for some people, I believe, in the neighbourhood of \$600....

We can get all of those figures and get those to the member. I know I have seen a sheet with all of those laid out on it. We just don't seem to have it with us at this time. We could add that and have that provided to the member.

[1455]

**J. Kwan:** The reason why I ask is it's been brought to my attention by members of the community that they are concerned around a reduction in the rates for foster care children and their families. One example was given to me. I want to determine the accuracy of this information, so it would be helpful to receive that information from the minister. The example provided to me was currently in a level 3 home with two children, receiving \$1,700 a month. They'll see a cut of \$800, and a level 3 home with two children will now only receive \$900. I'd like to receive that information from the minister so I can check on the rates issue and the information that's been provided to me to determine its accuracy and, of course, to make sure, from an opposition point of view, that children who are in foster care actually do receive adequate care in terms of support from government — so that those families have the opportunity to ensure the rights of children are protected and that there are opportunities to flourish in the future and that those opportunities are afforded to them.

The stated goal in the service plan is to: "Maximize the use of family foster care." Does the minister have any concerns with respect to the changes and how these changes would impact the ministry's attempt to accomplish this goal?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** I think, as the member has appropriately pointed out, foster care is one of.... If a child is not going to be living within the constellation of their own family, foster care can best replicate the family constellation, can come closest to replicating that, far closer than an institutional or group home or other models that we deal with. Clearly, that's the model we want to look at. We want to be able to move as many children as possible, who might be in other forms of care, into that model and/or back to their natural family if at all possible.



Do we have concerns about that? Certainly, we have to be continually watching and monitoring the issues that occur as we develop that. I pointed out in the discussions this morning that in restructuring that has happened in some other jurisdictions, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children that have come into care. Certainly, that's an issue and a concern for us, but we do want to ensure that those children who do come into care have the most appropriate, effective and responsive service possible. Foster care is the one that gives us the best opportunity for the most positive outcomes for them.

**J. Kwan:** My question was: how will the changes that are being brought forward by the ministry affect this goal? How will these changes assist the ministry to accomplish this goal?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** The strategies of the ministry in fact will place greater emphasis and greater focus upon foster care and the services that foster care and foster parents provide for children across this province. A part of our strategy sees and places greater emphasis and impact on that. That also means that the ministry must continue to provide the supports that foster parents require, the training that they require and the compensation for the services they provide.

We do provide amongst the very best compensation packages for foster parents that exist in Canada. We do provide the best training and support system for them. As we move into these strategies and changes, we will have to continually look at family recruitment and retention strategies that exist for foster parents. We have to continue to look at, manage and improve our foster parents programs.

There have been some concerns with respect to the role of B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations. Some foster parents have expressed that they do not feel they are being adequately represented by that organization. As we move towards a regionalized model, we hope we are going to be able to also move to a model that will ensure there are adequate and consistent supports for foster parents across this province. Clearly, they're an integral part of every bit of service that is provided to children, and we have to ensure they have the supports they need so that they can provide the supports that children need.

[1500]

**J. Kwan:** The concern, of course, is that the hopes of the association, of the foster parents, would be for the rates to increase rather than to decrease in terms of addressing the issue of inconsistencies. Given that it's going the other way, the fear I have, of course, is that fewer and fewer people would enter into the foster parenting program. If that happens, the ministry's efforts would be further jeopardized. I worry about what the actual outcome would be when instead of trying to attract more people into the system to be foster parents, you actually drive them away. They feel there are in-

sufficient resources to do the work they need to do as foster parents.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development is also proposing to move toward bed-specific contracts, a move that the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations is not sanctioning. In fact, they are vehemently opposed to this move. Again, to the minister, why is the Ministry of Children and Family Development moving in this direction when foster parents and their associations are not supportive of this change?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** There are two forms of payment which the member alludes to. One is bed-specific, and the other is child-specific. The bed-specific model is more equitable. It is one that doesn't present a number of the large inequities that can start to develop as one enters into a child-specific model.

The B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations was part of the policy, part of developing the model we have. They saw the model as being equitable and consistent. The member made reference to concerns about being able to raise everyone to a new level rather than appropriately and adequately applying the policy that was in existence.

I know the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations was a part of the development of the policy. It was well aware of the bed-specific model and what existed for it. Child-specific was meant to deal with traumatic anomalies in terms of issues. Over the past number of years, therefore, the policy has not been applied appropriately and consistently across the province. By moving to a more bed-specific model, we will have more of the consistencies that were intended in the original policy.

**J. Kwan:** According to the information I've received, the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations is actually not in support of the bed-specific contracts or of moving in that direction. That seems to be contrary to the minister's understanding with respect to this. I will certainly double-check this information with the federation, because my understanding is that they did not support this direction.

I was going to ask the minister whether there was consultation done with the federation and other stakeholders in this regard.

**Hon. G. Hogg:** There were a number of meetings held through the fall with David Young. I know I received reports from at least two or three of those meetings. It was my understanding that they had gone very well. In fact, there was media coverage stating that the foster parents were very pleased with the meetings which had taken place. These discussions took place, and they were well aware of the focus and direction the ministry was planning to take. It was my understanding that while they had concerns with some of them, there was not a dramatic concern.

**J. Kwan:** I have some of the information that highlights the concerns. In fact, I've got one document here

from the BCFFPA. The headline, right at the front of it, reads: "Not Sanctioned by BCFFPA!" It is with respect to the issue around changing contracts and the bed-specific contract. I actually have the information with me that states this. There seems to be a direct contradiction with respect to the minister's understanding and the information I have received in terms of their support for this.

Then there seems to be additional documentation here, which is newspaper reports around some of the concerns with respect to the changes in the foster care area. As an example, in one newspaper, the *Times Colonist*, the headline dated March 21, 2002, is: "Foster Care 'Hostage' Incensed at Pay Cuts."

[1505]

The documentation that I have received seems to indicate otherwise in terms of the support on these changes. I'd like to bring those matters to the minister's attention on the question around the discrepancy. Maybe the minister will look into the matter further. It seems to me that the association is not in support of these changes.

The *New Era* document states: "A B.C. Liberal government will work with foster parents to help them improve care." Instead, the Ministry of Children and Family Development has eliminated money for visits to counsellors, tutoring and respite care for families with special-needs foster children.

How do these changes fulfil the above-noted new-era promise?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** There has been a joint working committee with the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations, the Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents, the Federation of B.C. Youth In Care Networks and the ministry. They have been working at and looking at both equitable distribution and application of policies.

They have also been working at implementing new foster family recruitment and retention strategies, developing supports for foster parents based on evidence in the system-of-care document, implementing policy and standards for family-based treatment homes, implementing regional resource management plans and revising family care home agreements to accommodate service and payment changes.

There has been a joint working committee, and the ministry has been working with the service providers in an effort to make the most effective system that we can possibly have.

**J. Kwan:** My question to the minister, though, was in relation to cuts in funding in the areas of visits to counsellors, tutoring and respite care for families with special needs foster children. How do these changes help the minister achieve his new-era promise: "A B.C. Liberal government will work with foster parents to help them improve care"?

The cuts to these programs, in my estimation, do not help to improve care. They actually jeopardize the provision of support to foster children and their par-

ents. Therefore, it would appear to me that they put care at risk as opposed to improving it.

How do these cuts help?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** I obviously can't speak to specifics in terms of that. I'm not aware of the specific areas that the member may be referring to.

I am aware of the fact that the ministry has been trying to rationalize the services it provides in preparation for the move towards a community-based governance model. Services are being rationalized across the province with that intent in mind. It would be difficult for me to argue that a number of those services would not be of value at some point to children in foster care. As a former foster parent, I'm well aware of the types of supports and services that are often required in fostering.

There certainly has not been a blanket reduction or elimination of the types of programs the member is referring to. If it has occurred in one specific area, it may have been a region looking at, or trying to manage, some specific fiscal needs they may have had towards the end of the last fiscal year. Unless the member is able to give me some specifics on that, I wouldn't be able to provide anything further, other than to say that we are rationalizing. We are providing the services and trying to focus our resources and services in the ways that they will best be able to provide supports for foster parents and foster children.

[1510]

**J. Kwan:** My understanding is that funding for these programs — counsellors, tutoring, respite care for families with special needs, foster parents — is reduced and in some cases eliminated. According to the minister's understanding, is he advising I'm incorrect in that understanding and in fact, these programs are not being reduced and the funding is not being eliminated?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** We're perhaps dealing with different levels within the context of the service plan. We do show in our service plan a reduction of some of the funding to some of those services in future years. Those funding levels and/or reductions reflect our expectation of the reduction of the number of children coming into care.

Certainly, within the context of this budget year and the services being provided, counselling, tutoring and respite care are still an integral part of the services we do provide to foster parents.

**J. Kwan:** The assumption from the ministry is that the need for foster care or foster parents would reduce, and the need for the children in care would reduce. Therefore, the accompanying programs, and the demand for those programs, would reduce. I think that is what I heard from the minister. That is premised on the assumption that there are more foster parents who will come to the fore and make themselves available to be foster parents and also on the assumption that there

will be less children in need of foster parenting or in need of care.

There is a concern among foster parents, though, that the changes in funding to foster parents will result in fewer available foster homes, as parents realize they are unable to provide for children in their care because of fiscal constraints.

On what basis does the minister arrive at the assumption that the demand for services in the ministry would in fact be reduced? How did the ministry arrive at this assumption?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** We arrived at that assumption based on looking at historical data, looking at research that has occurred in other parts of the world and looking at what happened in this province over the past six years, when we've seen a 60 percent increase in the number of children in care.

By looking at those and by looking at national averages and determining the issues and the methods by which we were responding to risks, as they evidenced themselves in families and communities across this province, we believed we could respond to them more effectively and more appropriately within the context of the families that existed there.

That being the philosophical premise and the research based on that, we then looked at the presentation of some legislative changes, which we've now introduced to the House, and some proclamation of some pieces of legislation, which have not yet been proclaimed, but do exist within the act. Through those strategies, we believe we will be able to more effectively respond to the needs of children without necessarily having to take them into care.

**J. Kwan:** The concern, of course, is that with the government cuts in programs, not just in this area but in the Ministry of Human Resources, as people become more at risk and face more stresses, there may well be a higher demand for the ministry's services. I hope not. I really, sincerely hope not, but I suspect there may well be an increase in demand for the ministry services just because of circumstances in which people sometimes find themselves. Those are always difficult.

[1515]

In light of that, with the decrease in funding for the ministry and particularly in the foster parenting program and in the rates and so on, that may well impact the availability of foster parents coming forward and participating in these programs, which will ultimately, I think, impact everyone: the children, the ministry, the government and British Columbians as a whole. That could be detrimental to these children and to the overall thrust of the government's programming. I am concerned about that and concerned about these cuts and the ramifications that they could cause within the ministry.

The community, particularly one individual, has written a letter to the opposition caucus. This actually relates to the area of Human Resources, and we touched on this earlier today. This is a letter from

Donna Currie out in Abbotsford, who has written to the opposition. The letter reads as follows:

"My name is Donna Currie. I'm a single, divorced woman, aged 56. I'm raising an eight-year-old special needs child. I've raised two special needs children, both with mental illness, for 28 years. My grandson is the son of my daughter. She has a history of bipolar mental disorder. My grandson has lived with me since he was born. I have legal joint custody and guardianship, and my grandson is to legally reside with me.

"I'm on social assistance, and when I handed in my stubs today" — which was dated March 26, 2002 — "I asked the employee at the wicket about the cutbacks, and I was told that my file would be closed because I had legal guardianship and that a letter would be sent in the mail and appointments would be made with social workers.

"When I asked what I was going to do, she said I'd get child tax benefits. My benefit is \$207 per month, and it goes to my family. I'm the matriarch of my family. My children are disabled, with mental disorders. My panic and fear as I'm writing this letter is for my grandson.

"This is my story, but I write this for all of us grandparents that want the mere necessities and dignity for our grandchildren and to keep our families together."

I'm worried about this constituent because the implication of this letter is that when those dollars are taken away in terms of support from Human Resources, she may not be able to continue to provide support to her grandson financially, given her own personal circumstances within her own family unit. Therefore, it may cause her to have to seek the help of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. From that point of view, what can the ministry assist in, in ensuring that this individual has the opportunity to keep her family together and has the financial needs and supports met, so that she can provide the much-needed support to her grandson?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** Firstly, a small bit of clarification. The member firstly made reference to reductions in the schedule or the payments to foster parents. I just want to reinforce that, in fact, the policy and the procedures and the rate structure are exactly the same as they were a year ago. We have not made any changes to that. We are applying the policy correctly.

I, too, share the member's concern and worry about some of the impacts that the strategies that we're implementing may have. One of the concerns is around how we manage examples such as Ms. Currie and special needs children. One of the processes that we're putting in place, as we move down this process of change within the ministry, is that of individualized funding, that of looking at ways of providing supports for people such as Ms. Currie. While I don't know her circumstances specifically, I can say that as a concept, we believe in and want to move towards individualized funding models that may well be support for someone such as this individual.

[1520]

**J. Kwan:** I think this is one instance of one individual who's faced with a difficult situation because of the

changes to government programs and its funding and support to them. I recognize that this change comes from the Ministry of Human Resources, but it impacts on the children, which will ultimately have a domino effect to this minister and the work he's doing.

Then when we look at the rate changes.... I know the minister says there isn't a rate change, but the perception, of course, and the reality which some foster parents are faced with is that they have a rate change and that the dollars they formerly received from government to support children in foster-parenting situations have come down. This is in spite of the fact that the association has spoken in opposition to it and in spite of the fact that the association has also raised concerns to the minister, particularly on the issue of not sanctioning the bed-specific contracts.

The concern I have is that with all these changes, quite honestly, I don't know how the government will be able to meet its mandate of making sure foster parents will get the help they need to improve care and, ultimately, to ensure, enhance and optimize the outcome of the children who are in foster-parenting situations for their future. That's the context in which I raise these concerns.

The ministry service plan also indicates that it wishes to reduce the number of children in care. The number of children in care is driven by, of course, social and economic dysfunctions and is not necessarily a static number that could be raised or lowered on a whim. It's not one that one could lower or raise in isolation.

On March 4, 2002, the foster parents met with representatives of the BCGEU to discuss the possibility of forming a union for foster parents. The impetus to discuss the possibility of unionizing is driven by the frustration foster parents are feeling towards this government and the Minister of Children and Family Development. The spokesperson for the B.C. Federation of Foster Parent Associations, Kally Berlinger, acknowledges that there is widespread anger amongst foster parents because of the way the government is administering the cuts. She says that the government is "attempting to balance the budget on the backs of children." There is also concern that cuts to foster parent pay will "lead to instability for children and higher burnout rates for foster parents."

The minister has threatened that if foster parents unionize, they risk losing their tax-free status. Will the minister please advise on the accuracy of this statement? If indeed there are threats to foster parents on this issue, will the minister stop threatening foster parents with punitive actions if they seek unionization and guarantee that foster parents will not see their maintenance payments or their fee-for-service taxed?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** Firstly, I've made no such threats, nor do I ever intend to make any threats. Certainly, in a free and democratic society people have the right to organize in any fashion they see fit or wish to organize.

One of the media has talked to me about the issues, and it's my understanding that it's under the Employ-

ment Standards Act or the Labour Relations Code that contractors would have to move towards looking at becoming unionized. One of the risks associated with that is that they become known, therefore, as employees and/or workers. That is an issue. We do not want to see the situation evolve which would place the federal income tax exemption which currently exists for foster payments in jeopardy. As the member may know, there was some discussion about this a few years ago, and the federal government was looking at foster payments as taxable income. I believe it would be wrong, inappropriate and a hardship for foster parents and for the system if that were to happen.

[1525]

That was a question I was asked, and I explained as I best understood it the history that took place under the former government when those discussions came forward from the federal Income Tax Act, and my understanding of the Labour Relations Code and the Employment Standards Act and the impact they may have on that. That is a caution and a concern I have as we go through this process. Clearly, in terms of foster parents wanting to look at any type of organization — they're certainly free and able, and if they wish to — I have no issues or concerns about that other than ensuring that we focus on the best interests of foster children, ensuring that we don't get in place issues of seniority that may dictate where a child would have to be placed, as an example, which is a principle of many union agreements. I would certainly want to ensure that foster children are at the centre of that and that any decisions made reflect the best interests of the children of this province.

**J. Kwan:** Did I hear the minister correctly, then, that he does not support taxing foster parents in terms of the support they would receive, if they do move in the direction of unionization, and that the minister will work towards ensuring that the funds they receive would also not be taxable?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** I think that that certainly would be a concern. It is an issue for Revenue Canada. Some judges already count foster payment dollars in divorce actions and child support guidelines, so there are some practices in place which would suggest that there is some interest by Revenue Canada. Certainly, that is a caution, but I personally would not want to see that happen and would want to protect that. But as I say, there are some decisions made by courts already which suggest that that is an interest and is a direction that may well be taken.

**J. Kwan:** The *New Era* document has also made promises to families in B.C. which include targeting child care funding to help parents who need it the most and to increase child care choices for parents by encouraging the expansion of safe, affordable child care spaces. How is the Minister of Children and Family Development fulfilling these promises? Will child care be a service that the ministry provides to families re-

quiring support services? How much funding is targeted in this area?

**Hon. L. Reid:** In fact, the member may wish to address these questions to Minister Stephens, as child care does not fall within the realm of our current responsibility.

**J. Kwan:** Well, the issues, of course, relate in terms of children and early childhood development. That's been the trouble, actually, in all of these estimates. Where questions get raised, it gets referred to another minister. Then another minister refers it to another minister. The reality is that all of these matters relate. Child care support is related to early childhood development. They relate to the supports families need to ensure that the children are in a safe place, in a place where their rights can be protected and would be protected, in a place where they have every potential to maximize their future.

Child care choices for parents are important issues relative to the entire context of children and family development, so I'd like to ask the minister the question again. I hope the response wouldn't just be to go and talk to another minister, because the other understanding I have from this government in this new-era development is that ministers are supposed to be working across ministries and through the agencies. When your mandate is to ensure that children are protected and families have the services they need, then I would assume that the questions in this realm fall within the area of this ministry.

[1530]

**Hon. L. Reid:** Certainly, I have great empathy for the member opposite's sentiment. I do understand that this is a package. What I thought I would do is put on the record the programs that we have in place under the ministry in terms of the mandate I have under early childhood development, which may indeed flesh out a little bit of the question the member may wish to engage in as we proceed.

The member may well know that there are 271,000 children, age infancy to six years, in our province. These children, their parents, grandparents, caregivers — all of us — share this collective responsibility. Certainly, I have a special interest in this area as a parent, as a working mother: the challenges all of us face who have ever sought child care, who have ever looked for consistency across the process. There's no question it's an integrated discussion.

We are engaged in producing programming that will, I believe, result in healthy development, safe and nurturing homes, opportunity and promise for the future. This is our wish for all children. Research shows us that children's development from conception to age six is rapid and dramatic, and it affects lifelong learning, behaviour and health.

We know children's future success in school and as adults is largely dictated by the quality of emotional, physical, nutritional and intellectual care they receive

in the early years. Government believes this age group is so important to the future of this province that, indeed, our Premier put in place the first Minister of State for Early Childhood Development.

In this period of fiscal restraint, when many areas of government are experiencing program reductions and budget cuts, this government's continued commitment to putting children and families first is clear. We know that investing strategically in children's early years improves children's physical, behavioral and emotional outcomes. We also know it is fiscally prudent.

In a Vancouver Board of Trade report in 1999, Cleveland and Kashinsky cited there is at least a 2-to-1 economic payback when there is an investment in early childhood development. Many ministries in this government share responsibility for ensuring children's health and welfare: Children and Family Development, Education, Health Services, Health Planning, Human Resources and Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.

As Minister of State for Early Childhood Development, I am responsible for adopting, implementing and monitoring a cross-government, integrated early childhood development strategy, which speaks to the member's comment earlier. It absolutely is a package, and absolutely, it is a work in progress. We're determined to take the steps necessary to improve early childhood development.

I've heard and had discussions with my cabinet colleagues in the child-serving ministries, and they reviewed the many programs and services offered to children and families. I've spent time with cabinet ministers from across the land, federal and provincial, sharing ideas and opportunities for cooperation. In British Columbia, we are encouraging innovation in the delivery of early childhood development services.

By empowering families and communities, we will build a culture of learning and shared responsibility that promotes choice and accountability. It takes not only parents, brothers, sisters and grandparents; it takes the village to raise the child. In the words of Daniel Keating, it takes a child to raise a village. I don't know if the member opposite has had the opportunity to read the book preface by Clyde Hertzman, talking about the wealth of nations. It truly is a package. It is a joint undertaking that all of us share some responsibility for.

Strategic investments in the development and care of our youngest children are critical to our vision of building a province of responsible families living in safe, caring and inclusive communities. The Ministry of Children and Family Development core services review identifies six strategic shifts to guide the ministry on this new path. Three of those strategic shifts apply directly to early childhood development.

The first involves enabling communities to develop and deliver services with a consolidated, comprehensive, community-based service delivery system. We know social programs that are delivered locally and in ways that best reflect the community's needs and

strengths are most likely to achieve positive, effective results. We are supporting early childhood development initiatives that build the capacities of families and communities to do the things they do so well, to add value to the lives of their children and their families.

The second strategic shift addresses the need for evidence-based strategic investment in capacity- and resiliency-building. Investment in early childhood development is being clearly identified and benchmarked, so the progress toward these goals can be regularly and publicly accountable.

Under this model, resources will be deployed with an outcomes-based approach and with evaluation measures built in. These steps will ensure that investments in social and community-based health services are evidence-based, produce measurable results and empower vulnerable children, families and their communities towards real and positive change.

Our third strategic shift deals with capacity-building within aboriginal communities to deliver a full range of services with an emphasis on early childhood and family development.

Last fall, in my tour of northern British Columbia, I visited many remote communities. Many of these communities, because of their isolation, have experienced profound struggles with poverty and substance abuse. Many have seen their children removed from their communities. However, many are taking steps to rebuild in order to better support their families and to increase capacity and resiliency. There are many examples of success stories from these communities, but my most profound experience I will share with you.

It was when I visited the village of Yekooche. It's an incredible community story, where they reached out to government and asked for supports. We engaged in terms of working with that community, not imposing a set of parameters, not imposing a set of expectations, but working with that community to go forward and build on the issues they wished to address.

[1535]

They asked us to fund a dedicated social worker. We have put that in place. The worker is going to help in developing comprehensive plans of care. Members of the community have said this initiative has given them hope and faith where in the past there had been none.

You've heard the minister reference that 40 percent of the caseload of children in care are aboriginal. Only 5 percent of our province's population is aboriginal.

We now know that family supports are much more effective when delivered within the context of culture. The capacity of aboriginal families to parent their own children must be strengthened and honoured. Community leaders must be able to deliver comprehensive, integrated and culturally relevant programs to children and families both in urban communities and on reserve.

With the assistance of the ministry executive, I have developed a three-year plan to improve programs and services for early childhood development. The plan focuses on supporting and educating families, building

community capacity and empowering vulnerable children and families in their communities towards a real and positive change. The successful delivery of quality community-based, cost-effective services for children and their families requires the continued commitment and effort of all child-serving ministries and government. We are working together to develop a seamless, integrated service delivery structure that will enhance the well-being and healthy development of all children in British Columbia.

Also key to the success of this direction are partnerships with the federal government, other provinces and territories, academia, community groups and the private sector. In September of 2000 the federal, provincial and territorial governments reached an agreement to invest \$2.2 billion over five years for early childhood development in Canada. British Columbia is receiving \$291 million of those dollars over the next five years, to be shared among the child-serving ministries to implement programs for early childhood development.

The ministry is also undertaking partnerships with our universities and research facilities involved in early childhood development. One example is the working relationship the ministry has established with the University of British Columbia's human early learning partnership led by Dr. Clyde Hertzman. The human early learning partnership links universities, governments and community programs concerned with early childhood development, health and education for research purposes. We're providing \$2.5 million to this project, which will help us to find and understand the biological, familial and community factors, both positive and negative, that influence young children's ability to learn.

We're also working with community organizations with an interest in early childhood development to identify opportunities for collaboration. The Kiwanis Club of Courtenay is one such organization. The ministry has purchased copies of the Kiwanis video *Precious Minds: Nurturing Literacy in the Early Years* to distribute to public libraries, family resource centres, neighbourhood houses, child development centres, infant development programs and parenting centres.

These are great community partnerships. This is wonderful information delivered in a very easily accessible manner that in fact incorporates the work of Dr. Fraser Mustard and talks about the work of Dr. Clyde Hertzman. It's an opportunity for us to put into the hands of families and people who might spend some time reading to a very young, little person the importance of that, and to instruct them in the best ways to achieve the best outcomes.

We will continue to seek the expertise of those whose extensive knowledge, skills and experience has made British Columbia a leading edge in early childhood development in Canada. We believe strategic investments in the care and development of our youngest children are a fundamental form of good leadership, and we want those decisions to be based on the best available science and research. We must con-

stantly monitor and measure the results of those investments to see if we can do better.

To ensure we stay on track, government has identified four key actions as the priorities for early childhood development. This approach is in keeping with the national children's agenda, in which the federal government and the provinces agreed to work together to make early childhood development a priority for Canada.

The four key areas of investment are: promoting healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; strengthening early childhood care and learning; improving parenting and family supports; and strengthening community supports.

We certainly have had much experience in our province in terms of reducing the number of low birth-rate infants, increasing immunization rates, reducing infant mortality, reducing the number of infants with FAS and FAE, and lowering the number of children taken into care.

As a society and as communities we can significantly improve children's development by promoting healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy. The infant development program is one such program that is helping us reach this goal. It offers home-based services to infants up to age three who are at risk of developmental delay or who have a developmental disability.

By increasing home-based services for infants, we optimize their development and continuing participation in a full range of community activities. I am very proud of this project. I can tell you that the ministry has committed \$2.1 million in the coming year to the provincial infant development programs to reduce wait-lists and provide increased access to services across our province. This is an overall budget increase of 28 percent. A further \$145,000 has been set aside for the aboriginal infant development program to develop culturally appropriate programs for aboriginal children.

Educating parents on healthy pregnancy is a priority for this government, because healthy mothers are more likely to have healthy infants. In the coming year the ministry will initiate and strengthen activities that aid in FAS prevention, early identification and support, and services to children and families.

[1540]

Fetal alcohol syndrome is the leading, known cause of intellectual disability in children. It is also entirely preventable. The damage is permanent. Most children with FAS will never be financially or socially self-sufficient. The ministry has allocated \$400,000 this year to support the implementation of programs, educational strategies and research in this area.

Pregnancy outreach programs also play an important role in supporting healthy pregnancies. These programs promote breast-feeding and provide counselling, support and referrals related to nutrition, smoking, alcohol and other drugs to women at risk of giving birth to low-weight infants. Since 1987 one of the cornerstones of B.C.'s perinatal program has been the publication of *Baby's Best Chance*.

[The division bells were rung.]

I will defer to the Chair if we need to recess for a moment.

**The Chair:** As you've heard the bells, we will recess for ten minutes.

The committee recessed from 3:41 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.

[R. Stewart in the chair.]

**Hon. L. Reid:** Just prior to the recess I was talking to you about B.C.'s perinatal program and the publication, *Baby's Best Chance*. In British Columbia 95 percent of pregnant women receive a cost-free copy from the local pharmacy or public health unit with a coupon they receive from their physician.

The publication outlines ways expectant parents can optimize the mother's health and nutrition, such as taking folic acid or avoiding alcohol and tobacco. *Baby's Best Chance* has been a major contributor to healthier outcomes for both parents and infants by providing detailed information on what to expect during pregnancy, birth and the first year of a baby's life. It also serves as an extremely useful tool for agencies working with families to provide guidance and supports where there may be literacy or language issues.

The ministry has contributed \$80,000 to the revision of the sixth edition, which will be printed this fall. *Baby's* has been a tremendous success; we have decided to build upon it. In the coming months, two more books will be offered in what we're calling the Best Chance series. They'll offer the same kind of ready, practical information about children up to school-starting age — about five years.

*Toddler's First Steps* will be published this spring and will cover the age span from six months to three years in a child's life. "Preschooler's Ready to Learn" will be published early in 2003 and will offer advice and information to parents, grandparents, caregivers and community members about the opportunities, challenges and potentials of children aged three to five.

The Ministries of Health Planning; Health Services; Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services; and Children and Family Development; as well as experts from the regional health authorities, are all contributing knowledge, expertise and resources — again, to the member's question, an example of a cross-government, integrated, coordinated exercise.

[G. Trumper in the chair.]

We believe providing relevant and timely information such as the Best Chance series will strengthen the capacity of families to provide a safe, nurturing environment for their children and maximize their children's growth and developmental potential. Moms will know the best way to care for their children during pregnancy and certainly in the early years, and the child will not suffer the effects of fetal alcohol syn-

drome or fetal alcohol effect. It means that this child may live together with his or her family in a happy, healthy environment rather than experience the pain of removal from his family.

Strengthening early childhood care and learning is the second key action for government. Research indicates that the need for better knowledge about early childhood development is not limited to poor or at-risk children. Experience has shown us that a range of positive parenting practices can improve the outcomes of all of our children, including increasing numbers of school-age children ready to learn, families with increased capacity for effective parenting and improved health status of children. Parents and caregivers exposed to these practices acquire the ability to better maintain the integrity and independence of their families.

I look forward to working with our partners in government and in communities to develop a strategy that promotes the well-being of children and families. This fiscal year \$1.4 million has been earmarked to support and expand family resource centres and neighbourhood houses. These facilities are already established in many communities and play an important role in providing parents with information, education, support referrals and other early childhood development services. We believe these kinds of supports are one of the best ways to build the capacity of families and caregivers to help children thrive physically, emotionally, mentally and socially.

We know we can increase outcomes for children and their families by improving parenting and family supports. Infants and children who are neglected or abused are denied the stimulation and nurturing they need in the early years. This puts them at a higher risk for behavioral, social and learning problems in school years and throughout life. By providing greater access for parents, caregivers and children to better family supports and services, we can maximize the family's capacity for effective parenting and reduce the number of families requiring protective services. We must initiate and enhance programs in communities that increase a family's ability to provide a safe, nurturing environment for their children that maximizes the children's growth and development.

The Building Blocks program, established in 1997, helps parents in need cope with the demands of child-rearing. Through home visiting, FAS education, supports to new parents and mentoring, Building Blocks helps maximize the healthy growth and development of parents and children. In 2002-03, \$2.6 million has been allocated to support the 27 communities currently served by Building Blocks and to expand the program to additional communities.

[1555]

We know we must also provide greater equitable access for children birth to age six who require extra support in the broader community-based child care system. Parents with children who have special needs can feel particularly overwhelmed. The next 12 months will see an emphasis on the enhancement of services

for children with autism spectrum disorder. Research into this area is complex and growing. Every year there are new levels of knowledge and new approaches to test. We believe that rigorous scientifically based evaluation is required to provide effective treatment and best practices to children with autism. Our early intensive behavioral intervention program provides children with autism one-to-one therapy for a minimum of 20 hours per week until age six.

We are also introducing individualized funding to families for the development and implementation of intervention and treatment programs for children under the age of six with autism spectrum disorder. Individualized funding will be available to eligible families by June of this year. Funding for these two programs alone totals \$9.7 million in 2002-03. Additional funds have been allocated for the school year transition program. This interim behavioral intervention and skill development service for children age four to six with autism assists children to prepare for entry into kindergarten.

Strengthening community support is the fourth priority for early childhood development. Making a difference in the lives of children often means early identification and quick action when their needs are not being met. By developing and implementing community models for the comprehensive, coordinated delivery of ECD services, we can improve outcomes for children at risk of poor social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills.

Communities are also empowered to make decisions and provide early childhood development programs and services that are relevant and appropriate to their needs. The Learning Sites initiative is a research project with a mandate to work with communities to find better ways to support families with young children. Currently Prince George, Port Alberni, the west coast and the eastern Fraser Valley are involved in the Learning Sites project. Through consultation with service providers, educators, parents, caregivers and other community members, each learning site is developing an integrated community-based model of services for ECD. These models will be used as templates for other communities across British Columbia. In the coming fiscal year the ministry will expand the Learning Sites initiative to all regions of the province, for a total investment of \$1.7 million.

Another key area targeted for building increased community support for early childhood development will be within the aboriginal community. The disproportionate number of aboriginal children in care has shown us that we have not been effective in the past in providing culturally appropriate ECD services to aboriginal communities. We need to concentrate energy and resources in programs that recognize the importance of cultural continuity and practice as well as enhanced community development, increased parenting skills and school readiness. We must also support aboriginal community leaders in the development and delivery of comprehensive, integrated and culturally relevant programs.



Last year the ministry solicited proposals for the development of early childhood development programs for urban aboriginal communities. A total of \$8 million in contracts have been awarded. As a result, in 2002-03, 25 urban aboriginal communities will receive ECD services designed specifically to meet their individual needs. This investment in integrated, culturally relevant ECD programs will assist aboriginal families to acquire the skills, resiliency and strengths to enable them to support the healthy growth and development of their infants and young children.

[The division bells were rung.]

I will defer to the Chair, should we need to recess.

**The Chair:** Hearing the bells, we will have a recess for approximately ten minutes.

The committee recessed from 3:58 p.m. to 4:08 p.m.

[G. Trumper in the chair.]

**Hon. L. Reid:** The comments I wish to conclude with.

Government has taken a substantive and most important step to secure the future of early childhood development in this province through the establishment of the early childhood development legacy fund. I know that people across this province will be excited by this notion.

The government is challenging business, foundations, individuals, non-profits, professional groups, corporations and the private sector to build this fund to \$25 million by 2005. Endowments from this fund will go to projects that enhance early childhood development in British Columbia in perpetuity. We are going to build capacity with community. I can tell you today that we are the only province with a plan post-2005 when the national children's agenda funding comes to an end.

This community and family capacity will help us to provide programs and services for early childhood development in British Columbia that will create a healthier, more resilient society. It is essential to involve families and communities in the services that are provided for them. We believe our approach to early childhood development will help parents and communities maximize the potential for children's health, status and growth. By involving families in the context of their communities, we ensure their involvement in the decisions which affect their lives. Emphasis on early childhood development today will produce tangible results for the adults of tomorrow.

[1610]

Our hopes for the children of British Columbia are clear. We want to build a society where families and communities prosper emotionally, physically and intellectually; a society where children are confident in their community and family experiences and who are more ready to learn when they enter school; perform better

in reading, writing and numeracy; demonstrate improved health status on provincial health surveys; graduate from secondary school; contribute positively to their communities and the economy; and most importantly, are optimistic about the future.

In partnership with organizations, communities and families, I know we can deliver effective early childhood development programs. I believe we can make the necessary changes, stay on course and continue to be on the leading edge of innovative, effective and fiscally responsible early childhood development services to children and families in Canada. Our direction will result in programs that produce measurable results, that empower vulnerable children, families and their communities towards real and positive change in the quality of life.

I look forward to sharing these successes with you in the coming year. I think I've demonstrated more than adequately to the member opposite that this is a cross-government, coordinated, integrated strategy that looks at the whole child. At the end of the day we do share the children of this province with all the providers. Whether it's the Ministry of Health Services, the Ministry of Health Planning, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Education or whether it's issues around public safety, this is a package. This is a work in progress. I think the member opposite has had a clear indication of our commitment to this project.

**J. Kwan:** I understand that the minister must have a need to get a mailer to her constituents. I have a short question. Given that the minister has said there is cross-government collaboration, my question to the minister's statement is: will child care be a service that the ministry provides to families requiring support services? If so, how much funding is targeted to this service? Supported child care is for families who have children with special needs. What is the Ministry of Children and Family Development doing to increase child care funding for families with children with special needs?

**Hon. L. Reid:** The specific response to the member opposite is roughly \$35 million; \$35.37 million is the budget for 2002-03. That is for the supported child care piece, which is the piece that we have responsibility for within the Ministry of Children and Family Development. We are working in partnership, as you know, across government, and the Minister for Women's Equality is certainly looking at areas that we can better collaborate on as we go forward. But that is the budget: \$35.37 million.

**J. Kwan:** And for the next two years?

**Hon. L. Reid:** For 2002-03, it's \$35.36 million; for '03-04, it's \$28.96 million; and for '04-05, it's \$26.36 million.

**J. Kwan:** So there is a reduction of approximately \$7 million and then a \$10 million reduction. Is it the

anticipation of the minister that the reduction is a result of reduced caseload? How come the minister came up with such reductions? What's the rationale?

[1615]

**Hon. L. Reid:** There are a number of factors at play, not the least of which is anticipated and certainly, proven out in the last number of years; the number of babies born in our province is reducing over time. It was 42,000, I believe, the year before last, and we're down to 40,000 babies, approximately. Where we're front-end loading a lot of our programming in terms of good early childhood development programs, we believe we'll see a reduction in the necessity for some of these other programs as children go through the process. A lot of the supported child care programs kick in when children need supports in school. If we've done our job sufficiently from zero-to-six, the demand on those supports should lessen over time.

That would be the measure, which is why, frankly, we've contracted with Clyde Hertzman at the University of British Columbia to evaluate the investments we're making to know, indeed, when those investments bear out the results we're looking for over time. The only way you get to best practices is to measure — absolutely the only way. We believe the investments we're making will see a reduction in the need for some of these services. We believe that will happen.

**J. Kwan:** The reductions in funding in the area of education. We've actually come to realize now that funding for educational programs is being reduced. School boards across British Columbia are struggling with their educational budgets. They recognize that educational programs are going to have to be reduced because of reduced funding from the ministry.

I know the Minister of Education would like to argue that the Liberal government has protected education, but the reality is that with increased pressures, the education funding is netting a result of a reduction in educational programs. Those, of course, will be felt by the children and families in the system.

I'm not quite sure if those investments the minister talks about would actually add up to reducing the caseload. Maybe I'm incorrect; maybe the numbers will in fact reduce. In the event that the numbers do not reduce, then is it the minister's commitment that funding for supported child care for a family with special needs would actually increase instead of decrease?

**Hon. L. Reid:** It's safe and fair to say that our activity will be guided by the results we receive from Clyde Hertzman's work and the human early learning project. I don't think it's appropriate for us to predict the outcome when we are going to base our practice on best available research.

The member opposite will know that as a government in partnership with the federal government, we will spend more on the areas of early childhood development than has ever been spent before. There are \$291

million coming to this province over five years — \$291 million.

Do we have the flexibility to answer research questions as they come forward? Absolutely. Absolutely, we do, but that determination will be taken based on the best research of the day. We will not speculate on the outcome.

**J. Kwan:** The issue that I'm trying to raise is this, which I know is in the minds of many British Columbians, particularly families faced with challenges and who have children with special needs, who need government assistance. Their concern, of course, is that the cuts in funding from government, as a result, would not be able to ensure that the needs of families and children in British Columbia are met, therefore further jeopardizing the needs of children.

The minister says she will monitor the results. What I'm raising as an issue is: if the results don't materialize, will the government commit to increasing the funding instead of decreasing it?

It's a broad statement. It's not about a specific case but rather the overall thrust. If the government is truly interested in protecting the interests of children and families, then one would expect that the commitment from government would be: "Yes, if the demand increases, if the needs increase, then the funding would be there to meet those needs."

I think it is a relatively broad question and a simple one on the basis of principles of government and where they stand.

[1620]

**Hon. L. Reid:** Certainly, the member opposite will know that the research supports good, solid, early intervention. The minister will have heard me comment in my remarks that there's a 28 percent lift to funding for early childhood development. If we can enter into the lives of those children when they are newborn in terms of safeguarding the kinds of expenses that will follow, should we not intervene effectively? Will that in fact reduce the demand on a supported child care program once those children are three, four, five and six years of age? Absolutely.

The member opposite will know that the research speaks volumes not just in Canada and not just in British Columbia but across the globe in terms of the necessity for good, solid early intervention. That's the goal.

Will I commit that there will be flexibility in terms of responding to these issues? I've said that many, many times. In terms of basing any decision we take on the best available science, we will do that. That science will be available on our website as we receive it as a government.

**J. Kwan:** The issue, then, is on best science. This is something I will get into later on in the estimates. That's of course inner-city school funding. Science has already demonstrated that inner-city school funding works, and it provides for early childhood supports for

children to stay in school particularly to focus in on prevention, intervention, and early intervention on literacy amongst other places. Why would the government actually cut inner-city school funding when in fact that model has proven to be effective?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** The funding for the socioeconomic response is in place until the end of the school year. As the member has appropriately pointed out, there will be a reduction subsequent to that. That reduction is being compensated for by a number of the strategies which my colleague has outlined, in terms of the early childhood development initiatives which will support and have a far greater and more profound impact on the evolution and development of children as a result.

We are also working with the school districts to look at the way those dollars have been expended. We have received a number of concerns from a number of areas expressing the point of view that the funds could have been used more efficiently or more effectively in an effort to derive the types of outcomes which are desired in this matter.

We're also working with the Ministry of Education and the school districts as the Ministry of Education has opened up the envelopes of spending for school districts, giving the school districts more latitude to make decisions in terms of the best interests and the highest needs of their children. This funding in the past has been provided in discrete envelopes in which school districts did not have the ability to respond to the specific areas they felt were of greatest need.

Part of the process will be not just working with them around more efficient and effective utilization of it but also giving them more flexibility in the ways that they choose to expend those dollars.

**J. Kwan:** With all due respect to the minister, the fact of the matter is that in the area of education, the funding — the dollars that are dedicated for educational programs — has decreased. The reason why is because there are increased pressures by the minister, and the school board, faced with increased pressures with the same amount of funding, would have to cut programs. It's as simple as that.

As a result, children are going to be hurt, educational programs are going to be reduced, and that puts children and their future into jeopardy. That is the logical progress, or lack of progress if you will, of the government's decision around that front. That ties into the inner-city school funding aspect, whereby this ministry is cutting \$5.4 million in inner-city school funding.

The minister suggests that other programs within the ministry will provide for the needs of children in inner-city schools while the inner-city school parents, the inner-city school teachers and the children say otherwise. They have indicated to the government that the model of inner-city school funding targeting the most vulnerable children actually works. It actually allows for the children to stay in school longer, to make a transition from elementary school to high school. It assists the families through outreach work to participate in the

well-being of their children. It provides for multicultural and literacy supports in the system, to enhance the opportunity for the children to succeed and therefore for their families to succeed in the future.

[1625]

That's what the inner-city school funding has demonstrated. It has been a proven model that works. It's a small amount of money — \$5.4 million — that is being dedicated for this program, yet within the envelope of the social equity funding the inner-city school funding has been eliminated by this government.

I quite honestly don't know how both ministers can sit and advise this House that children are being protected. I think that the ministers know better and know the difference. I actually believe that, because I've corresponded particularly with the Minister of Children and Family Development. In the correspondence that I've received, he certainly seemed to indicate that he understands and supports the need of inner-city school funding. I wish that the minister would actually go back to his cabinet table and advocate for this funding, because it has been a proven model where it does work.

I'll have more to say around inner-city school funding and the social equity envelope a little later, but I want to finish up in the area of child care support.

[R. Stewart in the chair.]

I have received a copy of a letter to the opposition caucus from the Cowichan and Chemainus valleys child and youth committee. This is the letter that's been written to Children and Family Development. I'm going to read the letter into the record because I'd like to get a response from the minister on this issue. It is one of those issues that crosses ministries in the area of child care. The letter reads as follows:

"We met at the first call evening forum in Vancouver on January 31. At that time, you said that the Premier and other ministers intend to visit communities."

I should just preface that this is a letter written to deputy minister Chris Haynes, who is with us today. The letter then goes on to say:

"I invited you to Duncan on behalf of the Cowichan and Chemainus valleys child and youth committee. The committee hopes that you can meet with us soon.

"While we wait, we urge you to give voice to our concerns regarding funding decreases to children, youth and family services and programs. One particular concern to this community is how the federal early development funds will be allocated. For a while, we were concerned that provincially and federally no one seemed to know where these were. The early childhood development agreement, signed September 2000 by the government of Canada, provincial governments and territorial governments, states that you will work together to improve and expand early childhood programs and services.

"The hon...." — and it puts forth the name, which is referring to the Minister of State for Early Childhood Development — "...spoke at the early years conference on February 1. She indicated several areas that will be supported by the early development fund. The missing

component was safe, affordable, high-quality child care. It is not in the minister's portfolio, causing a gap and a hole in the services to families with young children. With more than 65 percent of young children during the first five years receiving care from other than their parents, it is obvious that this necessary service needs to be recognized, supported and enhanced to ensure the healthy development of all B.C.'s children.

"We're aware that the Ministry of Human Resources presently provides some funding for child care through the subsidy program. This alone is totally insufficient. An infrastructure needs to be established to provide stability for a comprehensive, affordable, high-quality child care system. We urge you to use your influence to ensure that this matter is acted upon through appropriate allocation of the early development funds.

"In closing, please be assured that the committee welcomes the opportunity to meet with you and hopefully anticipates that this can occur on or before March 8, 2002."

It's signed: "Mary Dolan, First Call representative for the Cowichan and Chemainus valleys child and youth committee."

While I recognize that the letter is written to the deputy minister, I think it would be important for the minister — whichever minister would like — to answer this question on the funding from the early childhood development fund, and specifically the gap that has been identified with respect to services to families with young children in the area of safe, affordable, high-quality child care.

[1630]

**Hon. L. Reid:** Certainly I wish to put on the record the comments that come directly from the early childhood development agreement, just because I believe that the actual wording is important to this discussion.

"In September 2000 the government of Canada and its provincial and territorial government partners announced the early childhood development agreement to foster the well-being of Canada's young children."

That's the umbrella goal, if you will, the intention as to why the federal government chose to allocate these dollars provincially and territorially in our country. In terms of the commentary on First Call!!! by the member opposite, it's definitely an important voice on where we're headed. We are partners in this exercise. There's no question about that. Is child care a piece of this pie? There's no question about that.

The member opposite will know that the Premier's intention was to place different responsibilities within different ministries across government. It may well be that the outcome is such that we have an integrated cross-government strategy. It is in the works. I know you've heard the minister responsible make comment regularly on the progress that's being made in that area. Will that blend with what we are doing? No question.

The member opposite has heard me in much detail this afternoon break down where our funding has gone across the system in terms of Health Services, Health Planning, in terms of the Education pieces, in terms of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. All

of that, all those pieces together, will form a decent launching pad for our youngest learners as they go forward.

Has this government made some place in priorities on very, very young learners and very, very young children? No question. Our focus within Early Childhood Development has been on the zero-to-three learner. There is abundant research that talks about making a difference in the lives of children. You do so when the children are the youngest, and you do so when those interventions are the least expensive. That is our intention.

Will we have an opportunity to evaluate our progress over the next one, two or three years? No question. That's why we've partnered — very effectively, I think — with the human early learning program partnership in terms of where we go next. If the member opposite is looking for the actual breakdown of baseline funding on what this province has done with those dollars over time, I believe that information will be available this month.

It has been an enormous, interesting, complex process to pull together all the funding streams across government, but that information will be available and will be forwarded to the federal government. It will be on the ministry's website, so that we can indeed begin to have a discussion that's transparent about how government allocates dollars around services for children.

It's absolutely the intention of First Call!!! That's their interest in ensuring that those dollars are spent strategically. It is our intention that those dollars are spent strategically, and I believe we will have fulfilled that in very short order.

**J. Kwan:** This is the information I have received to date. The federal government has made a \$2.2 billion investment in early childhood development with a five-year program that started in the year 2000. In the first year, B.C. received \$39 million and will receive another \$51 million for the coming year. In year 3, B.C. will get an additional \$60 million and \$66 million in each of the years 4 and 5.

The ministry has committed to spending \$8 million next year in 25 aboriginal communities, and she has advised that she is also planning to take \$25 million over five years to create the B.C. early childhood development legacy fund. That's \$5 million per year. That's a total of \$13 million committed for this year to date. There was also an announcement on March 7 of \$4.7 million for families with autism spectrum disorder, so perhaps that should be added, for a total of \$17.7 million.

But if the government has \$51 million coming from the federal government this year, where are the rest of the federal dollars going? How is it being used to advance early childhood development or supports for children and families? How is the other \$33.3 million being utilized?

**Hon. L. Reid:** Allow me to correct the record in terms of the member's understanding of the early

childhood development legacy fund. It is a fund that will see a contribution of \$5 million in total on behalf of government. The additional \$20 million will be leveraged from a number of different sectors, whether that be individuals, whether that be corporations or non-profits and, frankly, whether that be foundations. That will probably be our number one funding source when it comes to forming effective partnerships across government.

[1635]

In terms of the budget for 2002-03, and I can certainly put it on the record again, and I'm happy to do so for the member, but she will know that I canvassed these amounts in my opening remarks. Building Blocks program expansion and evaluation, \$2.6 million. Learning initiatives site expansion, up to one per region by 2002-03, \$1.7 million. IDP family resource centres and supported child care, roughly \$5 million. The urban aboriginal early childhood development initiatives, \$8 million; the human early learning program, the work we're doing with Clyde Hertzman at the University of British Columbia, \$2.5 million; the expansion of support staff, \$441,000.

Provincial forums and advisory committees.... The member opposite will know that one of the basic tenets is community supports and early childhood development learning and care. We intend to ensure that people have the best information with which to go forward by moving our forums around the province over the next year or two.

Professional development activities, \$50,000; resource development, \$150,000; aboriginal IDP advisory position.... It's listed here at 122. I know I quoted it earlier at 145. The legacy partnership, \$5 million over five years. That equals roughly \$20.8 million. Those are the allocations coming forward from our ministry. The additional dollars to bring us up to the point of \$39 million will be the dollars that flow from the other ministries, whether that be Health Services, Health Planning, the other areas of government where we're going to stream this funding together. This ministry and the other ministries involved.... Those will be the dollars that are pulled together to form the baseline reporting document, which will be available this month.

**J. Kwan:** The numbers the minister provided don't differ that much, with the one exception in terms of instead of \$25 million being put towards the B.C. early childhood development legacy fund, it is actually just \$5 million, and the rest is to be raised elsewhere. So actually, there's an additional savings of \$20 million that I hadn't accounted for. That means that from the federal government side, of the \$2.2 billion that is being provided to the province for early childhood development programs, you have about \$71 million that's unaccounted for. What happened to those moneys, then?

**Hon. L. Reid:** The member opposite should know that we are actually referring to the original sum of money coming to this province of the \$39.6 million. That is the sum of money we are currently reporting

out on. The \$52.8 million.... Many of those decisions are yet to be reached, and we will be reporting out one year hence in terms of our contribution and our commitment to the federal government.

**J. Kwan:** Then for future years what the minister is saying is that those programs and allocations of dollars are not yet available, and they will be available in the next month or so, I think the minister said, or in the next couple of months, if I heard the minister correctly on that, for future years. On the question, then, even if I were to accept that answer and if that's, in fact, what the minister stated, for this year, if the amount is \$39.6 million.... The minister has accounted so far for \$20 million. That's about half of the money that's gone missing. Has that gone to general revenues? Or what programs has it been dedicated for?

**Hon. L. Reid:** The member opposite is correct when she acknowledges my comments of earlier, which talk about the baseline reporting on the \$39.6 million being available to this Legislature and certainly to the public at large this month. That is a culmination — a coordination, if you will — of the spending of the Ministries of Children and Family Development; Health Services; Health Planning; Human Resources; and Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. I indeed touched on \$20.8 million being the funding that's allocated under the Ministry of Children and Family Development. I would suggest to you that the difference between \$20.8 million and \$39.6 million.... Those funds will be expended on behalf of the Ministries of Health Services; Health Planning; Human Resources; and Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. That information will form a report that will be available on the website this month.

**J. Kwan:** Money that has come from the federal government for the purposes of early childhood development has gone into other ministries, such as Health Services, such as the Ministry of State for Women's Equality and other ministries. They're not staying in this ministry for the purposes of early childhood development.

[1640]

**Hon. L. Reid:** The member opposite will have heard me say many times during my remarks that this is a cross-government integrated strategy. I can assure the member opposite that every dollar has been expended on the population for which this funding was designed, the zero to six population.

Are there services offered by Health that impact on the zero-to-six population? No question. The member opposite has often spoken of programs that benefit. That is exactly the intention of the federal government, and I'm happy to put it on the record again.

The tenets of the accord: healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy. The member opposite will know that many of those programs are funded by Health Services. Parenting and family supports: many of those

programs fall into the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Early childhood development, learning and care and community supports. We, in fact, are delivering exactly what the federal government has asked — that it is a cross-government, integrated, coordinated approach.

The entire \$39.6 million will not flow from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, but I can assure the member that it will flow to the population for which it is designated, which is the population zero to six years of age, which is exactly the reference that the federal government makes in its communiqué. I will quote: "All children deserve the best possible start in life. Experts agree that children's early years play a big role in determining their well-being later in life."

I mean, if the member opposite doesn't have the most recent document from the federal government, I will happily share it. I can assure the member opposite.... If she's willing to take a look at the map that's included, for every province in Canada they show how they break down their dollars across their governments. That is the goal, that no longer can we accept the notion that any one minister or ministry in government has sole responsibility for the health and well-being of children. If we intend to make a difference, we have to acknowledge that each and every one of us, each and every ministry, has some responsibility. I'm happy to put on the record, if the member wishes, an example from any province or territory she could name in terms of how they've broken down their spending and which ministry is responsible.

**J. Kwan:** This is actually very enlightening. I'm glad that I've got this information. The community has actually been very anxious about it, and they were very suspicious in terms of where these dollars have gone. They've asked the ministries, the various ministers, this question on numerous occasions and were unable to get an answer. I think we've actually shed some light in terms of where some of those dollars have gone. They've gone into other ministries for other programming.

I would ask the minister to provide the information on the remaining federal dollars that are not yet accounted for in the Ministry of Children and Family Development on specifically what ministries it's gone to, for what purpose and what programming and how much is attached to it. I would appreciate that, because that's something that the community is very much wanting to know.

Earlier, as well, I know that First Call!! had met with a variety of people, including government representatives. They had put forward a proposal with respect to how those dollars should be funded. Particularly, they met with members who are now elected in this Legislature as government members. They met, I know, prior to the election, and there were commitments or agreements from government members with respect to how those dollars would be allocated and in what areas. Could the minister please advise what happened to those commitments?

**Hon. L. Reid:** Let me be abundantly clear on this question. There is no suspicion in the community in terms of the allocation of these dollars. The Premier has been abundantly clear on his commitment to early childhood development in British Columbia and has, in fact, committed to a transparent process, which is why you will see this information on the website in a matter of weeks for the first time ever.

I can certainly put on the record that the transparency with which this government will go forward is an absolute breath of fresh air when it comes to the difficulty previous oppositions have had gleaning information from government. This will be welcomed by the community.

In terms of ongoing consultation, it will always be a work in progress. There's absolutely no question. I know the members opposite continue to meet, and certainly the minister and I continue to meet, with all groups that wish to come forward and give their input as to how they believe these dollars could be best allocated. That decision will, absolutely, be a work in progress over the next five years.

[1645]

Our intention and our goal and our commitment is to make very strategic investments so that, in fact.... Let me give the member opposite an example: a little child who is born in the year 2000, 2001, 2002. When that little soul crosses the threshold into their first kindergarten classroom, we will have the opportunity to look back and see if any of our strategic investments have in fact improved the quality of life, have improved the durability of relationships, the durability of parenting. That's what this exercise is about. Is that a cross-government commitment? No question. Absolutely no question.

When this member believes that she can suggest that spending those dollars across government is somehow contrary to the document, she is absolutely incorrect. She may wish to correct the record. We are doing exactly as prescribed by the federal government. We are honouring the commitment that the federal government has placed upon the provinces and territories of this country, and we will continue to do so.

**J. Kwan:** The minister states that they'll continue to do ongoing consultation, but the fact of the matter is that prior to the election there were meetings that were held with First Call!!, amongst others, in terms of how those dollars are being dedicated from the early childhood development fund. There was agreement from the member and I believe from this minister herself, who has made a commitment, in supporting and putting those dollars towards universal child care. That was the agreement from the community, but now the election is over, and there is a change in government.

The government here with the member who is now the minister, the opposition member then, seeing those dollars that would otherwise be dedicated for universal child care being taken away.... That's the concern here. That's the concern here in terms of what the commitment was and how best to send those moneys to sup-

port children and families in the broader community. Now the minister says spending money across government is something that is laudable and should be supported.

I'm not arguing whether or not government should be spending money across ministries to support programs in support of children, but the agreement is this. There was agreement in meetings, when the minister was in opposition, with First Call!, amongst other community groups, for those dollars to be dedicated for a universal child care program. That was something that opposition members then, who are now in government, supported and agreed upon. Since the election that has changed, and those dollars are not being dedicated for universal child care. It's being siphoned off into other areas, other areas which nobody yet knows. The minister has just stated it might be in the areas of health, women's services, etc., but we don't know what those programs are.

Letters as recent as February.... First Call!, amongst others, have been wondering: where has this money gone? The child care community sector had been calling on the ministers to provide answers. They couldn't get an answer from the Minister of State for Women's Equality. They couldn't get an answer from this minister. They couldn't get an answer from anybody. We have been in discussion with them, and all of this has become, quite frankly, one big confusion under this new era of transparent, accountable government.

Nobody knows where the money has gone. Maybe that will become apparent in a couple of weeks' time, or in a month or so, but the fact of the matter is that consultation was taken, and the information is not being shared. Yes, there is a high level of suspicion in the broader community in terms of what the government has done with this money, federal dollars, that have been allocated towards early childhood development funding.

More than that, the community is further concerned, and I'm concerned, because with the previous government some of those moneys for universal child care were dollars that the province had allocated, separate and apart from the federal dollars so that there would be added dollars to early childhood development, not just the federal moneys. Right now what we see with this budget and in future years is that the only dollars allocated to early childhood development in this pot of money are federal moneys. There are no added dollars, no increased dollars, no new moneys for early childhood development. That, too, is a concern in the broader community, and the opposition shares that concern with the community in this regard.

[1650]

I have some questions with respect to aboriginal community development. I sort of skipped over in different places, because it was topical, as the issues were raised. I'd like to ask some questions around the aboriginal community development area.

In the service plan summary for the Ministry of Children and Family Development, it says that the ministry will be moving child protection authority to

aboriginal entities and will be "...building capacity within aboriginal communities to deliver a full range of services with emphasis on early childhood and family development."

The numbers for this initiative show that \$2 million will be spent in '02-03 and \$4.1 million will be spent in '03-04 and '04-05. However, after '04-05, funding will drop to a low of \$1.4 million.

What is the expected operating cost to the aboriginal communities for these programs and services?

**Hon. L. Reid:** It'll take a moment to pull that information together.

While we're deliberating on that, I want to put on the record what the provinces have done. I'll take three examples so that the member opposite has not been successful in creating the sense that British Columbia is behaving differently than the rest of the provinces in Canada.

Let me give you the example of the Northwest Territories. This is what their allocation will purchase this year: universal screening, home visitation program, health and wellness awareness, language development and retention, child and family resource centres, and parent and family literacy programs. That's where their priorities are across their government.

Let's take the example, just going across the top of this document, of Nunavut. Their priorities are healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; and parenting and family supports. A variety of ministries in their territory will reflect that spending.

Let's talk for a moment about Newfoundland and Labrador: pre- and post-natal benefits, early literacy and prekindergarten orientation, family resource programs and healthy baby clubs, child care services and supports, and early intervention on autism.

A cross-section, hon. member, of how provinces have chosen to engage the dollars they have received from the federal government. I think it's fair to say that British Columbia is in good company.

I will receive the information momentarily in terms of your second question.

The aboriginal services allotment for 2002-03 is \$26.4 million; the following year, '03-04, \$16.9 million; and \$15.04 million. The reason it is front-end loaded is simply to allow opportunity for communities to build capacity, so they can engage when they build partnerships with other funding sources. Whether it be the federal government, community-based funding or opportunities to approach the early childhood development legacy fund, if we can successfully front-end load those programs in terms of building sophistication and building capacity, they will be in a better position to investigate opportunities for additional funding. That is absolutely the goal.

**J. Kwan:** Another way of putting it is called off-loading. You can say you're front-end loading and building capacity. Once people build the capacity, then government says: "We're no longer here to fund you. Go and find someone else. If you're not successful in

finding that funding, too bad, because then your program will just diminish."

[1655]

Is that the intent, or is the minister saying that if these agencies are unable to find funding elsewhere, this government will continue to provide funding to ensure that these programs are in place?

**Hon. L. Reid:** The member will know that funding for aboriginal programs is in fact increasing, so her commentary that this is anything other than an increase in funding is incorrect. We are encouraging the building of capacity within community, because the aboriginal communities in our country and our province are a shared responsibility between the provinces and the federal government. For us not to encourage that capacity so they are not in a position to access federal funding would be a senseless exercise. In fact, for us to ensure that the partnership can exist and exist successfully is absolutely our goal.

**J. Kwan:** The minister has just distorted my words. What I said was that the aboriginal programs for which they're receiving funding now for '02-03 is \$2 million and then \$4.1 million in '03-04 and in '04-05. After '04-05, the funding drops to \$1.4 million. What the minister said is that they are front-end loading the funding in the earlier years, so once the capacity is built, the government will pull out. The funding drops significantly.

It's not a question about whether or not they necessarily have the capacity to access other funding. The question becomes: if there's no other funding available, what will happen to these programs? That is the issue here. Those programs will then be lost. Will the minister and the Liberal government be in a position to say: "Hey! It wasn't us who cut the programs. You were supposed to have the capacity to get funding elsewhere"?

We know that funding elsewhere is thin — everywhere. Of course, the aim now, it seems to me, and what the government is trying to do, is to pull out of that and say: "Hey! You know what? When the funding is cut, don't blame me, because we've already funded you. You're supposed to be able to continue."

We've seen a similar situation with the Minister of State for Women's Equality. She has just sent out letters to women's centres, telling them: "Here's \$2,700. Here's \$3,000. You guys go out there and find alternate funding. If you can't find alternate funding, don't blame me, because that's not my responsibility any more." I actually see a trend happening here with this ministry and with other ministries throughout government.

**Hon. L. Reid:** The member will know from her previous government experience that there are, in fact, statutory responsibilities that flow directly from the federal government. She will know that, so this is not a mystery in terms of where those funding dollars will flow. It's not a mystery.

Interjection.

**Hon. L. Reid:** You know that the capacity must be built in these communities so that they can access those dollars. I will reference the delegation enabling agreement in accordance with section 92 of the Child, Family and Community Service Act that funding is provided by DIAND for reserve-based aboriginal family and children service agencies and by the ministry for urban-based aboriginal communities and Métis communities.

The member will know that the partnership has been in place for quite some time. The opportunity to further that partnership, to continue to receive increasing levels of funding, is absolutely the goal. To pursue any other course of action would be nonsensical.

**J. Kwan:** Well, pardon me for being suspicious of this government. What we have seen, in the different terminologies this government utilizes, is a series of double-talk. We have seen it. I have pointed it out in this set of estimates and in others in terms of this government's approach to protecting education.

When there are increasing pressures in the area of education spending, they're simply off-loading to the local authorities to say: "Hey! You know what? We protected your education funding in spite of increased pressures." You're supposed to provide for the same programs so that the minister can go around saying: "We protected those programs. We're funding those programs." We all know, on the ground, what it means is that there's not enough money to provide for those programs. Those programs will be eliminated, and children will be hurt in the process.

[1700]

So what am I seeing here? We see the minister and the Liberal government saying they're providing \$2 million in the aboriginal community initiative and then \$4.1 million in '03-04 and in '04-05. Then after '04-05, we see it drop to \$1.4 million. Supposedly, the money is being front-end loaded so that people can build capacity. My question still remains. After the drop, with \$1.4 million, if the community cannot find funding elsewhere, I'm sure they'll be told — maybe correct me if I'm wrong: "Don't come back to the provincial government for money. We're not going to fund that. We have already funded you to build your capacity, so you go out there and find money elsewhere." That is double-talk for off-loading. It's as simple as that.

Aboriginal children make up 40 percent of the children in care. However, aboriginal service providers receive only 2 percent of the budget. Can the minister explain how the Minister of Children and Family Development will be altering the funding formula so that it is distributed in a fair and equitable manner?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** The member is correct that 40 percent of the children in care are aboriginal and that the child and youth population of the province is approximately 8 percent. I'm a little bit confused with respect to the question, however. As we delegate aboriginal authorities to first nations, when those authorities come into existence, status aboriginal people on



those reserves receive federal funding. At that point, federal funding takes over when the delegation is complete. When the service is being provided in urban aboriginal communities, the ministry assumes responsibility and funds those levels with the funding envelope. There is a transfer of funds that goes to the aboriginal delegated authorities. Those delegated authorities are compensated, however, by the federal funding because of the federal statutory responsibilities my colleague alluded to.

If the member is asking how they are funded, they are funded by the federal government. If you're asking about urban aboriginal services, then the ministry assumes and continues to have responsibility with respect to services in those matters. If the member could be a little more specific, perhaps I can get an answer for her.

**J. Kwan:** Let's start with urban aboriginals.

[G. Trumper in the chair.]

[1705]

**Hon. G. Hogg:** The two urban aboriginal services we're working with are the Métis Family Services, who currently have 28 children in care, and VACFASS, which is not fully delegated as yet — nor is the Métis Family Services totally delegated at this point in time. We also have a governance model, and we're looking at the delegation authorities. We're looking at the possibility of putting in place five aboriginal authorities — or somewhere between three and eight, but probably in the neighbourhood of five. Those authorities would then assume.... We would delegate authority to those authorities to be able to delegate to the aboriginal communities so the aboriginal communities are not working directly with government to do that but are working with aboriginal agencies for that delegation process to take place.

The processes that are involved with the first nations child and family service agencies to serve reserve-resident aboriginal people the ministry works with include first nations agencies serving their children and families off reserve, first nation and urban aboriginal partnerships and the Métis communities. The processes are provided funding at this stage for planning, which includes consultations to identify the communities' needs, identifying the services to be delivered, plans for phasing in service delivery, and the negotiation of agreements; secondly, for infrastructure, which includes the physical infrastructure, such as computer systems, acquisition, building occupancy, as well as management, the cost of the governance structure and expertise and consultants that may be needed in terms of developing quality assurance.

The ministry will continue to support that capacity-building, consistent with the strategic shifts. The amount of funding that specifically flows from this is contingent upon this process and the agreements that come out of it, as well as the number and level of children that come into care and whether or not they are

status. For on-reserve dictated delegations, then the federal funding compensates for the pieces that the province does not provide for.

**J. Kwan:** The minister suggests that regional authorities would be developed to deal with aboriginal children and supports for aboriginal children. Could the minister please advise how that structure would be established and how that funding would be allocated? Is it that each of the different regions will get a certain amount of money and then that authority will decide how to spend it and for what area?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** We've entered into a very extensive consultation process to determine exactly the questions the member has put forward. I think we sent out letters and invitations to about 190 different aboriginal nations and communities and have been meeting with them. There have been consultation meetings happening around the province.

There are two stages to that. The first is a consultation process that talks about the information, giving the information in terms of the things we're looking at and the ideas we have, so that they become informed of the process. The second round of consultations is coming back with the aboriginal communities and talking about how they see that best being realized and the focus they have.

I can say that the aboriginal communities are feeling very positive about this process. They're very excited about the process. They see some positive steps being taken to give them the authority for and responsibility over their children. The process that will lead to these aboriginal authorities is coming through this consultation process.

We expect to have that completed by September. By sometime in September, as a result of the consultations, we will be able to put those authorities or a version of those authorities in place. I don't want to preclude or preclude the process of consultation and the good faith we've entered into with the aboriginal communities by trying to suggest that I know what the outcome of that will be. The outcome of that will be a result of the dynamics and the process we're involved in to lead us to what will be the best service model possible.

**J. Kwan:** Would the budget for each of the regional authorities be decided by the community groups who are participating in this consultation process, or is it a fixed budget which the minister's just going to provide?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** The budgets, again, are negotiated budgets that are contingent upon a number of variables, including whether or not these are aboriginal delegated authorities that exist on reserve or off reserve and the number of children that come into the purview and responsibility of the various delegated authorities. There are a wide range of variables that exist which result in the outcome of the budgetary allocation that will be there. Some of the baselines, obviously, in terms

of quantum are somewhat similar to the quantum numbers that exist with the non-aboriginal communities. However, there are different funding sources that start to come into that.

[1710]

The formula and the process become somewhat complex as you go through that exercise. I'm sure the member will remember from her days in government. I believe there were some of these which were delegated at that point in time. There was a very similar process that was entered into in the early stages in terms of how the actual dollar allocation was negotiated and brought into existence. The difference this time is that we've actually entered into a provincewide consultative process, and we're moving down the road to a community-based governance model with all of the services to children.

We've put some deadlines and time frames around this so that the process is moving fairly quickly. We're actually into the second round of consultations with some of the aboriginal communities already. As I say, expect that to be completed by September.

**J. Kwan:** Is the budget to which the regional authorities, through the consultation, would have the opportunity to provide or illustrate to the government or request of the government how much is needed for them to do their work? Or is it a fixed budget to which they'll get a fixed formula? When I say a fixed formula, they'll only get X amount from the provincial government, and it is on reserve. They will only get this amount from the federal government per child, so the upper budget therefore is a fixed amount.

**Hon. G. Hogg:** That is part of the negotiating and consultation processes, working out those details. We're not going into it with a set formula in a set matter and saying: "Here's what you get and here's what you don't get, depending upon where you are." It's part of the consultation. Part of the process is aboriginal communities having a chance to look at not just the provision of services for children coming into care but the ECD component of that as well, so they can actually build into their models some preventative procedures and preventative and educational matters so that we, hopefully, won't see as many children coming into care.

In the past, so often all we've looked at in the aboriginal communities is trying to provide the services for those children who've come into care and giving some authority and responsibility to those communities to pick up on that. We want to give them the full gamut, the full response to the full range of services that are needed so that they're able to put measures in place which will assist them in preventing children coming into care.

The funding for that will be contingent upon a number of variables, and that's what the consultation process is about: identifying those variables and being able to negotiate agreements. When we get to these, they're negotiated agreements. They're settlement

agreements that the aboriginal community has agreed to. It's not imposed upon them; it is an agreement.

**J. Kwan:** Can the minister advise how much the ministry has budgeted for the provincial portion of this initiative?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** The child protection and family development budget for this year is \$270.294 million. As the member has correctly pointed out, about 40 percent of that is for aboriginal children, but it has not been broken out specifically. We deal with the budget across child protection and family development. It's a gross budget. The allocations currently are that many of those aboriginal children are dealt with within the context of all of the services provided to non-aboriginal children as well.

Those numbers are broken out as the delegations are negotiated, and the agreements are made with respect to the funding formulas. Those moneys are broken out of that gross figure.

**J. Kwan:** Earlier the minister advised that aboriginal service providers receive about 8 percent of the total budget. Then is it right to assume that of the \$270 million, about 8 percent of that will be dedicated towards this initiative?

[1715]

**Hon. G. Hogg:** Actually, the 8 percent I said was that 8 percent of the child and youth population of the province is aboriginal, while they represent 40 percent of the children in care. I believe that was the 8 percent figure I had referred to.

**J. Kwan:** I used the 2 percent figure. The context in which I used it was that while aboriginal children make up 40 percent of the children in care, aboriginal service providers receive only 2 percent of the budget. That was the context in which I had put forward the 2 percent. The minister had replied that it was 8 percent as opposed to 2 percent. We're actually talking about two different things.

How much of the ministry's budget is dedicated towards aboriginal service providers, and what is the percentage?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** I'm assuming the member's asking what the allocated funding is to the 20 delegated authorities which are currently in existence. If that is correct, then we will be able to get that figure for you.

**J. Kwan:** Did I hear the minister correctly? Is he advising that that information has to come at a later date with the rest of the information that I've requested?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** That's correct.

**J. Kwan:** Okay. Thanks. Is it then safe to make this suggestion? Given that 40 percent of the children in

care are aboriginal and given that the funding for children in care supports is \$270 million, is it safe to say that in these negotiations the minister will be engaging in, it is within reason that one could come and start off negotiations as one approach and say that 40 percent of those dollars should be dedicated towards aboriginal supports to be divided up regionally?

**Hon. G. Hogg:** Clearly, there has to be a shift of resources to the aboriginal community. We don't know what that formula is or what that number will look like. As we stated earlier, there are certain responsibilities, statutory in nature, which the federal government will have as these authorities are generated as well.

The issue is that the service levels that we're able to provide to the aboriginal community have to be commensurate with the needs that exist within those communities. As we provide and look at provision for services for early childhood development, family development, protective services, family support services.... There are a wide range of services that we need to look at to provide within that context, which may even include mental health services and youth justice services. There is a wide range of things.

The figure that the member refers to is just 40 percent of the child protection part of that. As I said earlier, the formula is much more complex. It would be much simpler and easier, I suppose, to use a cookie-cutter model and say: "Here's what the allocation is, and here's how the percentage breakdown of that exists."

However, because we're in a consultative process, because there are unique nuances and variances that exist in various parts of this province and in various aboriginal communities, we have to work with those communities to work through those nuances and find out what those numbers are.

Certainly, we can use some baseline or draw some figures out of that, which would be indicative of that. When we do that, we have to blend in the federal funding as well. It's difficult to say that this is a baseline. Just taking 40 percent of it would be an overly simplistic way of looking at the issue.

**J. Kwan:** I just want to establish some parameters on the negotiations that these community groups would be engaging in with the minister and to what degree they would have flexibility and how much funding they could actually get access to.

[1720]

In that process as I understand it, while there's a significant portion of children in care who are aboriginal, the funding which they receive is not a good reflection of what the needs are. If the minister is saying that through these consultations he'll ensure that the needs of the aboriginal communities are met and will be provided for by government, then I'll await the result. I will hold the government accountable to his statement in making sure that the needs of aboriginal children are met and that, through the negotiations, adequate fund-

ing is ensured to provide for the aboriginal children in this province.

**Hon. G. Hogg:** I have every confidence in the aboriginal community's ability to negotiate and put together funding formulas and agreements which they think they can live with. They have a lot of skill, a lot of talent and a lot of ability with respect to doing that, I suspect. I know they will do that with the best interests of their children in mind and that the agreements we come to will be adequate agreements to be able to deal with and respond to the issues, just as they are across all of the communities that exist within the province.

**J. Kwan:** My concern is not so much with the aboriginal community and their ability to identify what their needs are. My concern is actually on the government side, as we see on the treaty negotiations issue, especially in light of the referendum question. The aboriginal community has already said that this referendum is illegitimate and repugnant to the aboriginal community; yet the government is proceeding with it anyway, therefore riding roughshod over the aboriginal community and their voices. From my perspective, it's not the aboriginal community's capacity or ability that I'm concerned about. I'm worried about the government's approach to aboriginal peoples.

**Hon. G. Hogg:** I object, Madam Chair.

Again, the issue is that the aboriginal community has to sign on to an agreement. They have to sign on to the arrangement. I suspect — I know — they will not sign on to an agreement or an arrangement with respect to this without knowing that it's in the best interests of their children.

When the member goes off talking about a number of issues which are not specifically related to this matter and not related specifically to the issue of the aboriginal community's coming to an agreement.... This is about agreement. This is about them signing an agreement around the delegation that they have. That delegation has within it the context and framework for the funding that they receive. The aboriginal community is a well-informed, intelligent community which will not negotiate an agreement that doesn't meet their needs. To suggest that it wouldn't be appropriately funded would simply mean the community had signed an agreement they were not satisfied with. I do not believe that's the case.

We have had a lot of goodwill through this process. There are a lot of positive things happening in this ministry with the aboriginal communities. The aboriginal community wants to take responsibility for their children. They want to work with it. We recognize that the state, both federally and provincially, has a responsibility to fund those services and has a responsibility to ensure that there are standards of care in place and that there are accountabilities put into place. The aboriginal community will do a wonderful job of putting that together and making that work, and they won't sign it if they don't think it's going to work.

**J. Kwan:** My point in pointing out the Liberal government's direction with the referendum is that irrespective of what the aboriginal community says, they're going to move ahead anyway. The aboriginal community has already voiced their concerns on the referendum process. The government's moving ahead anyway, spending \$9 million on the referendum process that could, in my view, be better spent on aboriginal services and be directed here to these areas in support of the aboriginal community. Then I think we would perhaps see better results in terms of children in care, especially in relation to the aboriginal community. That's what we've seen.

Fair enough — it's not just this government. The history of what's happened to the aboriginal peoples and aboriginal children has been one that is.... Dismal is too light a word. It's shameful in terms of the past and what all levels of governments have done to the aboriginal community. From that perspective, this is where I'm distrustful about whether or not the government will actually be there to negotiate in good faith.

The other matter is, quite frankly, that I've seen the government negotiate elsewhere not particularly in good faith. I want to make sure that the aboriginal community, with this ministry in these negotiations, is going to have the supports they need to ensure that the funding is actually going to be in place to support the needs of the children in the aboriginal community so that they, too, have opportunities to maximize their potential.

I want to ask the minister a question around early childhood development. We sort of skipped back and forth over it a little bit. These questions will roll into early childhood development and special needs children and youth.

[1725]

One of the ministry's stated goals is to improve readiness to learn for children under six. The Ministry of Human Resources will be cutting funding that income assistance recipients receive for preschool. Hastings School uses some of its inner-city school funding for a prekindergarten program for kids who have not been to day care or preschool. What will the Ministry of Children and Family Development be doing to ensure that those children not able to access preschool will be prepared for kindergarten?

**Hon. L. Reid:** The member opposite will know that she has canvassed the inner-city school funding question many, many times both yesterday and today. In terms of what early childhood development is doing in terms of preparing children for school, I gave a myriad of examples in my remarks earlier today. I'm happy to revisit those topics with the member. We have all kinds of good, solid supports in place to ensure that when children enter the school system, they have realized their potential around attachment, resiliency and the ability to go forward.

The reason we are putting a solid program in place and the reason we are going to spend \$291 million over

five years is to prepare children so that when they enter the school system, they have some ability to succeed. That is what this entire discussion has been about today, or should have been about today, in terms of understanding the necessity and the obligation all of us share across government to champion the lives of children to go forward, to ensure that they have every single opportunity available to them.

The early childhood development pieces are pieces of a very large puzzle. There's no question about that — pieces of a very large pie. The early childhood development and the infant development program pieces are vitally important. The number of children in our communities who will involve themselves in programming through neighbourhood houses, family places, public libraries — all the supports that are there today in communities.... There are some pockets of excellence across our province. My challenge, our goal, is to ensure that those pockets grow larger and we reach out across this province.

We have some leading-edge programs — no question. We have some great opportunities for children who are zero to six years of age. I don't think there's any difficulty the member might experience in understanding our commitment to this. We've spent hours today canvassing every single cent we are investing in terms of early childhood development and how important it is.

Let me give the member the example for fetal alcohol syndrome. She seemed to be alarmed by the notion that we might spend dollars across government. All of us have a part in that disorder — that birth defect, if you will — whether it's diagnosis that comes under Health, whether it's Health Planning to reduce over time the number of babies born with fetal alcohol syndrome, whether it's supports for those special needs individuals or whether it's social programming because they experience social and language deficits. That is an across-government response. All of that package will benefit the children of this province.

Again, I would reference back to the human early learning partnership with the University of British Columbia and the work of Dr. Clyde Hertzman. The only way we will know if the strategic investments we are making this year have value is to base our future direction on good, solid science. We will do that. Those decisions will be taken and revisited every single year, probably every quarter, in terms of how best to get the most value out of this investment.

The member opposite seemed to have some confusion as to the actual target stated by the federal government for these dollars. The provinces and territories agreed to work together to improve and expand early childhood programs and services across the country — not to spend dollars beyond the age of six — and to target very effectively those expenditures. I believe we've done that.

[1730]

**J. Kwan:** What I'm concerned about is this government's and this ministry's and this minister's approach

to funding children and families who are in need. The issue is not about whether or not there's cross-government funding. That was not my particular issue.

My issue that I raised was: how much money is this government dedicating to aboriginal, to children, to family members who are in need in this province? My question to the minister was the unaccounted amounts of moneys the federal government has given to the provincial government of which my concern, which I raised on behalf of community groups, was that there's no information afforded to community groups by this government in this supposedly open and accountable government. That's why people everywhere are asking the questions: what happened to the \$39.7 million that the federal government has committed to? Where is it? Where is it being spent?

There's a whole lot of secrecy about that to date, and maybe that information will be forthcoming at a later date, but to date nobody has been able to get that information. People are very concerned about it. What people are speculating, hon. Chair, is that those moneys are being diverted to other areas of government, perhaps to general revenues, and are therefore siphoned off to other areas and not there to support early childhood development initiatives — the programs to which the dollars were intended for. That is what people are raising in terms of their concerns.

People are raising concerns, because prior to the election I know that this minister — according to the community information I've received — agreed that those moneys should go towards universal child care for all children, to support early childhood development. After the election it's a completely different story.

There are a lot of inconsistencies in terms of what we see, in terms of government action and what they said they would do. They sort of wonder, then. The community groups would be concerned.

Is it a wonder that we'll be here canvassing these questions on the issue that I asked a very specific question on, and the minister gave me a very broad answer, which I know she likes to read from her briefing notes. She wants to get on record, and she can do it over and over again, I suppose. I asked a very specific question of the minister, and that is: from the Hastings Community School, who use some of the inner-city school funding for a prekindergarten program for kids who have not been to day care or preschool, what will the minister do to ensure that those children not able to access preschool would be prepared for kindergarten? It's a very simple question.

**Hon. L. Reid:** The member opposite only has to check the *Blues* of moments ago, hours ago, in terms of the allocation of funding for early childhood development. There is no confusion, member. I would invite her to continue to do that, and I would invite her to continue to pose questions if she needs clarification. Absolutely, we are able to continue this discussion.

In terms of the continual reference to First Call!, they presented a report that I believe was received by

your government when you formed government in this province. I can assure this member that they have correspondence within probably ten days, dated within the last ten days, where they are asking for a decision on that allocation. That suggests to me that they did not receive a decision previously. I would simply advise the member to check the record very clearly.

In terms of the question about support for preschool learners, one of the programs we have great interest in promoting is the HIPPIY program, home instruction program for preschool youngsters. That is the program for children who are not currently engaged in a facility for preschool development, if you will. That program has done some wonderful work and will continue to do some wonderful work in our province.

It was my pleasure, very soon after we formed government, to attend the graduation ceremony for these little tiny souls who were five years old, wearing little mortar boards on their heads, acknowledging with their families and with their providers, with the ten or 15 languages that were spoken in that context, that they indeed had a leg up when it came to attending a classroom setting.

That is a valuable program. It is a program that is funded by this ministry. It is a program that will continue to go forward. Frankly, it is a program that understands the necessity of partnership. The individuals responsible for that program have gone across this country to secure funding. It is a showcase program. They have done amazingly well in terms of inviting in foundations to support the work they're doing. That is not anything other than something we can all be extremely proud of.

In answer to your preschool question — what do children do who are not able to engage in a preschool setting? — that is a fabulous example of a program they could participate in.

[1735]

**J. Kwan:** Is the minister suggesting, then, that the children in Hastings Community School can access HIPPIY moneys so they could engage and make sure that the children in this school would have access to prekindergarten preschool support?

**Hon. L. Reid:** Certainly to remind the member that the funding is currently in place till the end of June. There are future decisions to be taken about what the program looks like next year. We're interested in having a discussion.

**J. Kwan:** My God, we have definitely entered into the world of doubletalk with the Liberal government. What I asked the minister is this...: For Hastings school, the inner-city school funding for prekindergarten programs for kids who have not been to day care would be cut. The minister acknowledges that those funds will be eliminated and that the program will be eliminated sometime in June. There is a concern in

terms of what the children will be able to access in terms of preschool support after that time.

The minister then got up and waxed eloquent about all kinds of stuff. Then she did focus on the issue around the HIPPY program, which I know is actually a very good program. I asked the minister the question: will the children from Hastings school be able to access HIPPY? It's the program which the minister says is great. Therefore, people would be able to have access to it. Then she got up and said: "Well, gee, the funding won't disappear until sometime in June, and then we can engage in a discussion about that."

We know what will happen then. By June, you know what? The House would have risen. All would have been forgotten. The children would have been left without, and they would have nowhere to go. Then the minister will say: "Well, maybe you can get HIPPY. Maybe you can get this and that and all the other programs out in the broader community."

The fact of the matter is that those kinds of programs are shrinking because the funding is being reduced. You know what? For \$5.4 million for inner-city school funding, that program could be ensured that it is in place and be provided for.

I know these two ministers.... I know the Minister of Education has got up and said this: "You know what? We didn't cut the social equity envelope funding. We didn't cut inner-city school funding. The only thing we've done is give less money to the school boards to provide for that funding, minus the \$5.4 million for inner-city school funding, and then say to the school boards: 'Fund all of the programs; all four aspects of the social equity envelopes.'" And then the ministers and the government can get up and say: "We didn't cut the programs. The programs are still there. The only difference is that we're just not funding it, and we're not providing the moneys towards it, but you're expected to deliver the programs."

I fear that's what's going to happen here with the children in Hastings school. That's my concern. What I've heard so far from the minister has given me no comfort whatsoever in making sure that these children will actually have access to preschool programs in order for them to prepare for kindergarten.

[1740]

I want to ask the minister this question. It's been a matter of confusion in the broader community as well. The \$11 million coming from the federal government that's been designated for the early childhood development initiative — are all of those dollars federal moneys, or are there any provincial moneys?

**Hon. L. Reid:** In terms of the member's previous comments regarding the HIPPY program, the answer she got was exactly the answer she asked for. It's an example of a program for children who are not currently involved in a preschool program. Before there is any further confusion added to that, that's the answer to that question.

In terms of the budget and what's provincial and what's federal, the early childhood development

budget that we will take and put into programs is roughly \$39.92 million. That is roughly 50 percent federal funding and 50 percent provincial funding.

**J. Kwan:** Let me put the question this way as well. Is the \$291 million that the ministry is investing over the next five years in early childhood development all provincial moneys?

**Hon. L. Reid:** The \$291 million the member references is the contribution coming to our province from the federal government over five years. It's a \$2.2 billion commitment nationally, of which \$291 million flowed to British Columbia.

**J. Kwan:** So all of that money is federal. There are no provincial moneys at all in this amount. That actually raises the concern again in the broader community. Let me just ask this. Can I safely assume that the \$11 million that's being taken for the early childhood development initiative comes from the \$291 million of federal initiatives?

**Hon. L. Reid:** I apologize if I'm not clear on the intent of the member's question. If it was, "What is the provincial contribution over five years, and what is the federal contribution?" the member heard that \$291 million is the federal contribution over five years. Our contribution over five years is \$249 million, for a total of \$540 million over a five-year period expended — invested — strategically in early childhood development.

**J. Kwan:** Just a quick question, then. The \$11 million that's been dedicated towards early childhood development — is that federal moneys out of the \$291 million, or is that out of provincial moneys, or is it a split?

**Hon. L. Reid:** Can the member give me some sense of which particular \$11 million she's referencing?

**J. Kwan:** It was announced that there is \$11 million dedicated for early childhood development. I think the staff actually know what I'm talking about. Maybe the minister can ask them for their advice and answer my question.

**Hon. L. Reid:** I thank the staff for their assistance.

It's roughly 50-50, the same breakdown I gave earlier when we talked — roughly a 50-50 split federally and provincially.

**J. Kwan:** I'll have some more questions for the ministers in this set of estimates, but I am noting the time. I move the committee rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Motion approved.

The committee rose at 5:45 p.m.