

Exploring the Process of Change  
In British Columbia Social Services  
1991 – 2001: The Benefits of Hindsight

by

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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in the School of Child and Youth Care

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### **Abstract**

In 1991, a political event took place in British Columbia that had a major impact on the provision of social services. The province, which for 16 years had been governed by a right-of-centre, pro-business political party was, for the first time since 1975, governed by the left-of-centre NDP party. This conversion of government brought with it a series of major shifts in the provision of social services throughout the province. The organizational change that was initiated continued for the entire 10-year mandate of the provincial NDP.

This study explores the period of change and related issues using a hybrid model of methods derived from case study. Methods include participant observer research, a review of relevant literature and documents, and most significantly, key informant interviews with many of the leaders in provincial social services between 1991 and 2001.

Findings reflect the relationship between leadership and change and in particular the importance of the former to the latter. Findings also explore the role of values in social services change agendas, the importance of stakeholder involvement in organizational change and the importance of communications and media in the context of change.

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Finally, thank you to Brian, Doug, and Martin for support, advice and friendship.

### **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this paper to three people. First, I would to my parents, Ralph and Shirley Hardy who instilled in me both a desire to learn and a willingness to work. Those Sunday drives to the University of Manitoba campus appear to have paid off. To my wonderful wife Dianne Tai whose on-going support and patience through my lengthy educational journey has made that journey possible. Now we can get on with the rest of our lives. My love and thanks to all three of you.

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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

### Overview

In the fall of 1996, I was teaching a Child and Youth Care class for first year community college students in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia. The course was titled *Introduction to Community* and featured a section on current issues in child welfare. When I teach this class, I try to link current events to events of significance in the past five to ten years. This particular term, I began to tell the class about how the Korbin Commission and the Gove Report continue to influence child welfare practice and human resource issues in child welfare in the province of British Columbia.

As I looked out at my students, I could see that many of them were looking somewhat puzzled so I stopped and asked them if I was going too quickly. They assured me that I was not. I asked if they were particularly tired that evening; tiredness is often a problem for evening students, most of whom have worked a full day in the child welfare system before coming to the college for their course. No, they assured me, they were not overly tired. So I asked them what the problem was. One brave soul put her hand up and told me that I spoke about Korbin and Gove as if the students should know who they were. I was surprised. I certainly had assumed that these students would know something about Korbin and Gove. Even though they were first-year students, they were all working either full or part-time in the BC child welfare system. As such, their salaries, conditions of employment and the rights of the children they worked with were directly or indirectly linked to the work of Korbin and Gove. The Korbin report had been released three years earlier while the Gove report was only a year old.

I asked the class to indicate by show of hands who had heard of Gove or Korbin or both. About sixty percent had heard of neither. Of the remainder, only one had heard of both and nobody felt that they could speak knowledgeably about the work that Korbin and Gove had done and the impact it had had on the child welfare system. As their teacher and also as their colleague in the field, I was troubled by what my students were telling me. I believe that knowledge of the history of one's agency and field is important and has an impact on one's practice. We can learn from both our failures and successes and by doing so, we can provide better, more reliable services. The Korbin Report had an impact on human resources and labour relations in BC, while the Gove report affected both child welfare practice and public awareness of social services and also resulted in the creation of the Ministry for Children and Families. I saw these events as fundamental, critical knowledge for child and youth practitioners working in British Columbia. To pass this history on to my students, I initially looked for academic analyses of these key events. I was surprised to find no articles that offered critical analysis of these events. Callahan and Callahan (1997) have noted that most people are uninterested in child welfare, until a tragedy occurs. Clearly, the work of Gove would be characterized as responding to a tragedy. I was less surprised to find a lack of critical analysis of what might be thought of as lesser events that took place in the same era. The actual reports that had been created regarding these key events were quite long and very detailed and my experience as a teacher told me that this was not material that would likely be read by CYC students or workers. At this point I began to wonder if I should consider doing some analysis myself in order to fill this gap in the literature. This line of thinking proved to be the beginning of my plan to complete another graduate degree. In the meantime, I had classes to teach and I

needed to be able to discuss these key events with my students in ways that would work for them.

As a result of that conversation with my class, I incorporated a number of key events into lectures that I offered at a variety of university and community college classes. I assumed correctly that these types of events were not taught at all or were mentioned in passing. Students instead were taught about the current child welfare system or about the theory of child welfare practice. The teaching was almost always about the structure of the Ministry but not the history. I found that the discussions of events such as the Gove Report, the creation of the Ministry for Children and Families (MCF) and the failure of the Contract and Program Restructuring (CPR) process became the most provocative and interesting classes that I taught. We could discuss history, beliefs, leadership, change theory, values and politics. My students genuinely seemed to enjoy this.

A few months after my class discussion, I was at a meeting of college and university faculty members, all of us child and youth care educators. At a break, I got into a conversation with a fellow university instructor and he suggested that I might want to look at the possibility of working on a Ph.D. at the University of Victoria in the School of Child and Youth Care. He wanted to see more practitioners enter into university and potentially teach one day. He suggested to me that I consider what topic I would be interested in researching for my dissertation.

This was the first time I had thought about undertaking a project of the magnitude of a dissertation. I saw myself as a social services program administrator who also taught practice issues at a variety of Lower Mainland post-secondary institutions. Although I had completed two Masters degrees, I did not see myself as an academic or as a researcher. I

was confident about taking on the course work involved with a Ph.D., but I had real concerns about the research and writing of a dissertation. What would I write about?

I thought about this question long and hard. I spoke to teaching colleagues and to colleagues from the field. I kept coming back to the reality of how little the child welfare workers who were my students knew about the history of their own field and how that history influenced their current work. Over a period of months I came to realize that my own position in the field afforded me a unique vantage point from which to tell a portion of the story. I felt that I was in a position to make a contribution to research in the child and youth care field in British Columbia and I wanted the opportunity to write about events that I believed had had a great influence on the child and youth care workers in British Columbia. There was a rich history and a great deal of accessible documentation. There were many avenues to explore and the potential for a number of research goals. I wanted the opportunity to pull this material together in an easily accessible form and to share it with both CYC workers and CYC students.

One of the key questions that I had to answer was whose perspective I would look at. My students, I knew, were interested in the background of influential events. They wanted to hear, in direct and concrete ways, how these events had come about and what impact they had on the direct service work as well as the administration of child welfare agencies. I chose to focus my study on the topic of change and the importance of leadership and vision in bringing about system-wide change. I further decided to tell this story from the perspective of key leaders in government. My goal was to give these leaders the opportunity to tell their stories in their own words without fear of being

ridiculed or challenged. I was more interested in their stories than in my academic critique of the stories.

What I propose to do in the remainder of this chapter is to provide a background to and brief description of certain events that are key to understanding the period I am studying. Following that, I will set out my problem and attempt to position myself within the research I undertook. First, however, there are a large number of acronyms common to the child welfare field in British Columbia that need to be clarified.

### **Acronyms**

Before beginning to explore the key events that underpinned the change this thesis describes, I will take a moment to clarify my use of a number of acronyms throughout this document. Social Services have many acronyms. The ones I have included here are commonplace and I have used them in place of the full term in the interests of brevity. Although this list is not exhaustive, it does cover the major terms used in the British Columbia social services community and in this dissertation.

<b>ADM</b>	Assistant Deputy Minister. This government bureaucrat reports directly to the Deputy Minister and is usually responsible for a portion of the Ministry. In the Children's Ministry <sup>1</sup> , the deputies could be responsible for Community Living, Child Protection, Finances, etc.
<b>BCACL</b>	British Columbia Association of Community Living. This is a lobby group made up of contractors who work in the Community Living sector of British Columbia Social Services.
<b>BCGEU</b>	British Columbia Government Employee's Union. This is a large union in British Columbia. Most government employees are members of BCGEU as well as many contract agency employees.
<b>CYCABC</b>	Child and Youth Care Association of British Columbia. This is a professional association for BC child and youth care workers.

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<sup>1</sup> The ministry responsible for child protection changed names a number of time during the period of time of this study. In a number of places I refer to it simply as the Children's Ministry in order to avoid confusion.

<b>CYS</b>	Child and Youth Secretariat. This branch of government was in charge of a number of Children's Ministry initiatives including contract reform and standards.
<b>CARF</b>	Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. CARF is a US-based standards evaluation organization.
<b>COA</b>	Council on Accreditation. COA is a US-based standards evaluation organization.
<b>CPR</b>	Contract and Program Restructuring. This was a government process intended to streamline contracting and the government's relationship with contractors.
<b>CSSEA</b>	Community Social Services Employers Association. This provincially funded organization is responsible for bargaining with the unions on behalf of unionized social services agencies in British Columbia.
<b>CUPE</b>	Canadian Union of Public Employees. This is the large Canadian union for many Federal Government employees as well as a number of contract agency staff.
<b>DM</b>	Deputy Minister. The DM is the most senior bureaucrat of a ministry and reports to the Minister and to the office of the Premier. DMs are responsible for the day-to-day running of a ministry.
<b>FCFS</b>	Federation of Child and Family Services of British Columbia. This is a lobby group made of up contractors who work with children, youth and families in British Columbia.
<b>MCF</b>	Ministry for Children and Families. MCF was the provincial ministry charged with the protection of children and people with developmental disabilities. It was established in 1996 and replaced the Ministry of Social Services.
<b>MCFD</b>	Ministry of Children and Family Development. MCFD is the current provincial ministry charged with the protection of children and people with developmental disabilities. Established in 2001, this ministry replaced the former MCF.
<b>MLA</b>	Member of the Legislative Assembly. This person is elected to represent a region of the province in Victoria.
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament. This person is elected to represent a region of the country in Ottawa.
<b>MSS</b>	Ministry of Social Services. MSS was the provincial ministry charged with the protection of children and people with developmental disabilities. This ministry replaced the Ministry of Social Services and Housing which had previously been responsible for both child protection and social assistance benefits.
<b>MSSH</b>	Ministry for Social Services and Housing. MSSH was the provincial ministry charged with the responsibility of protecting children, caring for people with developmental disabilities and managing social assistance.
<b>NDP</b>	New Democratic Party. The NDP is the political party that governed British Columbia from 1991 to 2001.
<b>ROO</b>	Regional Operating Officer. The ROO is a government bureaucrat in charge of a geographic region of the province and reports to the ADM.

## **Background to the Time Period**

To understand the period under study, it is important to have some knowledge of the context within which these events arose. I will undertake a more complete historical review in Chapter 2; what follows here is merely a snapshot of the years leading up to the period I am studying.

Beginning in 1972 in British Columbia, there was a rapid growth in the number of organizations providing social services. The newly elected NDP government of the day began to privatize many of the child and family service programs that had up to then been run by the public service. It seemed clear to people working in the field that contracts were moving to the field because agencies were less expensive to fund than government programs. A major reason for this was that the sector for the most part was not unionized. The work was contracted out to existing private organizations and at the same time a large number of new, smaller agencies were formed in response to the newly tendered contracts. An agency, in this context, refers to an organization set up to deliver direct service. For the most part, agencies were registered non-profit societies although there were some for-profit agencies. Most agencies were small by government standards averaging under one million dollars income per year. Only a handful of agencies were larger than 10 million in annual income. During this time period, the field saw a dramatic increase in the number of social service agencies. The "new" work, however, was generated through a shift in the method of service delivery rather than an increase in the actual amount of service being offered. For the next twenty years agencies struggled to find enough contract work to manage their infrastructures and keep themselves alive. Contracts were tightly controlled,

with employees seeing very few salary increases and low or no benefits. When agencies found extra money, it was usually put into new services as opposed to supporting existing services. Agencies worked together but were continuously in competition with one another for contracts. Some agencies, especially those that were affiliated with national organizations, had internal standards for best practice. Although the government had its own internal standards, there was little or no monitoring of standards in the contract sector. Agencies were left to develop their own best practice standards, usually without the benefit of validity, reliability or applicability outside of the agency's own doors. The majority of employees were not unionized and with the exception of a handful of family services agencies they were not aligned with national organizations. Many agencies believed the government deliberately refrained from encouraging the child welfare field to grow in organization and sophistication because it hoped to avoid the development of a strong lobby that would result in higher costs for service delivery. The government relied on agencies to provide cheap labour to deliver most direct services and to be willing to accept thirty days notice on any contract. It was not a balanced relationship nor was it one that agencies felt that they had the power to change. The government had the clients, the dollars and the contracts. This was the scenario as British Columbia entered 1991. Flynn and Hodgkinson (2001) stated, "There is no body of scholarly literature assessing the roles, functions and contributions of the non profit sector beyond the evaluation research at the institutional level" (p. 3). The sector was in many ways an invisible group of service providers, unorganized, poorly paid, under-educated and lacking any true sense of its own power and its responsibility.

## Key Events

There are several key events and reports that I view as benchmarks in the ten-year time span covered by this study. I chose these events because they had a significant impact on the child and youth care sector, the agencies where I had worked and our clients. I detail them more completely in later chapters of this work, but will take a moment here to name them and then briefly describe their importance. These events are:

- Election of NDP government, November 1991
- Creation of Korbin Commission, March 1992
- Death of Matthew Vaudreuil, July 1992
- Release of Korbin Report, June 1993
- Creation of Gove Commission, May 1994
- Release of Gove Report, November 1995
- Establishment of Transition Commission, December 1995
- Proclamation of the Child, Family and Community Services Act, January 1996
- Creation of Ministry of Children and Families, September 1996
- Contract and Program Restructuring, April 1997
- Closure of Contract and Program Restructuring, February 1998
- D.E. Allen Report, April 1998
- Contract Reform/Standards, January 1999
- Defeat of N.D.P. Government, June 5, 2001

### *Election of the NDP*

In November of 1991, the NDP, with Michael Harcourt as its leader, was elected for a second time to govern the province of British Columbia. The NDP government was fundamentally different from the outgoing Social Credit government. As Carroll and Ratner (2005) observe:

The NDP came to power with organized labour at the core of its constituency, and with a whole range of progressive social movements arrayed around that core. Relations with the local capitalist class, a leading supporter of the old anti-NDP coalition that was Social Credit, were distant at best. Whereas the Social Credit government had typically shut out the social movements from decision-making processes - regarding them negatively as "special interest groups" - these same

social movements now had a seat at virtually every NDP decision-making forum (p. 172).

The first and only other NDP government in BC had governed from 1972-1975.

One of the first things they decided to do was to take charge of human resources management in the public sector in BC. They saw this as a way to stabilize provincial spending.

#### *Korbin Commission and Korbin Report*

The Commission of Inquiry into Public Service and Public Sector, also known as the Korbin Commission, was formed by the NDP government on March 6, 1992. The stated goal was to look at human resource management issues in the public sector in B.C. “The commission's mandate was deliberately broad in scope, encompassing all areas of human resource management in the public service and public sectors in British Columbia” (British Columbia, 1993, p.1).

#### *Matthew Vaudreuil and the Gove Report*

Matthew was born on October 3, 1986. The first recorded concern about his safety was voiced by a nurse in his mother's delivery room who saw the two together and remarked that this mother would not be able to successfully parent this child (British Columbia, 1995). Matthew lived for five years before dying at the hands of his mother on July 9, 1992. In the spring of 1994, Mathew's mother, Verna Vaudreuil, pleaded guilty to the charge of manslaughter (British Columbia, 1995).

The problem during Matthew's life was not a lack of child protection services. Indeed, his situation was repeatedly brought to the attention of child protection workers by

those who knew him and his mother, and the family received support and service in a variety of ways and in numerous parts of the province. Instead, the inquiry that followed his death ultimately found that the real issue was the Ministry's decision to prioritize Verna's stability over Matthew's safety.

In 1994, the Honourable Joy MacPhail was the Minister of Social Services. MacPhail had been working, as part of the government's larger initiative, on reforms to the legislation concerning child welfare. In May, 1994 she introduced the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* and the *Child, Youth and Family Advocacy Act*, both of which had been planned for some time. At the same time, and in the wake of Verna Vaudreuil's recent guilty plea, MacPhail announced the Independent Commission of Inquiry into the death of Matthew Vaudreuil. Shortly afterwards the government appointed Judge Thomas Gove to lead the commission of inquiry (British Columbia, 1995).

Gove was appointed by the Ministry of the Attorney General. The initial plan was for the inquiry to involve a review of files and to last about six weeks. In fact, it took 15 months and resulted in recommendations for changes to the child welfare system in BC that continue to unfold today. In all, the Gove Report included 118 recommendations for change. The first of these recommendations to be implemented was the creation of a Transition Commission.

#### *Transition Commission*

The person to transform the recommendations of the Gove Report from theory into practice was the first and only Transition Commissioner, Cynthia Morton. The Honourable Joy MacPhail, Minister of Social Services, gave Morton a three-year mandate

to implement Gove's recommendations, beginning on February 1, 1996. On September 17, after eight months, Morton presented Premier Glen Clark with a report titled *British Columbia's Child, Youth and Family Serving System: Recommendations for Change*. (Morton, 1996). Morton reported in a personal communication (May 21, 2004) that Clark was unhappy with the progress of the commission and responded to the slow pace by stopping the commission. Clark ordered the following changes:

- the creation of a Children's Commission to review child fatalities;
- the dismantling of the Ministry of Social Services;
- the creation of a new integrated Ministry for Children, Youth and Families; and,
- the termination of the office of the Transition Commissioner (Morton, 1996).

#### *The Creation of MCF and the CPR Process*

Premier Glen Clark ordered the creation of the MCF in September 1996, in response to both Gove's recommendations and Morton's report. By 1997, the new ministry had restructured the delivery of mandated social services, reorganized the regions, centralized decision-making as it related to the delivery of services and made ready to restructure the contract sector (Rimer, 1998). There was limited consultation with either the contracted agencies or the public. Penny Priddy was appointed the new Minister for Children and Families and the social services field greeted the new minister very positively. The sector expressed reservations, on the other hand, about the appointment of Robert Plecas as the Deputy Minister for Children and Families. Plecas had a long history as a provincial government bureaucrat, having worked in over 20 different ministries throughout his career. While the Premier strongly supported this appointment, the contracted agencies and their lobby groups expressed reservations, concerned that Plecas

was non-consultative and lacked experience in social services (R. Plecas, personal communication, June 15, 2004).

There were a number of community meetings in the fall of 1996 and the spring of 1997 with groups such as the Federation of Child and Family Service Agencies (FCFS) and the Community Social Services Employers Association (CSSEA), where concerns were raised by agency managers regarding Ministry direction, Ministry leadership, poor consultation practices and the perception that saving money rather than improving service delivery was the government's real agenda. One of the major concerns expressed by both groups was the speed of change.

Contract and Program Restructuring (CPR) was the MCF process for restructuring the contract sector of service delivery. Morton had reviewed the broad topic of change in the contracting sector in her report to the premier (Morton, 1996), as had Gove in his report (British Columbia, 1995). Neither Morton nor Gove, however, had recommended a process that was fiscally driven, short term or divisive. Rather, the Gove report made a series of recommendations based on consultation, a thirty-six month time frame and values that would help focus the changes. Morton talked about a new ministry and followed the same thirty-six month time frame as Gove. Very late in the CPR process, in fact after several regions had announced winners and losers of contracts, MCF shut down the entire process. The closing down of the process was done at a point in time when both Simon Fraser Region and South Fraser Region had chosen which agencies would be receiving contracts and which would not. The Regions had already called meetings to discuss service delivery transition and the transfer of contracts. Not only was the process shut down, but both the Minister and the Deputy Minister were replaced, Minister Priddy

with Minister Boone and Deputy Minister Plecas with Deputy Minister Corbeil. Minister Priddy moved to the Ministry of Health while Deputy Minister Plecas moved to the Premier's office as Deputy Minister to the Premier for four months. Minister Boone declared the CPR process suspended and ordered a review (MCF news release, 1998). The Minister's stated reason for the shut down of the process was, "We are stepping back from contract and program restructuring with a commitment to planning, consultation and training". (MCF news release, 1998). The participants in this study would not entirely support this rationale for shutting down the process; indeed, when asked each one speculated differently on the real reason.

#### *D.E. Allen Report*

The MCF then hired the firm of Doug Allen and Associates to conduct a thorough review of the CPR exercise. Allen and his associates toured the province and set up Town Hall meetings where community agencies were encouraged to come forward and talk about their experiences with CPR. Allen made a total of 32 separate recommendations.

These were broken into five sections:

1. Project Management;
2. Financial Implications;
3. Labour Relations/Human Resources Implications;
4. Communities and Stakeholders Input; and,
5. Regional Transition (Allen, 1998).

Out of the 5 broad categories there emerged several critical recommendations.

- Allow sufficient time for the process;
- If saving dollars is a goal, state it clearly;
- Provide strong leadership for the process;
- Link CPR to a broader vision;
- Review all cost implications; and,

- Review all labour relations implications (Allen, 1998).

### *Contract Restructuring and Standards*

With the CPR project over, MCF was still looking at in excess of 12,000 contracts, held by 1,200 agencies that in turn employed over 15,000 workers. The government's next exercise, introduced by Minister Boone and Deputy Minister Corbeil in 1999, was a change project called contract reform. According to David Young, a senior bureaucrat in the MCF at that time, the process would feature three major initiatives;

- Contract Reform;
- Continuing Agreements; and,
- Accreditation (Young, personal communication, January, 2000).

Contract Reform referred to the review and revision of the actual contracts that were signed by MCF and the contracted agencies. The old contract system was outdated and did not line up well with what other ministries were doing with contracting. Other than MCF, all other ministries had already updated their contract systems. There was automatic tendering of contracts over \$50,000 unless it was clear that there were no other notable contractors. Contracts to be renewed were reviewed formally prior to signing. For the first time, service outcomes were included in many contracts. The most significant changes for MCF contracts were:

- A conflict resolution process;
- A longer time period for notice of termination of contracts;
- Commitment to long-term partnering;
- Clarification on ownership of files;
- A commitment to outcome measurement; and,
- A commitment to accreditation.

The Contract Reform process resulted in the creation of two documents: a component schedule which detailed specifics of service standards as well as costs and the continuing agreement which spoke to broader issues of partnership. Continuing contracting agreements were the Ministry's attempt to redefine the partnership between contractors and the government. It was viewed by the contracted sector as a more balanced partnership and as such, it had only a start date but not a closing date. In order to be eligible for a continuing agreement, an agency must:

- have been delivering service for the Children's Ministry for a minimum of three years;
- have no outstanding issues with the contracting ministry;
- have outcome measures in place; and
- have made a commitment to the process of accreditation (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004)

#### *Accreditation*

Accreditation involves an organization going through a process of internal examination of policies and practices against best practice standards. Following this internal examination, the organization invites an independent accrediting body to conduct an audit, ensuring compliance with standards in areas such as policy, record keeping, risk management, quality improvement, and a variety of others. The Ministry for Children and Families had decided to contract with two large American accreditation bodies: The Council on Accreditation for Child and Family Services (COA) and The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) to accredit contracted agencies throughout the province. In return for the opportunity to work with British Columbia agencies, CARF and COA offered a twenty-five percent reduction in fees to organizations in British Columbia (D. Young, personal communication, January, 2000).

Gove (in British Columbia, 1995) said that without acceptable and recognized standards there could be no meaningful evaluation system. This belief is at the heart of the accreditation. The government had a five-year plan to implement accreditation across the province starting in 1999. All agencies with budgets in excess of \$350,000 had to commit to the accreditation process or face the loss of contracts. (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004).

### *Provincial Election*

On June 5, 2001, there was a provincial election in British Columbia. The NDP was defeated and the Liberal Party was elected.

### **Problem Statement**

The events that have been briefly outlined above are discussed in considerable detail in chapters four and five. I have introduced them here to give the reader a sense of the context of my study and the reasons for my interest in this time period. A full list of interviewees is provided at Appendix D.

I thought that in order to better understand these events, their context, and to evaluate them, I needed to talk with a specific group of people. I wanted to hear from the decision makers themselves. What had they intended? How had they hoped that their projects would work out? What was their assessment of the impact of their work on child and youth care in British Columbia? I wanted child and youth care workers to know and understand what had been intended, what had actually happened and possibly why it had happened. It was one thing to read the conclusions of the Gove Report or to hear me

explain how MCF was created or to hear an agency person talk about CPR. It was on an entirely different level of understanding that I listened to Judge Gove explain how he had done his work or to ask a Deputy Minister how he evaluated the success of programs he had created. I thought that through interviews and analysis I could tell a story and possibly bring that story to life. When I say that I want to tell a story, what I mean is that I want to give the government leaders who were interviewed for this research the opportunity to tell their stories of the events they were involved in creating or implementing. As my research progressed, it became clear that the results would be of interest to a much wider audience than merely the child and youth care community.

Many in the child welfare field will say that child and youth care workers are viewed as less professional than, for example, social workers, psychologists or teachers (B. Harper, personal communication, June 30, 2004). In many meetings and public forums their opinions are discounted. Indeed, many child and youth care workers pride themselves on not being professional, by which they mean they do not aspire to the same status as social workers, teachers, or psychologists. They see themselves as deliberately training differently for a different type of work. The downside is that the rest of the child welfare world sees "different" as "inferior" (B. Harper, personal communication). Many workers are frustrated when they want to be seen as peers by other professionals but at the same time they resist embracing the education and professional training that would bring that credibility.

Some markers of professionalism include membership bodies, codes of ethics, conferences and a sense of the history of one's profession. Child and youth care workers in BC lack many of these qualities (D. Sabourin, personal communication, June 15, 2004).

Anglin (1999) examined the differences between child and youth care and social work, finding that child and youth care professionals tend to focussing on the individual and issues related to self-awareness. Social work professionals, on the other hand, tend to focus on the community and power relationships within and among communities. Not all child and youth care writers are as clear in defining the reality of the profession. Krueger (1991) argues that one of the most important tasks facing child and youth care is to "work towards a consensus definition of who we are" (p. 385). The Child and Youth Care Association of British Columbia (CYCABC) has struggled to survive for years and, in the opinion of a number of experienced administrators in the field, has largely failed at attracting the vast majority of child and youth care practitioners needed to claim a relevant provincial voice (D. Sabourin, personal communication). Other provincial organizations have had more success. The Alberta Child and Youth Care Workers Association has developed a code of ethics but this work has not had a significant impact on British Columbia child welfare or on the child and youth care workers in British Columbia. The Alberta Child and Youth Care Workers Association has an ambitious certification plan and appears to have a vibrant role in child welfare in the province of Alberta, a situation that had not been found in the British Columbia child and youth care system (D. Sabourin, personal communication).

The history of their profession does not seem to be very important to child and youth care workers' lives in British Columbia (M. Harris, personal communication, August 12, 2004). My own students confirmed this observation. Events that some would consider of monumental significance to the field have little or no visibility among the direct service providers (M. Harris, personal communication). Ferguson and Anglin

(1985) see the profession's lack of political involvement and awareness as a problem in the child and youth care field. "Political involvement has not traditionally been an area in which child care professionals have been very active, but such involvement is necessary for effectively advocating on behalf of children and families." (p. 99). It was with this in mind that I set out to develop some written material that I could use for my students and for my employees. I wanted the material to be user friendly and to be relevant to child and youth care workers. A significant number of child and youth care workers in the province of British Columbia have not completed a university degree (B. Harper, personal communication, June 30, 2004). In my last place of employment in the contract sector, fully one-third of the child and youth care workers and most managers did not have an undergraduate degree. My colleagues reported the same thing and suggested that many child and youth care workers they knew did not read academic journals or research reports. Instead, they preferred a narrative style of reporting and learning which they felt was more accessible (B. Harper, personal communication, June 30, 2004; D. Sabourin, personal communication, June 15, 2004). In fact, for many workers in the field academia is a foreign state. Pence discusses this lack of connection between child and youth care workers and the research that informs their practice.

The world of research is often perceived (and presented) as encompassing the distant and enshrouded summits of the Ivory Tower of Academia. It is the *pronouncements* of researchers, the final *products* of the research endeavour, their reports and articles that are most often passed down to those labouring in the frontlines. The *activity* of research: of planning, of data collection, of site visits, is often so obscured in the magical writing of tables and statistics that a worker in the field is forced to consider only the distilled punch-line, the conclusions; and too often these more intelligible parts of a report of research article are couched in either so narrow or so circumspect terms, that the reader emerges from the experience reinforced in the belief that

there is very little that research has to tell her or that she has to tell research (Pence, 1990, p. 236-237, italics in original).

Kuehne and Artz (1997), however, argue that research is relevant in child and youth care and that research and direct practice have been brought together.

When I began this study, I wanted to do two things. First, I wanted to tell the story, from the perspective of those involved, of what I saw as ten years of critical change in the field of child welfare in British Columbia. Second I wanted to analyze those changes focussing on aspects that students and workers would find accessible and relevant. I chose the ten-year time period because it was relatively current and I had access to many of the informants who would help shed light on these events.<sup>2</sup> More importantly, given changes in government at both ends of the time frame this time period had a clear beginning and end. The focus for my exploration would be two-fold: I would look at "leadership" and "change". Because the period of time was marked by dramatic change in the system of service delivery, I felt that my students would benefit from an analysis of that change and its effect on their current work. The time period also had a number of compelling leaders who championed the changes using different leadership styles. I wanted to investigate who those leaders were, what decisions they had made and what influences helped to shape those decisions. Finally I wanted to examine the impact of leadership styles on an agenda of change.

### **Personal Positioning**

I have worked in the child welfare field for over 30 years. In that time, I have worked in three provinces and have held over 25 different positions in more than a dozen

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<sup>2</sup> Complete lists of the key events and key leaders are offered in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

agencies. For most of the past 20 years, I have held senior management positions and for the past 12 years, these positions have been in British Columbia.

I had returned to British Columbia on the eve of the 1991 provincial election. It was the beginning of a great deal of change in the social welfare field, in the child and youth care field and in contracted services delivery. This would be the beginning of my analysis.

As I begin this paper it is important to locate myself in my research. I am an experienced child welfare administrator and as such I have come to rely on a set of core values that are at the heart of my belief system. They are:

- be pragmatic;
- avoid political affiliation;
- put ideology into context;
- practice reasoned debate; and,
- learn to accept "No" as an answer.

I believe that these values are crucial to the success of an organization operating in our field, and I credit them with my survival and my ability to influence practice and policy in this very competitive environment. I will take a moment now to clarify what I take these values to mean.

I use the term "pragmatic" to summarize my values. When I say, "be pragmatic," I mean as opposed to being idealistic. My particular brand of pragmatism is not a lot different from the government itself, as described by Carroll and Ratner (2005):

A second point of tension, viewed from the agency side, involved difficulties in *realizing political principles* under the pressure of contending economic and political realities. Part of this tension entailed a struggle between "principles" and "pragmatism," which was not unconnected to the practice of political brokerage (p. 174, italics in original).

An administrator needs to do the practical things that are required to keep the agency alive. It is important to avoid the trap of clinging to ideals in a reality that does not reward them. I also avoid political affiliation. Because most of the dollars coming into the provincial social services system come from a government funding body, to tie one's agency to a particular political ideology is not practical. In simpler terms, all governments are turned out of office at some point. For a social services agency to survive long term, it is critical to be non-aligned. This is a simple pragmatic reality.

It may seem as though I am arguing for a complete avoidance of political ideology, but this is not my position. Rather, I believe that to be effective, one must make the pragmatic decision to put ideology into context. My strategy is to focus my values on terms of the work that my agency does and the needs of those we serve. In order to maintain my position and influence on service and funding directions, I must ensure that I am at the decision-making table; ideally at all the decision-making tables. I will not find myself at more than one table if I am viewed as supportive of only one political ideology. I have successfully worked through three different governments and eight different premiers during my career in the province of British Columbia. I have not always agreed with those leaders or their ministers, but I ensured that I was in a position to influence change and to challenge the status quo.

In my experience, there is always room at a decision-making table for reasoned debate. Arguments that are well researched and prepared, then presented in a logical, considered manner, are usually well received. An administrator who learns to accept "No," as well as "Yes," and refuses to personalize the debate, will be invited back to the table for further discussion. There is more influence inside the room than outside.

I summarize these values by calling them pragmatic. I believe that a pragmatic view, as I have outlined it above, will lead to success as an administrator in the child welfare field. Bringing my pragmatic view to the events briefly outlined above leads me to the research questions that direct this study.

### **Research Questions**

There are four research questions that are central to this study. They are:

1. What were the intentions of key officials when they attempted to introduce significant change to the British Columbia social services system?
2. What were the change philosophies used by these same leaders?
3. What was learned from the experiences and how do the leaders assess these change events in hindsight?
4. How might these learned lessons be applied to future change agendas?

I undertook this study in the hope that by reviewing the relevant documents and by interviewing key participants I might be able to answer these questions.

## Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

### Context and Ideology

Although this study explores social services in British Columbia from 1991-2001, the events discussed will make more sense if put into a larger historical context. Development and restructuring had happened in social services in British Columbia and in Canada prior to 1991 and these earlier developments had an impact on the ten-year window of time that I am exploring. While it could be argued that the child welfare field is by its nature prone to change, influenced as much by the political will of the day as by developing research, Hamilton (1995) has suggested that the end of the nineteenth century was a high water mark for change and restructuring in Western Europe and North America. By the end of the nineteenth century, with the development of the modern understanding of human development, children were for the first time being seen as other than tiny adults. By this time church groups and other charities were developing orphanages and training schools for children who had prior to this time been placed in poor houses and workhouses. Hamilton argues that because the nineteenth century's major social revolution was industrialization, any shift in values that included the rights of children had to be considered significant. Strong-Boag (2002) also argues that there were specific reasons for attitudes towards children to change after the industrial revolution. Although many factors were involved, she cites a few in particular, including:

- the development of a more liberal Christianity;
- the growth of industrial and agricultural modernity;
- the rise of the middle class;
- the greater emancipation of women; and,
- enlarged notions of citizenship. (Strong-Boag, p. 31-32).

In Canada, from the 1830s onward, volunteers and private philanthropy played an important role in developing Canada's social services system (Chappell, 2006). Church groups began to try to assist "the worthy poor." This often meant that two-parent families with children were deemed worthy of support while others were not. Charities and not-for-profit societies began to form for the purpose of delivering services to children and families. In Canada, the Y.W.C.A. was formed in 1893, as was the National Council of Women. Women played a key role in developing social services by creating organizations such as the Elizabeth Fry Society and the Salvation Army.

By the turn of the century, the state began to involve itself in the care of children. In 1893, Ontario passed the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the federal government passed the Juvenile Delinquents Act in 1908. This was significant because governments were for the first time making laws specific to children rather than grouping children together with adults.

In 1900, the Canadian Federal government put the provinces in charge of child welfare. British Columbia passed the Infants Act in 1901, allowing the province to transfer legal guardianship from the state to a Children's Aid Society. Hamilton (1995) discusses the development of the Children's Aid Societies in Victoria for the children living there and in Vancouver to service the children living elsewhere in the province. In 1919 the first Superintendent of Neglected Children was appointed in British Columbia and given the responsibility of visiting and inspecting Children's Aid Societies, of which there were three: Victoria Children's Aid Society, Vancouver Children's Aid Society and Catholic Children's Aid Society of Vancouver (Wharf, 1993).

Although the passage of these acts and the development of the Children's Aid Societies would appear to show a significant growth in issues related to child protection, Cruikshank (1995) points out that it would be over 90 more years before the British Columbia government began to look at systemic child welfare concerns related to something as basic as fatality reviews. Cruikshank points out that fatality reviews for children in the care of the state remained the responsibility of the coroner's office and these reviews were done in isolation from other child fatalities.

As the field developed and the volume of service delivery increased, government funding for these services remained low. The majority of service providers were women volunteering their time. The volunteers were well intentioned but not trained or adequately resourced (Wharf, 1993). While the field was beginning to professionalize and the Societies were hiring trained social workers around this time, the social workers were responsible for little direct service provision. As Wharf describes it, the social workers were providing administrative, investigative, supervisory, and other services but were not directly caring for children. Instead, the children were most often cared for by foster parents who were reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses rather than being paid a salary to care for the children. In many ways, Wharf argues, the foster care system was an extension of the early emphasis on a strong volunteer contribution to child welfare (Wharf, p.33). There was not a significant shift towards mandatory reporting of child abuse until the 1960s and the shift came as a result of work done in the medical community rather than the child welfare community. Kempe, a physician, described battered-child syndrome for the first time in 1962 and this event led quickly to the enactment of laws requiring physicians to report suspected child abuse. In British Columbia, the duty to report child

abuse was mandated in 1967. Another factor that changed Canada dramatically in the 1960s was the introduction of new immigration policies. Graham (2003) argues that the increase in immigration during this time was directly related to new immigration selection principles introduced in 1962.

### **Professionalization of the Field**

Wharf (1993) describes the way in which the professionalization of child welfare began with formal training of social workers and the creation of practice standards. The University of Toronto developed a Social Services Department diploma program in 1914 and the Canadian Association of Social Workers was established in 1926. The University of British Columbia developed its Social Work program in 1926, the same year that Charlotte Whitten became the Director of the Canadian Welfare Council. In 1927 Whitten conducted a survey of child welfare issues in British Columbia, which Wharf argues established the basis for the development of professional child welfare services in British Columbia. Recommendations included

- the need for social agencies to work together rather than as isolated units in the community;
- the need to make more organized efforts to keep children in their own homes rather than place them in institutions;
- that trained social workers be hired to staff children's aid societies as field workers in the community helping families, rather than as institutional personnel caring for children; and,
- that the care and maintenance of wards should be financed entirely by the municipal or provincial government.

The province accepted Whitten's recommendations in 1930 and the city of Vancouver followed suit in 1932 (Wharf, 1993).

Child Welfare continued to evolve steadily from the 1920s through the post war years when there was a population explosion brought about by an economic boom. There was a demand for more government involvement and more services, which in turn led to growth in government-operated institutions. The child welfare system was becoming increasingly the responsibility of the government and Wharf (1993) describes the resulting decline in the influence of church groups and charities. Society became increasingly aware of and concerned about "social problems" and demanded that the government act in the interest of children who needed protection. Wharf goes on to describe the development of university and college courses specific to child welfare. In addition, at around this time the government began to contract out a number of services to non-profit societies. One of the key documents that influenced government was the Marsh Report, written by McGill University social work instructor Leonard Marsh. Marsh called for welfare reforms in 1943 and his design, as described by Graham, Swift, and Delaney (2003) had an impact on the development of a Canadian social safety net.

### **Contracting Out**

There were some concerns expressed by social scientists regarding the relationship between professionalism and contracting out. Ismael (1988), for example, argues that an important impact of contracting out public services to the private sector has been identified as the deprofessionalization of the public sector. However, it was hard for governments to ignore the cost savings that would result from this type of service delivery. Simply put, it is cheaper to hire a non-profit society to deliver services than it is to have unionized government workers deliver that same service directly.

Denholm, Pence and Ferguson (1983) describe the move in the 1970s away from large government institutions towards a focus on smaller settings. They argue that this was the result of the identification of specific types of problems in children and an attitude that encouraged removing such children from the mainstream society and placing them in institutions. Denholm et al. go on to argue that genuine treatment programs were in fact few and often ineffective so a number of private societies attempted to create residential settings, sometimes based on the cottage system, with more specialized treatment goals. The goals were very difficult to attain, however, because of the lack of adequate knowledge, a dearth of trained personnel, and inadequate funding. The authors give the following list of such institutions that were operating in the early 1970s:

large, government institutions:

- Woodlands
- New Denver
- The Maples
- Brannan Lake
- Willingdon

smaller, privately owned facilities:

- Laurel House
- St. Euphrasia's
- Pacific Centre
- Cedar Lodge
- Seven Oaks
- Chrisholm
- Children's Foundation (Denholm et al., 1983, p.42).

Since the 1970s, we have seen a move to create alternatives to the traditional residential system of care. Denholm et al. (1983) discuss the increase in the number of group homes as well as therapeutic foster homes. In addition, they say, "there has been a campaign for more community involvement in the organization of family support services and the introduction of large-scale, school based child care programs" (Denholm et al., p.

43). Many researchers applauded this reduction in the number of larger institutions. "That large institutions are being phased out is undoubtedly a good thing because the demands of their social systems all but preclude personalized care and the "normalizing" experience that developing children require" (Durkin, 1990, p. 110).

This was also the era that saw the introduction of contracting out as a new service structure. Armitage (1986) argues that contracting out tends to diffuse responsibility as well as making the organization that provides the service the captive of the one that pays for it. Despite criticism regarding the quality of services and the problems related to responsibility, governments chose to contract out in order to save money and private organizations are always ready to accept contracts on this basis. Ben Carniol, in his book *Case Critical*, is critical of the impact of contracting out on the social service workers who form the backbone of social service delivery. He argues that by contracting out, governments manage to avoid unions and thus workers are not able to negotiate their own terms of employment. Carniol also argues that contracting out leads to a competitive bidding process that does little to improve service delivery. He points out that the cheapest service can also be the least effective service, as is frequently evidenced by periodic scandals within the nursing home industry (Carniol, 2005, p. 107). McBride discusses the way that contracting out achieves at least two neo-liberal goals: "although the state continues to provide funds, it transfers delivery of services and profit-making opportunities to the private sector" (McBride, 2005, p. 105).

Contracting out also inevitably leads to an imbalance in the power relations between contractors and government. Robbins and Longston (2001) define power as, "a capacity that A has to influence the behaviour of B, so that B acts in accordance with A's

wishes." (p, 224). Understanding how power relates to dependency further clarifies this definition. Robbins and Longston state, "the greater B's dependency on A, the greater the power A has over B" (p. 229). This describes the relationship that exists between government (A), controlling both funds and clients, and contracted service providers (B).

Yet, with all the changes, the system is still not sympathetic to the needs of either the workers or the children. Durkin underlines this point:

Children and child care workers alike are prisoners of a system that succeeds in bringing out the worst in all of us rather than the best. It is a bitter irony that there are so many needy children and so many good, decent, capable, and hard-working child care workers who are ready, willing, and able to help, and yet the way their relations are structured all too often precludes quality child care (Durkin, 1990, p. 114).

As Carr, et al. argue, "the core reality is this: major changes in organizations typically do not succeed " (Carr, et al., 1996, p. 11). Even when change is well planned and organized, the authors maintain, "no organization that initiates long-range change today can have any real assurance that the change will be relevant in two much less five years" (p. 19).

### **Values and Their Impact on the Field**

Values form the foundation of political decision-making. Stein (2001) argues that from the 1960s onward Canadian values began to change as we shifted from prioritizing the needs of the disadvantaged groups to prioritizing the needs and rights of individuals. One result of this, she argues, is the increased emphasis on individual autonomy and the shift "from solidarity towards self-affirmation" (p. 58). Ignatieff (2000) also describes this tension between the rights of the majority versus the rights of the minority:

In other words, rights have a double-sided relationship to democracy. Rights enacted into law by democratically elected representatives express the will of the people. But there are also rights whose purpose is to protect people from that will, to set limits on what majorities can do.

Human rights and constitutionally guaranteed rights are supposed to have a special immunity from restriction by the majority (p. 2).

The tension between majority wishes and the rights of disadvantaged citizens is played out everyday in the world of social services. Governments must decide who will receive services, for how long, and in what quantity. When service needs outweigh their supply, decisions must be made regarding which groups will be prioritized and which problems or concerns should receive attention. This same tension is played out in both the health system and the education system. Stein (2001) describes the importance of efficiency as a means rather than an end, asking whether it is efficient to pour funds into a person or a problem that has little likelihood of a positive outcome. Governments must determine whether efficiency should be a determinant of service provision. Grant (1965) and O'Neill (1994) both warn of the consequences of moving away from the historically important value of government responsibility and intervention to a system that is driven by market forces and the autonomy of private enterprise.

Parton (1997) argues that the rise of the new right has a direct impact on the practice of social work. Parton says that the concept of "moral panic" can be used to characterize the attitude towards social work in Britain in the mid-seventies. He goes on to argue that the rise of the "new right" has resulted in the creation of a crisis in regard to child protection, resulting in a shift in the view of social workers from helper to adversary.

Callahan and McNiven (1988) discuss the emergence of the rights movement in British Columbia, in the 1970s and 1980s, noting that although the Children's Aid societies in Vancouver and Victoria were quasi-governmental agencies, bridging the gap between private and public organizations, the two sectors nevertheless remained separate from one another in terms of planning, funding and service delivery. Service recipients

began to organize, often with help from federal government grants. The target of their criticism was frequently provincial social services. Callahan and McNiven go on to explain how professional organizations such as the British Columbia Association of Social Workers joined with anti-poverty groups to lobby for better funding and improved resources.

On the other hand, writers such as Osborne and Gaebler (1992), Peters (1993), Savoie (1993), Seidle (1995), and Wheatley (1999) all question the effectiveness of government intervention, government programming and the role of the state in the delivery of services. They argue in favour of private-sector delivery of services. Wheatley, in particular, argues that privatization can in fact lead to greater independence and resiliency on the part of the private service providers. The tension is between a belief that we should return to older values and that endorse government responsibility in direct service delivery and a belief that we need to move on from those values towards a new and better set of values.

This tension formed part of the underpinning for the 1991 provincial election in British Columbia. On one hand, there was a provincial government formed by the Social Credit Party who believed in fiscal conservatism. They had been in power for the previous 16 years and for 36 out of the previous 39 years. The official opposition, the NDP, was a left of centre party with progressive political values and a belief in the importance of government involvement to protect minority rights. The NDP was allied with the movement towards more progressive rights while the outgoing Social Credit Party was not viewed as sensitive to that movement.

It is interesting to note that although the "rights revolution" was very much alive in British Columbia, it was not nearly as evident in other areas of the country. In Alberta, the Conservative government of Premier Ralph Klein had made very bold moves that angered rights groups, unions and the disadvantaged. First elected as Premier of Alberta in 1992, Klein had won three consecutive elections on a platform of fiscal restraint and support to business. He had been successful in these endeavours to the point that the Fraser Institute, a right-wing think tank, awarded him its first International Fiscal Performance Award.

In 1995, Mike Harris was elected premier of Ontario and led his Conservative colleagues towards what he called a Common Sense Revolution, a term borrowed from the Reagan Republicans in the United States. He led his province into an era of government downsizing, welfare cutbacks, mergers of school boards as well as municipalities and an overhaul of education curricula.

The political successes of both Klein and Harris were indicative of a major shift to the right side of the political spectrum and although there was much concern about both their methods and the impact of these changes, there was little debate about the political effectiveness of these two premiers. Their belief systems appeared to resonate with the majority of voters.

British Columbia went to the polls in 1991 at a time of transition. After many years of Social Credit government, the people of British Columbia chose to shift from a traditional right-of-centre government to a left-of-centre, reform-based socialist government. The new government was about to enact a wide range of change and restructuring and once elected it would not take long to get started. Connor and Lake

(1988) argue "the political / legal environment, swinging from conservative to moderate to liberal and back again, can on its own serve as a potent source of change" (p. 19).

Governments in most provinces in Canada contract out huge portions of direct service to organizations including school districts, hospitals, colleges and universities, crown corporations and social service providers. This contracting accounts for the majority of government spending. A review of how contracting is done, the actual costs and how contracting could be improved would certainly have an impact on service delivery as well as government costs. It was for this reason that the new provincial NDP government set up an inquiry into the public service and the public sector as one of its first major initiatives.

### **Change**

Change can be triggered by both internal and/or external sources. Connor and Lake (1988) make this argument and discuss, for example, how internal sources of change may include internal staff with external affiliations applying knowledge to internal situations. New organizational goals or even excess organizational resources can also trigger internal change. External sources of change may include such elements as social changes, the political legal environment, economic conditions and technological developments. Lee (1997) suggests that in organizations, which are prone to bureaucracy and protection of the status quo, organizational change will not take place until the pain of staying the same becomes greater than the pain of changing (p.297). This point of view is supported by Connor and Lake (1988) who define resistance to change as "any attempt to maintain status quo when there is pressure for change. Acts of resistance can slow or stop the

organization's transition from its current state to some desired future state" (p. 117). This is true in the social services sector where change is often a response to an internal force such as change in leadership or an external force such as change in government priorities, funding levels or standards.

In November of 1991, with a newly elected government at the helm, the province of British Columbia and the Social Services Ministry began to move forward in an agenda of change. This desire to change was not surprising. Most new governments initiate change in order to move away from the status quo of the old government and help the new government to put its stamp on its jurisdiction. However, what is promised does not always translate into action. As Evans (1998) wrote, "the contemporary language of business, government and politics is amoral, facile and self-serving, a clattering babble of competing voices touting narrow interests" (p. 105). The language of change and the fact of change are not always the same thing.

Initially, it was planned change and it was change that went against the current of social change in much of the rest of Canada. There was clearly a neo-liberal agenda in place in much of Canada. As McBride puts it, "this increased use of P-3 ventures and contracting out of services achieves two neo-liberal goals. Although the state continues to provide funds, it transfers delivery of services and profit-making opportunities to the private sector" (McBride, 2005, p 105). Alberta was already moving towards an agenda that featured tax cuts, reduced services and a downsizing of government and Ontario was beginning their so-called "Common Sense Revolution". Private sector writers such as De Bono (1993), Drucker (1995), Peters (1985), and Senge (1990) were championing fiscal restraint and the need for change in order to downsize and reinvent service delivery. This

was part of a belief that government services would benefit from the application of business principles. It was not that all programs were simply cut by neo-liberal governments. McBride quotes Houle (1990) in the following:

Outright abolition of programs or draconian restructuring has not been characteristic of social policy reforms. Rather, other techniques have found favour: greater selectivity in programs that were previously universal, increased restrictiveness in determining eligibility for programs, and imposition of ceilings on program costs or, alternatively, attempting to make them self-financing (Houle, 1990 in McBride, 1997, p. 89).

The typical change pattern used the following steps:

- initiate strategic plan;
- consult with the affected sector;
- re-draft plan;
- implement change; and,
- revise and evaluate change.

The key was to have an initial strategic plan to put forward. This was accomplished through the creation of the Korbin Commission of Inquiry into Public Service and Public Sector. By reviewing and analyzing the public sector, the government hoped to be able to create a series of significant changes that in turn would control costs and stabilize service.

Kurt Lewin published a change theory model in 1947 that featured a three-stage model of change that involves unfreezing, changing and refreezing (Proehl, 2001). Lewin provided the template for change theory; most organizational change models that were developed after Lewin featured a series of steps ending with a re-stabilizing of the environment. Ferguson and Anglin saw change as a cyclical process describing it this way:

The change cycle depicts a process in which an adaptation is made that restores equilibrium in the system. If an adaptation is not made, however, the system remains in a state of disequilibrium which, if allowed to continue, can create more stress, which results in yet greater

disequilibrium, and so on. The downward spiral that ensues when a state of equilibrium is not attained can be a destructive process, leading ultimately to the disintegration of the system (Ferguson and Anglin, 1985, p. 94).

Beckard and Harris (1987), Brager and Holloway (1978), Galpin (1996), Kotter (1996), and Schaeffer (1987) all developed change models with anywhere from four to nine steps or stages (Proehl, p.89). All of these models feature a loop where the last stage leads back to the first stage allowing the cycle to repeat. The process outlined by Lewin applies to the events this study is concerned with in the following way: over the ten years of change that are examined here, the social service field seems to have locked into the change stage of the model. It seems that the field was unable to "refreeze". A good example of this is the creation and early years of the Community Social Services Employers Association. I will return to this example and discuss it more fully in Chapter 4. There is more change taking place and at the same time change itself is changing.

Schaefer and Fassel state:

We know that change appears to be accelerating at a tremendous rate, and concomitantly our view of change is also changing. In the past, in the dominant system of the culture, change was not considered "normal." It was an upheaval or crisis that forced one to do something different. This was followed by a period of stability, shattered by another change; however, there was pressure to get things back to stasis and therefore, security (Schaefer and Fassel, 1988, p. 21).

The work of the Korbin Commission was not the only change agenda that the sector was dealing with. The Gove Report led to the Transition Commission, which initiated the creation of MCF. The CPR process followed and so, in turn, did Contract Reform. All of these processes took place over a five year time period. With the exception of the Gove Inquiry, none of these initiatives ran to term. The sector was stuck in change mode and nobody seemed to know how to re-stabilize the social services system.

Managing change is not easy. Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) argue that one reason for the difficulty in managing change is the inability of most managers to plan effectively, particularly when the direction of change is uncertain. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the effect of this observation on planned change in the world of social services. The following chart, developed by Proehl in 2001 and reproduced in Figure A, summarizes a variety of change models.

**Figure A - Comparison of Organizational Change Models**

Beckard and Harris 1987	Brager and Holloway 1978	Schaeffer 1987	Kotter 1996	Galpin 1996
1. Determine the need for change	1. Initial assessment	1. Clarify the change imperative	1. Establish a sense of urgency	1. Establish need to change
2. Define the desired future state	2. Preinitiation: Set the stage for change	2. Detail the new of changed system	2. Create the guiding coalition	2. Develop and disseminate vision
3. Describe the present state	3. Initiation: Introduce the change	3. Identify required resources	3. Develop vision and strategy	3. Diagnose current situation
4. Assess the present in terms of the future to determine the work to be done	4. Implementation: Actualize the plan	4. Specify resource development activities	4. Communicate the vision	4. Generate recommendations
5. Manage the transition state	5. Institutionalization: Anchor the change in the system	5. Schedule activities	5. Empower broad based action	5. Detail recommendations
		6. Budget implementation resources	6. Generate short-term wins	6. Pilot test recommendations
		7. Manage project implementation	7. Consolidate gains and produce more change	7. Prepare recommendations for rollout
			8. Anchor new approach in culture	8. Roll out changes
				9. Measure, reinforce, and refine changes

(Proehl, 2001, p.89)

Dyer (1984) developed a seven-step change model outlining stages from identifying the problem to data gathering, data analysis, problem re-formulation, action planning, action taking, and finally evaluation of the action. In Chapter 5, I will return to Dyer's model and show how difficult it was to apply to change planning within the British Columbia government. All of these change models require the ability to think critically, to understand and engage in a formal change agenda and to be a change agent. As I will show in Chapters 4 and 5, this was not the normal functioning of the British Columbia social services sector. Overall and with few exceptions, agencies were not accustomed to engaging in complex change and lacked the sophistication to do so. Change usually meant loss and it was not likely that agencies would embrace loss. It is clear that there is no lack of change models and that the change models are consistent in their cyclical nature. It is also clear that in social services in BC, it was rare for a change model to be followed through to completion. I will discuss this further in Chapters 4 and 5.

Proehl (2001) reports that human service providers believe current legislation and financial incentives discourage innovation. With fiscal and political conservatism on the rise, they find themselves struggling to balance the needs of their clients with the financial viability of their agencies (Proehl, p. XI). In Chapter 4, I will return to this point and offer an illustration of how it played out in the British Columbia context. In the world of social services, the Korbin Report gave rise to the creation of CSSEA, one of whose primary goals was to address low wages in the sector. This desire on the part of the government to address universally low wages created a conflict between the government representatives on the CSSEA Board and the service representatives on the Board. Fiscal accountability,

mixed with a stated intention to address low wages in the field, produced confusion in the sector and made change difficult.

Tichy (1983) maintains that planned change can be divided into three processes. First is the development of a strategic plan that provides the goal or outcome. Second are decisions regarding the change technology: the tools that will be used to create change. Third is the creation of an implementation process to describe the method for achieving success and for navigating problems or roadblocks. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the extent to which Tichy's theory can be applied to the change that occurred in the context of this study.

Change can be difficult at the best of times, and in social services change is often negatively viewed. One of the more positive outcomes of accreditation has been that in order to achieve accreditation, agencies have had to embrace change. Chappell (2006) argues that agencies often attempt accreditation to prove to the government and to the community that they are able to achieve their goals and that they can operate efficiently.

Cunningham (1993) argues that research is not helping the problem. His contention is that research can create more variables and move service providers further from the simple grounded theories that in turn could be used in the field. In fact, to many in the social services system, research is a foreign concept. Ideas generated in the universities seldom make it to the field. Many service providers are suspicious of academic research. I will revisit this point in Chapter 4, in the section regarding Accreditation and Contract Reform, and show how Cunningham's point bears out in the context of this study.

Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) describe the way in which organizations or systems change. They argue that there are two types of change that happen simultaneously. The first is evolutionary. This conception of change arises from the Darwinian model of growth adaptation and change. It is a slow process that people and organizations cannot avoid. A good example is the use of computers in social services. Twenty years ago there were very few computers in service providing organizations; today many workers do their reports on computer. Younger workers experienced using computers in school from an early age and have carried these skills into the workplace. To the growing number of younger workers, computers, cell phones, and PowerPoint presentations are not considered new technology. These are examples of evolutionary change.

The second type of change is based on complexity theory, or the balance between chaos and structure. This model described more rapid change and how one responds to changes as they occur. A good example of this type of change is the decision to require accreditation from contracted organizations. I will discuss this example in Chapter 4 in the section devoted to Accreditation and Contract Reform.

It is ironic that most service providing organizations see themselves as stable within their own world. It is only when interacting with the larger world that they lose their sense of stability and balance. In many government organizations, there are changes in leadership when there are problems. For example, Bryman (1986) discusses the frequent changes in senior bureaucrats such as Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers within the BC government. Bryman describes this as more cosmetic than practical, maintaining that changing top leaders seems to make little difference in subsequent performance. Bryman suggests that this may be in part because leaders are

constrained and it may also be that researchers and lay people overstate the importance of leadership.

Although contracted service providers seem to be more internally stable than government ministries, they have their own problems to deal with when it comes to change and particularly during transitions in leadership. Gilmore (1988) comments that the not-for-profit world often suffers from poor transitions. The change may be unanticipated and unplanned and Boards are often ill equipped for the process of choosing new leaders for their organizations. Fullan (2001) discusses the relationship between change and the leaders in charge of it. He describes change as a double-edged sword that exhausts those required to take part but can also offer opportunities to innovate that are not available in stagnant organizations.

If you ask people to brainstorm words to describe change, they come up with a mixture of negative and positive terms. On the one side, fear, anxiety, loss, danger, panic; on the other, exhilaration, risk-taking, excitement, improvements, energizing. For better or for worse, change arouses emotions, and when emotions intensify, leadership is key (Fullan, p. 1).

The issue of leadership is critical to understanding change in the social services field. Leadership can and often does make the difference between effective and ineffective change. Kotter (1996) suggested that successful change is 70% - 90% leadership and 10% - 30% management. Certainly the contract sector in BC, with its depth of experience and lack of credentials, would support that theory.

## **Leadership**

At no time is the gap between individual needs and organizational needs more painfully obvious than at times of cutbacks and difficult business conditions. Leaders must balance sensitively the needs of people and of

the institution. A leader's promises must come under critical examination at these times (De Pree, p.19-20).

Leadership is a critical factor during a time of change. Fullan (2001), Galaskiewicz and Bielefeld (1998), Kuczmarski and Kuczmarski (1995), Pitcher (1997), and Proehl (2001), all refer to the importance of leadership in helping to shape change and the ways in which change and leadership are closely linked. According to these authors, managing change is the responsibility of leaders and leaders are responsible for change. Duck (2001) spoke of the enormity of a major change process and its impact on leadership. She writes, "I cannot overemphasize the amount of energy it takes to lead an organization through a major change. The leaders are asked to develop the change plan, model the desired beliefs and behaviours, recruit champions, overcome resistance and inertia, and get people moving in new ways - all while keeping the rest of the business afloat" (p. 208). In *Managing Change in the Public Services - A Guide for the Perplexed* (Taskforce on Workplace Adaptiveness, 1990), the authors state that effective organizations have two key characteristics: they manage change well and their leaders have vision. (p. 20). In his book *Charisma and Leadership in Organizations*, Bryman (1986) discusses the evolution of leadership approaches over the past sixty years and the key approaches and themes are noted in Figure B.

**Figure B. Trends in Leadership and Research**

Period	Approach	Core Theme
Up to late 1940s	Trait approach	Leadership ability is innate
Late 1940s to late 1960s	Style approach	Leadership effectiveness relates to how the leader behaves
Late 1960s to early 1980s	Contingency approach	It all depends: effective leadership is affected by the situation
Since early 1980s	New Leadership approach (includes charismatic leadership)	Leaders need vision

(Bryman, 1986, p.1)

Various leaders in the child welfare system in BC endorse one or another of these approaches; however, the trait approach is probably the most popular conception of leadership. Both contracted service providers and government agencies frequently hire leaders. Bryman (1986) discusses the types of traits that researchers studied. These included *physical traits* such as age and appearance, *ability traits* such as intelligence and knowledge and *personality traits* such as self-confidence and interpersonal sensitivity. Bryman (1986) also suggests that by the early 1950s researchers had begun to shift from discussing innate traits to what leaders do. Rost (1993) states that by the 1960s leadership was being defined as behaviour that moves people towards shared goals. In the 1970s, however, academics in a number of disciplines developed new conceptual frameworks of leadership. These changes, Rost argues, led to the dramatic increase in the 1980s in research and writing related to leaders and leadership. Rost goes on to argue that the volume of research done in the 1980s did not actually reflect a shift in paradigm. He maintains that the 1980s took us back to trait-based leadership or the great man/great

woman taking organizations on a quest for excellence. Rost (1993) sees this shift back in time as the influence of an industrial paradigm on leadership theory. That leadership paradigm is still in vogue today, as I will show in Chapter 5.

Proehl (2001) suggests that within human service organizations, those leaders who hope to be successful must be able to introduce and implement change for their organizations. "They must be able to differentiate between the different types of change that exist and to develop strategies appropriate to the change" (Proehl, p. 102). These change types include incremental changes and dramatic shifts. In each of these cases, good leaders will use the appropriate strategies to engineer the changes. The wrong strategies will make even the most well intended changes unworkable. "Transforming the culture - changing the way we do things around here - is the main point" (Fullan, 2001, p.44). Changing the culture may well be the goal but most leaders struggle to accomplish it. Kuczarski & Kuczarski (1995) argue that most managers are short-sighted, spending too little time trying to understand the causes of their employees' unhappiness and too much time trying to achieve organizational goals.

Mahler (1973) argues that executive continuity is key to organizational stability. He describes the importance of succession planning, suggesting that effective organizations maintain a "farm system" and therefore rarely have to look outside the organization to fill top positions. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the importance of succession planning from the perspective of leadership.

Collins and Porras (1994) discuss what they call "myths of success", a number of which were strongly related to what was happening in the Children's Ministry during this time period. One myth says that visionary companies share a common subset of values

and that these values are politically correct. Another myth described by Collins and Porras is one that says, "the only constant is change". Many things can change but core values and ideology should seldom change. This implies that there are core values that are central to an agency's ideology. Finally, the authors described the myth that companies become visionary primarily through vision statements. There is nothing wrong with vision statements; however, they are only one part of a continuous process. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the way in which this understanding of values relates to the events being studied here.

Fullam (2001) describes the importance of a leader having a moral purpose. De Pree (1992) writes about the need of leaders to make and keep promises to followers. The child welfare system as a whole has not been very good at following through on promises. The problem is that people are less willing to trust future leaders who also make promises. There is an expectation of failure already built into the process.

Heifetz and Linsky (2002) suggest that people do not so much resent change as they resist loss and they see change as the herald of loss. As they put it:

You appear dangerous to people when you question their values, beliefs, or habits of a lifetime. You place yourself on the line when you tell people what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear. Although you may see with clarity and passion a promising future of progress and gain, people will see with equal passion the losses you are asking them to sustain (Heifetz and Linsky, p. 12).

The authors go on to state that there are two types of change that leaders have to deal with; (1) technical problems where people have the skills and the procedures to deal with the problem and (2) adaptive challenges where one's current skills are not adequate. They argue that the single most common source of leadership failure is that people treat adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002). It often

seems that government and private agencies believe that each leader has the skill-set to deal with any and all problems. When a leader fails to deliver or to adequately address a problem, that leader is often replaced.

Perhaps part of the problem is the tendency to confuse leaders with managers. It is common to assume that a job title implies what the person does. Zaleznik (1977) described the difference between leaders and managers, arguing that leaders are visionaries while managers are planners. Both are essential to change management but are quite different. As Robbins and Longston (2001) put it, "leaders provide vision and strategy; management implements that vision and strategy, coordinates and staffs the organizations and handles day-to-day problems" (p. 266). Gilmore (1988) discusses the differences between leaders and managers as outlined in Figure C.

**Figure C - Comparison of Leader and Manager Roles**

	<b>Leaders</b>	<b>Managers</b>
<b>Necessary Characteristics</b>	Imagination; ability to communicate; creativity readiness to take risks; willingness to use power; to influence the thoughts and actions of others.	Persistence; tough mindedness; intelligence; analytical ability; tolerance; good will.
<b>Attitudes towards Goals</b>	Have personal, active goals; shape ideas; seek to change the way people think about what is desirable, possible or necessary.	Have impersonal goals that arise from necessities; respond to ideas.
<b>Conceptions of Work</b>	Create excitement; develop fresh approaches to long- standing problems; open up issues; project ideas into images that excite people and only then develop choices that give the projected images substance.	Formulate strategies; make decisions; manage conflict; negotiate, bargain, compromise, balance; limit choices.
<b>Relations with Others</b>	Intuitive, empathetic, intense; concerned with what events and decisions mean to people.	Prefer working with others, with a low level of emotional involvement in these relationships; role-oriented; concerned with how to get things done.
<b>Sense of self</b>	Feel separate; work in organizations, but never belong; inward.	Joiners, sense of belonging.

(Gilmore, 1998)

One of the real issues for leaders is isolation and simply being too far from the field. Macdonald (1998) has this to say about it:

Executives, isolated in their chateaux, have high thresholds of pain. The company has to lose its major customer, be faced with a hostile takeover bid, or face a major cash-flow crisis before the executives really react and their attention is wholly engaged. Then all hell breaks loose, and special task forces are formed or consultants called in to solve this major problem (p. 30).

Kouzes and Posner (2002) described the practices that good leaders engage in.

These include;

- model the way;
- inspire the shared vision;
- challenge the process;
- enable others to act; and,
- encourage the heart.

These are fairly simple practices and yet they set a high standard that most leaders in both the government and the contract sector would be challenged to achieve. Words such as model, inspire or challenge are not found in most social service agencies. Enabling and encouraging may happen on occasion but are hardly the norm in the sector; in fact, the human service sector tends to tolerate bad leaders and bad leadership. Schaefer and Fassel (1988) argue "no one variety of leadership style is appropriate to all situations and that is a mark of leadership - to be flexible" (p. 28).

Rost (1993) studied the literature on leadership and found little in the way of clear definitions. In fact, he says, "60 percent of the authors who have written on leadership since about 1910 did not define leadership in their works" (Rost, p. 7). Rost also describes the ways that the words "leader" and "leadership" are used in the literature. While the word "leader" can be found in the English language as early as 1300, the word "leadership" does not appear until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In contemporary literature, the words "leader" and "leadership" are often used interchangeably, which Rost argues is a mistake. Not all leaders are capable of leadership and not all leadership is accomplished by designated leaders. Manburg and Goldman discuss how decisions are made in child and youth care regarding administrative or leadership strategy:

The pattern of administrative staffing in child and youth care programs, not unlike other areas of social service, is characterized by a system of

promotion as reward; reward for loyalty, seniority, availability, etc. Administrative competence, technical or clinical knowledge, capacity for leadership, and ability to supervise others are often secondary considerations in decisions regarding promotion of staff (Manburg and Goldman, 1990, p. 161-162).

### **Summary**

This chapter has offered an overview and history of the evolving child welfare field in British Columbia and a review of key literature related to organizational change and leadership. The history of British Columbia's social services field shows a movement from the early practice of a small number of charitable organizations, staffed mainly by volunteers, providing direct services to "the worthy poor" towards the current system, directed by a large government bureaucracy and delivered as a shared responsibility between the government and those agencies with which it contracts for direct service provision. This evolution has resulted in increasing professionalization of the field and a sense that social service organizations do benefit from some of the theory around leadership and organizational change that has developed in the business and management fields.

The examination of change undertaken in this chapter reviewed a variety of change models and pointed out some important themes in the literature; such as, the need for long-term strategic planning when initiating large scale organizational change, the necessity of bringing closure to a change process, and the importance of strong leadership to provide stability during the period of change. This chapter ended with a discussion of the literature surrounding leadership, noting in particular the difference between leaders and managers, and underlining again the importance of continuity and stability through such things as ensuring appropriate succession planning.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I report on the interviews I conducted with the participants in this study. Themes that emerge will centre on change and leadership, and will make more sense in the context of the literature on these topics. Many of the concerns expressed by those I interviewed flow from issues such as government contracted service delivery and the increasing professionalism of the child welfare field. Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of the methods I used in undertaking this study.

## Chapter 3 - Methodology

### Qualitative research

Merriam said that “qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena” (Merriam, 1998, p.5). It was my intention to conduct a qualitative study of a ten-year time period in the history of social services for children and families in British Columbia. As Stake points out, “standard qualitative design calls for persons most responsible for interpretations to be in the field, making observations, exercising subjective judgments, analyzing and synthesizing and all the while realizing their own consciousness” (Stake, 1995, p.41). It seemed, given my location as a participant in child and youth care services in BC, that not only could I be the person making interpretations and observations and judgments, but I was, in fact, one of the best possible candidates to do this type of work. With my depth of experience as a practitioner, educator and manager, I believed that I could also be effective in analyzing and synthesizing the data. Merriam argues that the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data, and I qualify.

My research would involve interviewing those who were involved in the events that I was interested in. Given that, a qualitative study was the most appropriate choice. There are, of course, a variety of quantitative data available in the social service field. There is information available about the number of children in care, the amounts spent on various budgets, and so on. This information can be found salted throughout my dissertation, providing background and context, but it is not the heart of my study. I wanted to describe what had happened during these 10 years of change and I wanted to

interpret what had influenced the leaders of those changes. That was the focus point in the interviews and also in the analysis.

Erickson (1995) describes qualitative research as field study where the key interpretations to be pursued are not the researcher's interpretations, but those of the people being studied. I certainly had my own interpretations of events in British Columbia social services and I would be doing analyses of key events as part of this dissertation. But being able to research the beliefs and ideas of key decision makers is much more significant and of interest to the sector as a whole. My role would be to give voice to the participants and give them an opportunity to talk about key changes that they had been involved in. Why were some decisions made? Why were some policies or practices implemented while others were not? Stake (1995) states that in qualitative studies, research questions typically orient to cases or phenomena seeking patterns of unanticipated as well as expected relationships. What were the relationships that had an impact on change? Which relationships were predictable and which were unexpected? There are a number of methodological approaches that one can take to structure the process of asking and answering such questions. One such approach is the case study method, which typically involves interviews, and a document data review. Gillham (2000) said that a case study is a main method. Within it, different sub-methods are used such as interviews, observations, document and research analysis, work samples and so on (Gillham, 2000, p.13). The key to this dissertation was to be the interviews with key participants in British Columbia social services. As well, I knew that I had unimpeded access to the key documents and based on a combination of what I knew from having

worked in the system and what the key decision makers had shared with me I chose to proceed using a methodological approach with a number of different foci.

While I believe that a qualitative approach is appropriate for this research, it is not without its limitations. Lincoln and Guba (1989) said that

The single limitation that a constructivist, responsive, fourth generation evaluator would put on the use of qualitative methods is that no causally inferential statistics would be employed, since the causal linkages implied by such statistics are contrary to the position on causality that phenomenologically oriented and constructivist inquiry takes (Lincoln and Guba, p.259).

I accept this as a limitation of qualitative research and indeed it offers all the more reason to use a qualitative methodology. My research employs primarily participant observation interviews and to a lesser extent case study. Because I was involved in all of the events as both a participant and an observer, participant observation is the most obviously appropriate methodology. Case study requires both document review and interviews. My study is a mix of both methodologies rather than a single focus methodology. Gillham (2000) said, “what you are looking for is what all researchers in all disciplines are concerned with: Evidence; Theory. You need the facts - imperfect though they may be; and you need to be able to understand or explain them” (Gillham, 2000, p.12).

Merriam (1988) argues that not all researchers are suited to qualitative case study. She described three researcher characteristics that are critical to successful case study.

*1. A high tolerance for ambiguity*

I see myself as highly tolerant in that I work in social services where there is often a lack of clarity and a lack of certainty. You cannot succeed in this field without a high tolerance for ambiguity.

## *2. Sensitivity to the needs and values of others*

Once again, as a social services administrator and a child and youth care professional, I pride myself on my ability to understand the needs of others and to try to adapt programs to the needs of a variety of cultures.

## *3. Good communication skills*

As an educator and a trainer I have had to learn to communicate with a wide range of individuals. I have also had to learn how to communicate with bureaucrats, funders, other agencies and the community. Communication is a critical skill for anyone working in social services.

Thinking back to my original reason for wanting to do this research, I wanted my students to have a better understanding of changes in the British Columbia social services system and how those changes impacted on them and their work. A mix of methodologies seems to me to best meet this goal. This study uses a mix of methodologies. The major method I use is participant observation, but there are also elements of case study as well as the lived experience of the participants. I believe that the study is unique and so too is the mix of methodologies.

### **The Participant Observer**

For anthropologists and social scientists, participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture (DeWalt & DeWalt 2002, p.1).

Participant observers are usually immersed in the world they are attempting to study. That is an apt description of my involvement in social services in British Columbia. As stated earlier, I worked in social services during the ten years that I am researching. I know most of the interview participants personally and am known to most of the others. This puts me in the position of being a potentially biased observer. Friedrichs and Ludtke described these phenomena very clearly.

A peculiarity of participant observation is that over a period of time, interdependence arises between the observer and the observed. To a greater or less degree, reciprocal influences appear during the process of observation. The observer takes a certain role in his field of observation. While this is happening, the position, expectations and reactions of the observer as well as of his interaction partners change (Friedrichs and Ludtke, 1975, p.29).

I knew I would have to be conscious of my relationship with the issues and with the various participants. Unlike many participant observer studies, I did not decide to do the study and then immerse myself in the culture. I was immersed in the culture and then decided to do the study. I found myself in an interesting position. On one hand, I had been an active participant in a variety of change events while on the other hand I was not part of either the elected government or the government bureaucracy. Spradley suggests that the participant observer will experience being both the insider and the outsider simultaneously (Spradley, 1980).

Observational research involves making observations that do not necessarily need to be structured around a hypothesis (Trochim, 2004). Observational research is descriptive research and in this particular case it would feature descriptions of key events, descriptions of interviews with key participants and descriptions of working in the events being described. This is a key component to my study. I wanted to tell a story that was rich in detail and in the personal observations and remembrances of the key participants. I

wanted to know what the participants would think and what their analysis of key events was. I hoped to be able to analyze the data from the interviews and it was my hope that this would lead to some solid recommendations that could be used in future change agendas in contract social services sector in British Columbia.

Participant observation has been primarily associated with social anthropological research. It was originally used to study and monitor and describe naturally occurring behaviour. Its aim was to uncover culture and values. It often involved engaging in conversations with people in order to probe specific issues of interest. (Bogdan, 1972; Jorgensen, 1989; McCall, 1969). A research project grounded in ethnography seemed to be a good fit given the focus of this research.

Bryman describes ethnography this way: ethnography is taken to mean research in which the researcher:

- is immersed in a social setting for an extended period of time;
- makes regular observations of the behaviours of members of the setting;
- listens to and engages in conversations;
- interviews informants on issues not directly attainable through observation alone;
- collects documents about the setting or people in it;
- develops an understanding on the culture of the people being observed within the context of that culture; and,
- writes up an account of that setting (Bryman, 1986, p. 3).

Bryman lists these seven points that he sees as the keys to ethnography. Going over them in reference to my work, there is a good fit.

- I am and have been immersed in the social setting of child welfare in British Columbia for many years.
- I had been noting and discussing the behaviour of the people I work with during that time.
- the discussions initially were more informal than research focused, but that changed over time as I became more and more focused on what I was observing and how that might relate to research.

- As I was directing an agency, I had to listen to and respond to colleagues, funders and politicians all of the time.
- I had been doing formal interviews as part of this dissertation and informal interviews for the past five years.
- As an agency director, I had read the documents related to this dissertation as part of my regular work. I already owned copies many of the original documents.
- I believed that as I am part of the culture I was observing, I had a good understanding of that culture.
- I was in the process of doing the write up that Bryman spoke about.

There are many types of research methods within ethnography. I needed to be able to slot myself into at least one of these research types. Gold (1958) broke the types into:

- Complete participant which means fully functioning members of a social setting without people knowing the true identity of the researcher;
- Participant as observer which means fully functioning in the setting and people are aware of the researcher's identity;
- Observer as participant which means the researcher acts primarily as an interviewer with some observation;
- Complete observer, which means no interaction whatsoever, and observation only.

Gans (1968) broke ethnographers into three subsets:

- Total participants who are completely involved in the situation but who resume a researcher role at the end of the day;
- Researcher/participant which means partial involvement in the situation but still a fully functioning researcher;
- Total researcher in which the researcher has no involvement in the situation and only observes.

Based on the definition put forward by Gold, I saw myself in the role of observer as participant, while using the Gans (1968) definition I am more likely to be placed in the total participant category as I do the work on a day to day basis and then step away to do research.

There are research issues to be aware of when using participant observation. The primary concerns include the following.

### *Subjectivism*

This method relies heavily on research integrity. The experiences and the research cannot be replicated by other researchers and so intellectual honesty is critical. It is not likely that this exact research could be replicated in that I had unique access to these participants that would likely be denied to most other researchers. However, the model used for this research could be replicated for any researcher who had unique access to a group of interviewees, access to documents and an insider's perspective on the situation being researched.

### *Documentation*

Especially in interview situations, the reader must trust the researcher to accurately report on the information gathered. This is particularly true when using personal communication as a major part of a study. Other researchers cannot access the personal communication nor can it be used in other research. I was able to reduce the risk of inaccurately reporting my interviews because I taped all of them. This allowed me to return to the interviews to re-check data. In addition, I have a lasting record of my interviews.

### *Project Situations*

This can be problematic when time limits and the positioning of the researcher are not well suited to participant observation. There were no time limits imposed on this study. I had been involved in the field for many years and in informal research since 1998, and was thus an insider to a large extent.

In order to be effective, Jorgensen (1989) argues that participant observation works best when the following conditions are present:

- the research problem is concerned with human meanings and interactions viewed from the insider's perspective;
- the phenomenon of investigation is observable within an everyday life situation or setting;
- the researcher is able to gain access to an appropriate setting;
- the phenomenon is sufficiently limited in size and location to be studied as a case;
- study questions are appropriate for case study; and
- the research problem can be addressed by qualitative data gathered by direct observation and other means pertinent to the field setting (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 13).

I believe that my study covers all of Jorgensen's conditions. This study is about human interaction and is from an insider's perspective. I had been living in this work on a day-to-day basis for years. I had been able to limit the size of the case and I believed that the questions raised were appropriate. The data I gathered were based on a great deal of firsthand experience.

### **Bias**

Being a participant observer and being immersed in the social services culture meant that I would have to pay attention to issues related to bias. Where this was of particular importance was after I had completed the interviews and was making ready to analyze the data. Once I had completed my data collection, I would need to approach data analysis carefully. Because I had been working in the system that I was attempting to analyze, I would need to be careful to not allow my biases to overshadow my objectivity. By being conscious of the issue and stating my biases at the beginning, I hoped to minimize the impact of bias on this project. There is a balance between access and

distance, between objectivity and subjectivity, between interest and disinterest. Because of my work and the work of my agency, I did and do have a vested interest in the topic. However, I believe that my involvement and access were real assets to this study. They allowed me a unique status on this project that outweigh concerns over bias.

I entered the research with an awareness of professional bias in at least two critical areas. In the first place, I did not see the ten-year period as a particularly positive or productive period in the community social services area. There was a great deal of wasted time and money and energy on projects that were not well thought out and then were poorly implemented. Secondly, I believed that the community social services sector was and is a healthier culture than the government social services sector. Morale is higher, turnover of staff is lower and the relationship with clients is seen as more respectful. It was my intention to declare these biases prior to conducting my interviews and I did so. I did not see these biases as being problematic for my participants. In fact, in informal discussions I knew that many of the participants were in agreement with me and had the same concerns about the government social services sector that I did.

I think that this particular study, done at this particular time by someone with my experience and contacts, would make for interesting and useful research. The research will contribute to the collected knowledge of the child welfare field by taking a critical look at a time of significant change in child welfare practices and agency relationships in the province of British Columbia. As well, the information will prove to be a useful tool for child and youth care agencies and workers who are looking at significant events that have had an impact on their work and careers and on their clients.

I also have the responsibility of addressing the issue of researcher bias. I work in the social services sector that I wanted to research. In fact, I had been actively involved in all of the change initiatives that I wanted to research. As well, I knew many of the people that I hoped to interview. Nevertheless, I believe that my involvement was to my advantage. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Having lived the events, I know the events not simply theoretically but practically and up close.
- My involvement gives me passion for my topic.
- My knowledge of the social services system and my working relationship with both elected officials and bureaucrats gives me a degree of access to the leaders and the managers that would likely be denied most other researchers.

Walcott (1994) said that bias should stimulate enquiry without interfering with the investigation. It is difficult to imagine working in the field of child welfare without beliefs and biases. I am biased in favour of effective governance. I am biased in favour of successful change agendas. I am biased against change for the sake of change. I am biased against change that is not grounded in vision. I believe that these biases did not interfere with my ability to do a creative and honest job in investigating my case.

### **Lived Experienced**

Given that I initially wished to better understand the relationship between the ministry and the contract agencies and that I had hoped to interview a variety of people who in turn would talk to me about their experiences in this relationship, phenomenology or lived experience seemed like a good fit especially because, as Van Manen (1990) wrote, phenomenology aims at giving an understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences (Van Manen, 1990, p.9). Having lived through the ten years of change and having observed it firsthand, the idea of studying what was for me an everyday

experience, was attractive. I really wanted to have a better understanding of what had taken place and why as understood by those who had participated in the events. My first inclination was to ask the workers and managers in the system what their experience with change had been and how they perceived the changes that had taken place. I thought that perhaps a study including talking with people who were directly impacted by the changes might act to shed light on a decade of change from a particular perspective. The idea was interesting in that it would give voice to workers and managers who had felt ignored in most of the change processes. I could also look for themes in the experiences. I could investigate it. Were all of the experiences unique and separate, or were there similarities that could be grouped? I spoke to a number of people in the social services sector and found that most could not discuss the changes they had been through in any degree of detail. I would have no difficulty in finding people to interview but I feared that I would not get any true insights into what had happened and why it had happened. After careful thought I realized that the idea of interviewing people involved in the change agenda would make more sense and offer more information than interviewing people who had been impacted by those changes. This was especially true, given that I was doing this work in the context of a field that did not seem to understand or even know about the changes that had impacted on their work. I was still interested in the phenomenology of the experience but perhaps with a different group of participants. Hammond (1991) distinguishes between a description of things as one experiences them and one's experience of things:

The slight differences in these two formulations can be ignored here. One important class of such experiences of things is perception – seeing, hearing, touching and so on. But it is by no means the only one. There

are also phenomena such as believing, remembering, wishing, deciding and imagining things ( p.1).

This seemed to me to lend itself well to providing the theoretical ground for how I structured gathering the needed data. I had first hand experience in all of the categories discussed by Hammond. A large part of the changes the province went through were related to believing and deciding and imagining. Government believed that change was necessary after so many years of conservative governance and agencies believed that they offered good services. They said as much in news releases and in budget notes. Decisions were made on a daily basis in government and in agencies. Some of these were good decisions while others were not. Some were understandable while others were confusing. Nonetheless, decision-making is key to governing. People in the system imagined that there were plots and side deals and unfair practices happening. This certainly was the experience of many of my colleagues who often phoned me to check up on rumours and fears. I know that I did the same thing and often without any grounded evidence. I imagined that other executive directors were closer to ministry decision-makers than I was or that ministry decision-makers were not treating me fairly. The government believed that agencies were over-funded and that there were large surpluses available that could be taken from agencies and used to generate more services without an impact on existing services. I cannot overstate the fact that the relationship between government and agencies and between agencies themselves was full of uncertainty and mistrust, misinformation, gossip and rumours. Former Deputy Ministry Robert Plecas told me in conversation that, as an outsider coming into the Ministry, he was amazed at the extent of rumours in his Ministry and how they were always negative and usually without substance (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

It is important to understand the context in which these agencies were working. Based on my experience as an executive director, I knew that agencies were used to competing against one another for contracts, employees, and relative positioning in an evolving sector. I also suspected that there were probably too many agencies for the amount of work being generated. The contracts had thirty-day termination clauses and any number of competitors would and could take over the contracts on short notice.

Some agencies appeared to have developed very close relationships with the funders while others were at odds. It was a provocative situation that became charged in a time of change and cutback. The social services community is not unlike a small tribal culture. There are a finite number of inhabitants and most of them know one another personally. On one hand, the agencies work closely together in both local and provincial committees and groupings. There is a sense of camaraderie while at the same time they must compete for a finite amount of funding. Generally speaking, when one wins, several lose. For the most part, this context is not directly discussed. The agencies tend to focus more on their camaraderie than on their competition. But the competition is always there and everyone is aware of it.

As Ryba put it, “the ultimate end of phenomenology is to provide a body of description and a systematic ordering of these descriptions” (Ryba, 1991, p. 281). I knew the events that I wanted to research and was able to describe them in some detail. It seemed to me that if I could achieve a descriptive account of the beliefs, memories, wishes, desires and imaginings of key participants on the change process and an ordering of events, I could better understand the overall climate of change.

The lived experience appeared, therefore, to be a good basis for entering into discussion with the participants. I would be able to focus on the lived experience of the participants and I would be able to find out from them their beliefs regarding leadership and change. However, I also had access to key documents and for that reason turned to case study.

### **Case Study**

Cavaye stated that case studies typically combine collection techniques such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and document reviews (Cavaye, 1996, p.229). There certainly is no lack of suitable documents in a field of study where ongoing review and strategic change planning have been one of the few constants in a changing terrain. At a minimum, I intended to review:

- *The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Public Service and the Public Sector* (1993), known as the Korbin Commission report;
- *The Report of the Gove Inquiry into Child Protection*;
- *The British Columbia Child and Family Services Act*;
- *The Allen Report*;
- Documentation related to the Contract and Program Restructuring (CPR);
- Documentation related to contract reform and accreditation;
- Annual reports from the Children's Commission, the Children and Family Advocate, and the Community Social Services Employer's Association (CSSEA); and,
- MCF planning documents.

I chose case study as one of the methodologies for this research because I believe it offers the best "fit" for the content and context that I wanted to examine. Several authors in the field have substantiated my choice of this approach. Yin (1984) argues that the case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. Rapid change has

been a hallmark of social services in British Columbia for a number of years; changes in direction, service philosophies, ministers, deputy ministers and contracting protocols.

Patton saw the case study as important in particular settings and noted that case studies became particularly useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation in great depth and where one can identify cases rich in importance (Patton, 1987, p.18).

Given that I was both a participant and an observer of the changes that took place in social services, these documents were not foreign to me. I had read them all when they were released, not as part of any research, but because they had an impact on the work that I did on a day-to-day basis. On a researcher/practitioner continuum, my initial context for reviewing policy reports was that of developing an informed perspective on key concepts and events, with a focus toward the practitioner end of the scale. The knowledge I gained in familiarizing myself with these documents as a practitioner would serve me well as I shifted my emphasis toward that of a researcher.

Finally, I knew many of the people involved in the creation of these documents and the implementation of plans coming out of the documents. I had been in regular contact with them over the years and I believe that the trust established in those relationships would open doors and that most if not all would allow me to interview them. As a participant in the events, I was in a unique position to talk to these people about experiences that we had shared. I proposed to interview these people rather than using questionnaires to gather my data. In that way, I expected a much more in-depth response and a much higher rate of return than questionnaires might allow.

Because I was fascinated with change, I had made a point of talking to decision-makers about change whenever an opportunity presented itself. I was also appointed to a number of committees and panels such as the BC Children's Commission and the Child and Family Review Board that gave me yet more access. I genuinely liked most of the people I met and understood how difficult it is to be a leader in the social services sector. Having taken on similar responsibilities at other times in my career, for example, I was the executive director of a mandated child welfare agency in Manitoba, I could be honestly sympathetic to their difficult roles.

One of the interesting realities of community social services work is the relationship between the funders and the contractors. Clearly, it is not a balanced relationship. Most of the power rests with the funders in that they control the dollars and in many cases, the access to the clients. The relationship is relatively amicable until money is in short supply or contracts are not going to be renewed. In those cases, some of the relationships turn rather ugly. Harsh words are exchanged, there are often comments made in the media and feelings are hurt. When things finally settle down, the same people have to find a way to work together. This ongoing drama has a real impact on the quality of relationships in the social services field.

Guba and Lincoln raise an interesting question of anyone contemplating a case study methodology; they put it this way: "The question to ask is, beyond the goodness criteria, simply this. Does a given case study serve the needs of the various audiences (all of them) who have some stake in its use?" (Guba and Lincoln, 1999, p.137). It is a good question to ask and I have asked it informally of both contractors and Children's Ministry staff. I spoke to three Executive Directors of contract agencies, two middle managers and

one contract manager in the MCF. I told them that I wanted to write a critical overview of the key events that had an impact on the Ministry and on contractors between 1991 and 2001. I asked if that sort of study was of interest to them. The MCF staff said yes and suggested that it could make for good orientation material for new staff. The agency people thought that it should be included in curricula in community colleges teaching child and youth care. The British Columbia social service field has not had a generous supply of research on either the history of the work or an analysis of the work. This would present an opportunity to both describe and analyze a 10 year period of time within workable parameters.

To create a manageable research project, I intended to follow an organized set of methodological steps to achieve my goals of gathering, analyzing and interpreting my data. Morris (1993) saw case study as following a predictable cycle that includes analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation. Lincoln and Guba (1989) suggested that a case study should contain the following:

- an explanation of the problem;
- an explanation of the context;
- a thorough description of processes related to the context; and,
- a discussion of outcomes or lessons learned from the study.

My proposed study fit well into these types of designs. The problems or issues to be explored were the changes and the impact of changes in the community social services sector while the context was to be the times and events of the 10-year period of time (1991-2001). The study was to focus on interviews and document reviews. The documents would be reviewed, looking for patterns, context and lessons learned. An example could be to look for a pattern in recommendations in reports or studies. Do the same recommendations appear again and again or are they unique to a particular study? This

thematic data analysis would provide research outcomes, which would be useful to practitioners, policymakers, implementers and educators. Interviews would be semi-structured and would focus on two or three individuals for each event or major document. Questions would be broad and open ended and would link to the documents.

Wadsworth said, “we need to go on asking ‘why’ ‘why’ ‘why’ until contextual meanings are revealed” (Wadsworth, 1987, p.25). The processes and the problems, which have been such a hallmark of the social services field, are not going to go away until we are able to learn from both our failures and our successes. What factors can influence success and failure? Is there a predictability relating to change agendas? Are some people better suited to social services change than others? Were social services agencies a factor in the change agenda or simply victims of the agenda?

I have suggested a number of times that my role in social services is an important part of this study. Lancy (1993) said that:

Personal accounts, as the name suggests, are different from other kinds of reports in the social science literature because they focus on whole lives or people in the round. The person is examined not just as a convenient exemplary of a category we are interested in, but to get at his/her personal life story, views, and accomplishments (p.169).

Wharf and Callahan (1982) believed that the first step in a case study should be a review of major documents. The second step would be a review of the context followed by interviews. By context here I mean an examination of what else was happening at the time that a particular social services event was taking place. For instance, was the government in some kind of difficulty or were there a number of significant complaints? Were other ministries in trouble or was a particular government situation in the media? Given the shifting political landscape of British Columbia, it is not hard to imagine that there were difficult events that seemed to unfold regularly. Gawthrop (1996), Harcourt (1996) and

Tyabji-Wilson (2002) all paint a picture of a government having a difficult time finding stability. Harcourt suggests that it was difficult right from the beginning. He says, “the sheer horror of the financial burden we faced meant that at the very beginning of our administration we were forced to drastically alter our governing strategy” (Harcourt, 1996, p.75). Issues such as the Robin Blencoe harassment issue, a case where a number of government employees accused a sitting minister of sexually harassing them, Bingogate which was a scandal involving charity dollars flowing back to the NDP, the death of Matthew Vaudreuil discussed earlier and many other events all created a context which influenced how the government conducted business. Vaughn Palmer, legislative reporter for the Vancouver Sun newspaper told me that it is critical for a government to be viewed as having integrity because this leads to trust. The events mentioned earlier undermined trust. Without trust governments have a very difficult time getting things done. Palmer cited the examples of the Bill Vander Zalm and Glen Clark governments, who having lost trust on issues related to integrity were unable to continue in government (V. Palmer, personal communication, August 9, 2004). The final step in the study would focus on analyses and recommendations.

It is not that case study is without limitations and potential research problems. McCutcheon and Meredith said that this methodology’s flexibility, while valuable, limits the development of common standards and practices. A case study’s research contribution is largely determined by its design quality and by the researcher’s analysis (McCutcheon and Meredith, 1993, p.245). I wanted to be able to develop my research design and factor in my role in that design. It would be critical for me to keep separate my role as a researcher / observer from my role as a participant who lived through the changes being

studied. I was not looking for common standards. This is a unique story told in order to create an historical record of an interesting time in social services in British Columbia. It was possible that some of the recommendations could be used as standards but that was not a priority.

Darke, et al. stated, “the data collection and data analysis process in case study research are both subject to the influence of the researcher’s characteristics and background and rely heavily on the researcher’s interpretation of events, documents and interview material” (Darke, et al., 1998, p.278). I had to be aware of my role and my bias in studying these events. My involvement was both a strength and potentially a weakness. While it allowed me an extraordinary degree of access, it also meant that I had to be conscious of bias in my questions and, in particular, in my analysis.

Yin (1994) argues that designing a case study research project in order to ensure that the research question can be appropriate and adequately answered can be difficult and data collection for case study research can be time consuming and tedious. I limited the number of interviews that I would do to no more than three per change event and limited the document review to no more than two or three documents per event because I did not want to become overwhelmed with material.

Yin (1984) also said that concerns had been raised over the lack of rigor in case study research. This can certainly be true just as it can be true for any other methodology when the researcher is less than vigilant. Case study is subject to the same use or misuse, as any other methodology. I believe that by consulting with colleagues both in the academic community and in the social service community, I would be able to be vigilant in order to ensure rigor and integrity in my research.

Having already given an account of my role as a participant observer, I still needed to add more dimensions that speak to my particular role. I used Case Study to do that. Carrothers believed that: “case studies were essential to public policy analysis and were a key to meaningful policy evaluation” (Carrothers, 1991, p.90). And in reality that is what I was going to be doing; researching public policy. The policies included child welfare policy, contracting policies and public service policies. Throughout my research work, I found government policies being developed, implemented, revised and reviewed. That was to be a key part of this work.

Wolins (1982) said that a researcher has to plan carefully and think about data before actually starting to collect it. I had been thinking about this topic for years and with focus since 1998. I had struggled with both question and methodology and was now at the point of being ready to engage in research. This was to be an important study, a study that was overdue in this field. The contract sector has been through a great deal of change and reform in the past ten years. In spite of all of this change, there was little or no research and very little readily available documentation available to the child and youth care community. Writing about this decade was critical and would be well received by the social services community.

Wadsworth said, “Research is a process which begins with people having reasons for asking questions then setting about getting answers for them” (Wadsworth, 1997, p.6). My reasons for asking questions have been stated earlier. I wanted to make sense, if at all possible, of a series of government decisions made during a ten-year period of time. I had little or no investment in a particular set of answers to these questions. I simply wanted to

see what would happen when I asked the questions. I needed a structure to help in directing my work and I decided to use the following six-step process.

1. Determine and define the research question. By being clear and focused with regard to the research question, the researcher can return again and again to the question when research appears to be going off track.
2. Select cases, participants and data sources and look at analysis techniques. It's important to determine in advance what evidence to gather. This does not close the option of selecting more data. However, it helps to avoid the tendency to over collect data.
3. Prepare to collect data. Set up a system to collate and organize data. Because of the potential for having to work with a large quantity and a wide range of data, a pre-arranged system is essential.
4. Collect the data.
5. Evaluate and analyze the data.
6. Do the write-up.

Using this six-step system, I attacked the work in the following way. The research question relates to the impact of leadership on change.

When I use words such as change and leadership I want to ensure that they be put in the proper context. When I use the word leader, I mean the formal leaders in the social services system. They are the people in the social services hierarchy who make major decisions and who implement those decisions at a macro-level. All of the participants in this study are leaders. With regard to the word change, I use it here to describe the series of major events that are the subject of this study. Some of the changes were successful while others were not. In some cases there is disagreement as to whether or not the change had a positive impact on clients and/or agencies.

The case was the years 1991-2001, in the Social Services Ministry in British Columbia. I made a list of what I wanted to read and the people I wanted to interview. I made some phone calls in order to get a sense of whether or not people were open to talking to me. The response was universally positive. In fact, a number of people were

prepared to open other doors to interviews that might not have opened without their intervention.

There are two parts to my data collection. These two parts are related. First, I would need to collect and review these documents. I already had a large collection of key documents, since I work in the social services system, and had been given documents over the years. I would then conduct a series of semi-structured interviews and begin to analyze and evaluate my data. At this point I had to decide how I was going to proceed with my interviews and once the interviews were complete how would I analyze the data.

### **Collection and Analysis Procedures**

As stated earlier, I started off simply wanting to supply my students with information related to events that had taken place in the provincial Children's Ministry that I believed had an impact on their careers as child and youth care workers. The key events that I had been looking at were the work of the Korbin Commission and the work of the Gove Commission. I was able to find the formal documents but little or no analytical material related to these events. As I began to read and research, I soon found that there were other less well known events that were related to the larger better known events. I added the creation of MCF, CPR and contract reform along with several other lesser-known events. As my list of events grew, it became important to control the volume of material that I would be reviewing. I started by limiting the time period to be reviewed. I chose 1991-2001, as it was bracketed by provincial elections and I was familiar with the events of the era, having worked in the sector. Once I had set up time lines, I needed to finalize the events that I would study. I chose events that had a direct impact on the

contract sector of social services and the child and youth workers who were employed there. I was also interested in events that had an on-going impact on social service work in the province as opposed to events that had only short- term impact.

The next step in the planning was to decide on a list of interviewees in relation to each of the key events. I made a list of key events and then beside each event I made a list of who had been the key administrators or bureaucrats or elected officials during the event. There were five or six names on each list and my goal was to reduce the list to two or three interviewees per event. The list included people who were well known to me and who knew me reasonably well. Included were people with whom I had a passing relationship and people of whom I knew but who did not know me. I kept names on the list if I knew them well enough to call and ask for an interview. In cases where I did not have a relationship with the people who were listed beside a key event, I tried to find someone I knew who was known to the person in question. I did not want to make any "cold calls" to potential interviewees.

I then began to work on the list of questions that I would ask the participants in a series of semi-structured interviews. The key themes that ran through the questions were issues such as leadership and change. Once I had a first draft of questions I field-tested them by going through them with a couple of experienced executive directors. My goals were to see if the questions were clear and easily understood and to get some idea of the time involved in administering the questions. Following the field tests I made some small changes in the order of the questions and in how the questions were worded and began to plan out the interviews. In addition to the participants discussed above, the key administrators and bureaucrats, I decided to interview a couple of well-informed

“outsiders” in order to have a different contextual viewpoint. I decided to interview newspaper reporters who reported regularly on the provincial political beat and who had written about social services.

I began to formally contact the interviewees in order to set up the interviews. In all cases, I phoned first and asked if they were interested in being interviewed as part of my research. If they were not, I was prepared to move on to other potential candidates from the initial contact list. It is interesting to note that everyone I spoke to agreed to be interviewed and only a few asked to not have their names noted in the paper. Everyone agreed that I could tape the interviews. Once I had verbal agreement, I followed up by sending out a formal letter explaining what I was doing, a copy of the questions and a form for them to sign giving me permission to tape the interviews and to use the material found on those tapes for my research. In some cases the form was signed and mailed back to me prior to the interview while in other cases, the form was signed and given to me when I arrived for the interview. In all cases, I had signed consent forms from all participants prior to interviewing. (See Appendices C, D and E for a list of questions, a list of participants and a copy of the participant consent letter.)

### **Interviewing**

Because I was working with participants, I needed permission to do human subject interviews from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Victoria. I applied to do human subject research in April 2004. I was given permission to do research on May 12, 2004 and could conduct interviews until May 12, 2005.

Because my research was current, because many of the authors of social policy are still working in the system and because I know most of these bureaucrats, I was able to integrate a review of the documentation and the interviews in a very creative way. Knowing the documents, knowing and having access to the authors, and having been part of the system when events took place allowed for a unique opportunity. I had spoken informally to a number of the participants. As I continued to work with many of them on a regular basis, it was difficult not to interact. As well, they knew what I was doing educationally and many had asked whom I would interview. I was careful to protect the confidentiality of the participants if that was their wish; however, what I found was that many of them wanted to speak to me and wanted to speak on the record. They had not had the opportunity to speak out on the topic of their work and the impact of their leadership. As well, many of them were in singular positions where real anonymity would be difficult. I gave each participant a disclosure form and asked him or her to sign it. The interview phase of this research project was critical to the success of the project, and I had a unique opportunity to access key decision makers and to interview them as to their role in an agenda of change.

My plan was to do a semi-structured interview as opposed to a structured interview. Douglas makes the case that the truly structured interview exists only in theory. "As is true of most extremes, this one is rarely lived up to except in pious statements of obeisance to absolute truth. No one could live up to an absolutist code, so no one does" (Douglas, 1985, p.19).

Chirban (1996), Georges and Jones (1980), Houtkoop-Steenstra (2000), Schein (1987), and all discuss the importance of the interviewer knowing his/her subject and

knowing what he/she is looking for. In many ways, the interview starts well before there is interaction between researcher and interviewee. Georges and Jones said, "Fieldwork does not begin when investigator and informant first confront each other face to face. Rather, it commences when some individual decides (for whatever reason) that she or he will do fieldwork" (George and Jones, 1980, p.23).

Hyman (1975) cautions about researchers having preconceived expectations of what answers they will receive in an interview and suggested that this type of bias certainly exists and should be acknowledged in the research. The researcher needs to be open to contrary findings. An openness to contrary findings leads to a likelihood of reduced bias (Yin, 1994, p.59). Merriam saw the interviewer- respondent interaction as key to the interview process.

The interviewer-respondent interaction is a complex phenomenon. Both parties bring biases, predispositions, attitudes and physical characteristics that colour the interaction and the data elicited. A skilled interviewer accounts for these factors in order to evaluate the data being obtained. Taking a stance that is non-judgemental, sensitive, and respectful of the respondent is but a beginning point in the process (Merriam, 1998, p.87).

I then began the interviews. I decided to do no more than two a day and usually did one per day. It was a good thing that I followed this format in that many of the interviewees talked at great length and went well over the time frames that I had envisioned. I completed around half of the interviews before I called on the good-will of the existing participants to assist me in establishing contact with those whom I knew less well.

Once I had collected my data, which included both key documents from the era and personal interviews with participants, I began to analyse it. Without ignoring the significance of individual points of views, I looked for themes that emerged from all of the

participants. I looked for themes where there was agreement between participants and I looked for themes where there was disagreement. I was looking for any key themes relating to leadership, values, change or governance.

When key themes emerged that were shared by a number of participants, I applied these themes to both change successes and change failures. My intention was to look for consistency in this application and to determine whether there was practical application for the benefit of future change agendas. Once I had completed taping the interviews, I played the tapes with the intention of pulling out all of the answers to the questions. Starting with the first transcript, I looked at all of the answers to each question. I did a numerical coding in order to see what themes emerged. An example was when the first participant said that he/she had used a formal change agenda, I numbered that statement as "1" and looked for similar statements from all of the other participants. I would then group all of the various "1s" and used this as a possible theme. I needed to know how many similarities there were in the data before determining the number of themes to explore further.

Once I had completed a first draft of the results chapter, I emailed the relevant sections back to the participants, asking for feedback. I set a time limit on the feedback and by the end of the deadline had heard from about one third of the participants. I then phoned anyone who had not contacted me and asked if they had received the information. In all cases, they had and in all case they were satisfied with the content of the section. The feedback that I did receive regarded small details such as job titles or where a particular meeting had taken place. There was no disagreement with how I had interpreted the data taken from the interview. I was now able to begin to analyze the data that had been collected.

## Chapter 4 - Results

This chapter will focus on both the relevant literature and a discussion of the results of the interviews carried out in this study. The interviewees were key decision makers in British Columbia social services.

### Korbin Commission

“As a social democratic government, we were interested in expanding services. The challenge was to not have increased funding simply result in increased wages rather than expanded services”(G. Clark, personal correspondence, October 13, 2004).

The Commission of Inquiry into the Public Service and Public Sector, better known as the Korbin Commission, was one of the first major initiatives of the new NDP Government of British Columbia. The purpose of the commission was to streamline and reduce the number of contracts for service delivery without reducing the amount or variety of services. The commission also had the stated intention of including community agencies in planning and executing these changes. As the report stated,

Community agencies have developed a great deal of expertise identifying service needs in their communities, and in program design and delivery. In a great many cases, they have also developed positive human resource management strategies to cope with a complex and difficult contract-negotiating environment. Multi-service agencies have a particularly broad perspective.... It is essential, therefore, that the development of new approaches to government management of contracted services involves the service provider community in a substantial and meaningful way (British Columbia, 1993, p. 33).

On March 6, 1992, Judy Korbin was appointed as commissioner of the Commission of Inquiry into the Public Service and Public Sector. She was appointed by the government of the Province of British Columbia and was directed to report to the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Glen Clark (British Columbia, 1993). At the time of the establishment of

what became known as the Korbin Commission, human resources costs represented \$10.9 billion or 60% of the government's annual budget of \$19 billion dollars (British Columbia, 1993). The commission was established to look at recommendations relating to the delivery of acceptable levels of service delivered in the most cost effective manner possible in both the Public Service and the Public Sector (British Columbia, 1993). Gawthrop (1996) suggests that the appointment of Korbin to head this commission was politically motivated. As Gawthrop puts it,

Linda Baker, principle secretary to Premier Harcourt had come under intense criticism for hiring party loyalists to investigate patronage appointments. It was Baker who advised hiring Judith Korbin for the government's \$1 million commission on public service costs and practices. Korbin, a 25-year member of the NDP, whose husband helped the BCGEU fight Socred privatization plans for highways maintenance, was to preside over a politically sensitive task: her commission would study issues like contracting out, public sector bargaining and salaries for senior public sector managers (p.150).

This was not the first time that the public sector had been reviewed in the province of British Columbia. In 1927, the government commissioned the Whitten Report, which offered a series of recommendations related to professionalism and funding issues in the child welfare field (British Columbia, 1995). The Whitten recommendations helped to professionalize services and to arrange for provincial funding for child welfare initiatives. As a result, there was steady growth in the service sector and most of the growth was in government-delivered services. With this increase in government-delivered services, there was a decrease in volunteer-based service delivery. (Wharf, 1993).

This growth continued up until the 1980s when the government began to shift services back into the non-profit and the private for-profit sector, this time on a paid rather than volunteer basis. This shift regarding the government's views of the delivery of services was not unique to British Columbia. As Wharf (1993) describes it, in many

jurisdictions in Canada there has been a shift in the way that child welfare services are provided and funded. Increasingly, governments have used private contracts to accomplish this same work (p.63). In 1982, the government began a restraint program that resulted in devolution of programs and privatization of services. Korbin (in British Columbia, 1993) reports that while restraining the size of the direct public service, which was 42,970 employees in 1983 and 39,058 in 1992, the 1980's had seen an explosion of contracting for services by government ministries (p.9).

Historically, most contracts lasted for one year and were renewed annually with very little review or debate. As recently as the late 1990s, renewals were often done by mail or even over the phone. The Ministry would mail the existing contract with a change of dates and the contractor would be asked to sign it and return it as quickly as possible. Rekart (1993) found that in B.C. social services, actual tendering of contracts only took place when a new contract came up or an old contract terminated. Contracts were simply renewed out of habit. In my experience over many years of delivering services for the Social Services Ministry, I rarely sat down with my contract managers to review contract goals, clarify service outcomes or discuss contract language. In fact, we usually made changes to the contracts over the phone without ever exchanging the document. In many cases the contracts did not accurately reflect the actual services being delivered.

Gove (in British Columbia, 1995) noted that overall growth in contracting between 1984-85 and 1991-92 was 100% across all government ministries and a staggering 161% in the Ministry of Social Services. By 1992, the government was spending in excess of \$628 million on contracted community services. By 2001, this total was up to 1.3 billion dollars. Gove noted as well that less than 16% of all government contracts came under the

control of the B.C. Purchasing Commission. The significance of this cannot be understated. It means that fully 84% of all government contracts were not subject to any centralized or consistent standards or rules. Contracts could be and were awarded without advertising, without a bidding process, and without any sort of appeal process. They were often awarded with imprecise service outcomes or without outcomes at all. The system encouraged agencies to develop close personal relationships with contract managers as these relationships were key to getting and keeping contracts.

The relationship between the various levels of management is also a factor in this process. Agency managers, regardless of their skill and experience, depend on the government for the majority of their funding. This relationship plays a role in the quality of their relationship with government leaders. Ministers are short-term leaders who are unlikely to stay in one ministry for more than two years, while Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers are career bureaucrats who may or may not survive a change in ministers. The system seems designed for instability. Agency managers conduct their day-to-day business with local Ministry personnel who are likely to be in place far longer than senior management in the Ministry.

Judy Korbin (in British Columbia, 1993) and her commission were asked by government to do the following:

- to inquire into and report on ways to enhance the delivery of public services through an independent professional public service;
- to review the delivery of personnel and labour relations services relating to the recruitment, hiring and promotion of employees in the public service;
- to review policies and procedures within the public service relating to the contracting for services outside the public service;
- to review current structures and practices for the public service relating to collective bargaining, dispute resolution and exclusion for collective bargaining units under the *Public Service Labour Relations Act* (PSLRA) and the *Industrial Relations Act* (now the *Labour Relations Code*); and,

- to recommend the most cost efficient and effective personnel policies and services for the public service (p. E13).

The Commissioner was sensitive to the issues raised and the possible impact of recommendations on the provincial workforce (British Columbia, 1993). With this in mind, the commission collected a great deal of input. They accepted over 1,000 written briefs, met in 20 municipalities, sponsored five conferences and collected 1200 survey responses (British Columbia, 1993). Korbin recalls that the participants were generally very co-operative (J. Korbin, personal communication, September 22, 2004). The commission, upon reviewing the wealth of information available to them, came up with seventy recommendations for change. The key recommendation, from the perspective of child and family services agencies, was the creation of the Community Social Services Employers Association (CSSEA).

The government of British Columbia acted on this recommendation and required that all agencies funded by the provincial government become members of CSSEA. CSSEA would then be responsible for coordinating the bargaining of all unionized agencies and overseeing compensation arrangements for all other agencies in the province (British Columbia, 1993). Korbin recommended that CSSEA take responsibility for reviewing equity issues in the field and this recommendation was well received by social services agencies. I attended a meeting with members of the Federation of Child and Family Services agencies of B.C. where Korbin presented her recommendations. Although there was some apprehension about the loss of control of bargaining process, executive directors expressed support for the idea of having CSSEA deal with the problem of wage inequity. Korbin (in British Columbia, 1993) herself said,

The commission recognizes the importance of addressing the inequities in the current system but it also recognizes that the great disparities in compensation levels and employee benefits prevents an immediate solution. Government, management and labour must work together to carefully plan solutions to address this problem (p.3).

In addition to the question of wage inequity, CCSEA was also dealing with the question of its role as an advocate on behalf of the organizations that made up its membership. CSSEA was intended to have responsibility for supporting private social service organizations on human resources and labour relations issues. Under the leadership of Jim Karpoff, CSSEA had begun to speak on behalf of the organizations it represented and to advocate for more funding. In fairly short order, the sector had gone from a few small, independent agencies with little or no collective voice or political clout to a sector that met at a common table and spoke with a common voice on issues related to compensation. The government reacted quite strongly to this attempt to redefine the role of CSSEA, and in 1995 it hired Judy Korbin to once again review the work of CSSEA. The result of her report was a firm directive from the government to CSSEA that it was not to take on the role of advocate in the social services sector.

In Chapter 2, I offered Proehl's opinion that human service providers find themselves struggling to balance the needs of their clients with the financial viability of their agencies (2001, p. XI). We saw this challenge played out at the first CSSEA Annual General Meeting where there was heated discussion about how the sector would realize a 21% salary increase for both union and non-union employees including managers, phased in over three years. Agencies were encouraged by CSSEA to see these numbers as realistic. Very few social service administrators were experienced in formal human resources / labour relations process. As well, the sector tended to overestimate the importance of their work to the funding government and indeed to the public. They

believed they were worth this large increase and that the government could afford it, though this was never a realistic goal. As former Minister Joy MacPhail explained, social services is not a vote-determining issue among the public (J. MacPhail, personal communication, July 22, 2004). The 21% increase was not delivered and many agency leaders and their staff felt betrayed. They had joined CSSEA and been active in CSSEA because they believed that there would be an immediate impact on salary levels.

Contracted agencies were very interested in Korbin's sentiment regarding the need to address discrepancies in compensation levels. Some agencies unionized in response to the assumption that there would be more money available for unionized agencies than non-unionized agencies. It became clear, however, that agencies were not going to be able to work out collective agreements on their own but rather would be required to work through CSSEA with the knowledge that CSSEA would have final say on all collective agreement issues. Judy Korbin completed her work in 1992 and her report was published in 1993. The impact of her recommendations is being felt in 2006 in the social services sector whenever human resources and labour relations issues are being dealt with. CSSEA continues to operate and to be in charge of all aspects of human resources and labour relations for unionized contract agencies in British Columbia.

### **Matthew Vaudreuil and the Gove report**

“I was completely overwhelmed emotionally and could not believe that this had happened” (J. MacPhail, personal communication, July 22, 2004).

The story of Matthew Vaudreuil, how he had lived and how he had died, had an enormous impact on the social services community of British Columbia. In his report on the inquiry into this tragedy, Justice Gove (British Columbia, 1995) said that one of the problems with

British Columbia's model for service delivery was that the Ministry social worker was often the service provider least familiar with how the child was faring. In Matthew's case, Gove said, it was the public health nurses, physicians, emergency ward personnel, foster parents, child care workers, home support workers, daycare workers and others who saw Matthew regularly, saw how he and his mother interacted, and saw his self-abuse and tantrums.

These people were a key source of information about Matthew's safety and well-being, but there is little evidence that Ministry social workers consistently sought this information or made effective use of it when they did. There is scant evidence that they ever acted on it to Matthew's benefit (British Columbia, 1995, p. 149).

Matthew Vaudreuil was born on October 3rd, 1986 and died at the hands of his mother on July 9th, 1992. The death of any child is a sad event. When it is a homicide there can be both sadness and outrage. As the former executive director of a mandated child welfare agency, I have personally dealt with situations where children have died and where children have been killed but none of the cases I worked on produced as large or as prolonged an impact as the death of Matthew. Matthew's death led to the creation of the Gove Inquiry and the Gove Report. The Gove Report led to the creation of the Transition Commission which led in turn to the creation of the Ministry for Children and Families, the creation of the Children's Commission and the dissolution of the Ministry of Social Services. (Mullins, 1998).

In 1979 there was a study commissioned by the B.C. Attorney General into the death of Charlene Harder, a child who had been killed by her father. The story made the papers and a study was ordered and conducted by Brent Parfitt, Division Head, Family and Social Services, Ministry of the Attorney General (Parfitt, 1979). Many of his

recommendations were later mirrored in the Gove Report. The Parfitt Report was neither studied nor reported on in any extensive way and few if any of the recommendations were actually implemented. The death of Charlene Harder, although as tragic as that of Matthew Vaudreuil, did not have the long-term impact that Matthew's death did. Gove documented that from 1986 when Matthew was born until 1995 the Ministry was informed of the deaths of 264 children who were either in the care of the superintendent or were known to the Ministry. Gove's staff collected this data because it did not exist on one list. It was only through exhaustive cross-referencing that the list was completed (British Columbia, 1995). Of the cases reviewed, fully 96% had at least one child protection complaint prior to death and 70% of the children died prior to age six (British Columbia, 1995). Between the time of Matthew's death and the publication of the Gove Report, nineteen more children died, of whom ten were killed, yet the Ministry had only investigated one of these cases (British Columbia, 1995).

The Gove Report was not the only study done in relation to the death of Matthew Vaudreuil. A best practices paper was funded by the Children's Ministry and researched by the University of Victoria (Callahan, 1998). While the paper focused on a variety of best practice issues, the real heart of the paper focuses on barriers to best practices. These barriers include fear, lack of training, workload issues, ongoing change agendas and lack of resources. Clearly, Gove was not the only person to explore child welfare practice and to find these types of concerns.

Thomas Gove was a Provincial Court Judge working in Surrey, British Columbia. He received a call from the office of the Attorney General asking him to conduct a review into the death of a child. He was told that it would take approximately six weeks and

would involve some file reviews and some interviews. In fact, it took almost six weeks to collect the file material to send to Judge Gove (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004).

Although the decision to appoint Gove to conduct this investigation was made by the Attorney General, the decision to request an investigation under the British Columbia Inquiry Act was made by Minister Joy MacPhail. MacPhail was a former labour economist with no experience in child welfare. She took the initiative of proposing to her cabinet colleagues that the Ministry look to an external review in investigating the death of Matthew Vaudreuil. As a relatively new minister who had not dealt with this type of situation previously, she was overwhelmed emotionally by the death of this child. It is worth noting that MacPhail's own son was the same age as Matthew and this fact was rarely far from her mind (J. MacPhail, personal communication, July 22, 2004).

I asked Gove why he had chosen to take on this task. He told me that he had been involved in child protection cases as a lawyer and in fact child welfare formed the bulk of his casework. He knew about some of the problems in the system and felt that this was an opportunity to address some of the issues. Once he had accepted the appointment, he reviewed the terms of reference and found them to be quite broad (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004).

The Commission was exhaustive. Between June 1994 and September 1995, the Commission held 158 public meetings, heard from 126 witnesses and reviewed 264 submissions (British Columbia, 1995). Gove decided to divide his work into three broad areas. First there was to be a series of hearings into Matthew's life. This took forty-three days and featured meetings in the different communities where Matthew had lived.

Second, there was an examination of MSS policies and procedures. Finally, there was research into best practices. Gove commissioned a total of twenty-two papers. These papers would assist Gove in determining policy (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004).

The goal was to collect a broad range of ideas, opinions and experiences and use these to help offer recommendations for reform. The task was daunting and was not easy for anyone involved. Jane Morley acted as Legal Counsel for MSS, having been appointed by Colin Gabelman, the Attorney General. Morley was a lawyer who had acted for the Ministry on protection work in the Greater Victoria area since 1980. She agreed to take on the position as Counsel for MSS because she was interested and simply because she was asked (J. Morley, personal communication, June 21, 2004). She was also told that the job would take three weeks and would involve finding out what had happened and trying to learn from what had happened.

Right from the start there was some confusion of roles. Morley was representing the Ministry's interests, not those of the individual social workers. Workers were very anxious that they would be sacrificed in order to protect the Ministry. Morley was concerned that Counsel for the Commission, Len Doust and Robert Cooper, had a theory of the case that would not allow the Commission to start in neutral and simply look for the truth. Morley was not entirely sure how to deal with this issue as she had been directed not to take a defensive role in support of the Ministry. On the other hand, she was concerned that there were perspectives on the truth that were not being put forward (J. Morley, personal communication, June 21, 2004). As one can imagine, this was a very difficult time for all concerned. Individual workers were fearful of being scapegoated. Contractors

were fearful of retribution should they speak out on the issues. The Ministry itself was fearful of being accused of not protecting children in its care. MacPhail told me that there was a great deal of controversy inside the Ministry as to whether the Ministry should take a for-or-against stand on the issue of removal of children from their families (J. MacPhail, personal communication, July 22, 2004). This comment is supported by Vaughn Palmer, Legislative Reporter for the Vancouver Sun, who told me that he was aware that there was a significant split in the NDP caucus with regard to child protection. The difference of opinion and values was not simply in the Ministry but throughout the government (V. Palmer, personal communication, August 9, 2004).

The commission produced over 700 pages of material in two volumes, as well as a separate smaller booklet that dealt with recommendations. I will not focus on the entire report or the wide range of recommendations. Instead, I will focus on the Gove Report as it relates to government contracts for service delivery. Contracted agencies and their workers were involved in Matthew's life and were discussed by Gove in his report. Gove noted that it was beyond the scope of his inquiry to analyze the entire spectrum of contract child welfare service (British Columbia, 1995, p.189). He did, however, appreciate the value of contract service providers and how important they were to service delivery. When I say service delivery, I am referring to a wide range of services that include residential care, mental health professions, counselling, children and infants programs, adult services, shelters, women's services and many other social services.

It appears, however, that the Ministry did not make it clear to contract service providers how much the Ministry relied on them to be its eyes and ears. While contract service providers indicated that they recognized their legal obligation to report child

abuse, they were also deferential to the social worker's decision-making authority, and assumed that the social worker was familiar with the circumstances of the family involved. A review of the childcare worker and home support worker contracts entered into by the Ministry during Matthew's life also reveals the lack of any coherent case plan (British Columbia, 1995, p.149). As part of his work, Gove commissioned a research paper by Robert Whitelaw (1995) titled *Standards, Monitoring, Evaluation, Performance Measurements and Accountability in Providing Contracted Child Care and Protection in British Columbia*. This was not the first review done in British Columbia regarding the relationship between the contractors and the funders. In 1980, the Ministry of Social Services and Housing (MSSH) undertook a pre-implementation interview survey to determine what contractors thought about the Ministry. Findings included the following:

- A lack of meaningful communication between the agencies and the Ministry is perhaps the most significant problem that exists in their relationship (p. 1).
- Many agencies are dissatisfied with Ministry services. The majority found them ineffective, inequitable and inconsistent (p. 2).
- The Ministry of SS&H has, from the perspective of the agencies it deals with, a long way to go in improving its relationships, policies and services (p. 63).
- The surveyed agencies were not hesitant to voice their concerns and each displayed sincere interest in improving the social services function in B.C. It does seem to be their perception however that it is the Ministry that is preventing this from happening. Having offered their co-operation, the next move is the Ministry's (Whitelaw, 1995, p 1-3, p 63).

In 1992, the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia published a report called *Public Funds, Private Provision*, authored by Josephine Rekart. Rekart (1992) found that even though funding to the provincial Ministry increased during the study period, there was no way to determine if this resulted in more services or more money to the contractors. As well, she determined that there was programmatic blurring between government and contractors and that the ability of contractors to be truly

independent was seriously at risk. Finally, Rekart talked about the funding implications for contractors and said,

The voluntary sector does not have the capacity to raise funds that can match the growth of government funding. It is therefore unrealistic to expect that the private sector will fill in the gaps should the government reduce its funding. At present, the notion of partnership is somewhat of an illusion because of major power imbalances between the two sectors (p.8).

In 1992, as part of the Family and Children's Services legislative review, the Ministry appointed a panel to review child protection legislation in British Columbia. The panel came to a number of conclusions but key was what they believed the current system to be lacking. They stated that the system showed a lack of a common philosophy and values; a lack of common sense language; a lack of common financial system and fiscal policies; and a lack of consistency in privacy roles, information sharing. Clearly there was no lack of current research material that spoke of the relationship between contractor and funder.

Whitelaw's work (1995) was a logical extension of all of the earlier research. In his executive summary he states that the absence of clearly defined and commonly supported standards prevents monitoring and evaluation of child and family services in British Columbia. He goes on to state that this inability to evaluate delivery activities, combined with a fragmented decision-making and administrative system, undermines efforts to ensure accountability of those responsible for maintaining the welfare and protection of children. This contributes, he argues, to many of the current concerns raised by the Ministry staff, contracted agency representatives, community interest groups and the clients (p.1-2).

Whitelaw (1995) argues that there are a number of weaknesses in the current delivery of services by contracted agencies, including

- the absence of uniform or comprehensive standards in child welfare;
- the inability of previous efforts within the Ministry of Social Services and across related ministries and co-coordinating groups to reach agreement on practice standards for contracted services,
- the failure of policies and procedures to enable the professional workforce to use their discretion in making decisions; and,
- an administrative, organizational and operational system based on fragmented work and service delivery patterns (p.17-19).

Gove also raised the issue of standards and qualifications, noting that the only part of the child welfare system that had regulated qualification standards was the child-daycare sector. No other sector had any required minimal level of training nor had the government ever required agencies to provide details of hiring requirements or staff training details. Gove was not the first person to note this flaw in the system. Parfitt, (1979) noted the need for more training in his report on the death of Charlene Harder.

Korbin (in British Columbia, 1993) noted that there were no hard data available on training levels or qualifications for contract staff because contract managers infrequently collect such information, because training levels vary greatly due to 20-30% staff turnover rates, and because previous reports provide little concrete information on community social service agency staff training levels (p.188).

There are a number of reasons why qualifications are at a minimal level.

- Many agencies lack the contract dollars to recruit well-trained workers. Generally, agencies are able to attract experienced workers who lack formal training or trained workers lacking experience. Of course once these trained workers get one or two years of training, they are able to get jobs in better paying organizations or in government (D. Sabourin, personal communication, June 15, 2004).
- Many agencies lack the funds to support workers advancing their formal training. In times of tight dollars, agencies are not able to pay for expensive university or community college training. In spite of the importance of training,

rent, utilities and salaries take precedence. Agencies often went for years without any increase in operating dollars that might have been used to pay for training (B. Harper, personal communication, June 30, 2004).

- Many agencies will often develop internal training systems. In this way, workers can get needed training at a fraction of the cost of out-sourcing the training. The downside is that there is no basis of comparison, standard format, or consistency. Often, the training is done by someone who is experienced in service delivery but who lacks formal training in theory or in education (D. Sabourin, personal communication, June 15, 2004).
- There has often been the debate in the social services field about the value of training and the value of experience. This competency versus credentials debate is a heated topic. As many of the leaders in the social services area lack graduate degree, they will make a strong case for the value of experience. It is the very thing that they were able to offer (M. Harris, personal communication, August 12, 2004).

Gove recommended a consultative process among stakeholders that would result in province-wide guidelines related to qualifications and training. The government did help to set up a multi-lateral task force on training but to date involvement has been voluntary and no provincial agency has adopted any task force recommendations in a formal manner. In fact, the Liberal government of British Columbia suspended funding of the Multilateral Task Force on Training, Career Pathing, and Labour Mobility in the Community Social Services Sector when it became clear that agencies were not acting on its recommendations or applying its competencies to any employee group.

The Gove Report put the entire child welfare system under a critical microscope. Issues were raised with regard to power imbalances, communication problems, consistency, qualification and partnerships. Gove went so far as to commission a report titled *Youth-On-Youth* and authored by Teresa Lum, a former child-in-care. This paper looked at gaps and issues from a youth consumer perspective and made recommendations in four categories: advocacy, reporting abuse and neglect, apprehension and life in care. The message from young people was that while in care or while coming into care they did

not feel respected, they had little consistency in their lives and they had little or no control over what was happening to them (British Columbia, 1995).

Gove made a total of 118 recommendations, which Minister Joy MacPhail accepted with a promise to implement every one. The decision to adopt all of the Gove recommendations was important to MacPhail. Gove had briefed MacPhail and her senior staff on the day before the release of the report. Gove recalls that Ministry staff attempted to debate the findings with Gove and to challenge some of the details in the report. MacPhail would not allow this to happen. She was devastated by the report and what it told her about her ministry and she was not prepared to pick apart the details of it. She knew that the Ministry was in trouble and needed reform. Gove also told me that he knew that when MacPhail took the report to cabinet, she made it clear that anything less than a 100% commitment to implement all of the Gove recommendations would result in her resignation (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004).

MacPhail had learned some valuable lessons from this process. She learned that there are swings in how the public views child welfare. At times they are pro-apprehension and at times they are against apprehension. She also learned that while everyone agrees with the importance of protecting the best interests of the child, in practice this is not as simple as it sounds. There are many competing interests vying for government funding. The sector is not well organized and it is difficult to get agreement about what is in the best interests of a child and how best to proceed to protect those interests. Finally she learned that social services and child protection are not vote-determining issues among the public. The public would rather this issue not be in their

face at all (J. MacPhail, personal communication, July 22, 2004). Different leaders learn about how change actually takes place or does not take place while on the job.

The next step in the evolution of the British Columbia Child Welfare System was the creation of the Office of the Transition Commission.

### **The Transition Commission**

On February 1, 1996 the government began to implement the Gove recommendations with the creation of the Transition Commission. Gove had suggested that a senior administrator was required to oversee this transition. This person should be independent of any of the affected ministries or service providers, have experience in the delivery of multi-disciplinary child welfare services, and have legislative authority to make the structural changes necessary to create the new child welfare system at the community, regional and provincial levels (British Columbia, 1995, p.286). Cynthia Morton told me that when she was appointed to lead the Transition Commission, she felt that this was a rare moment in government to do whatever you wanted to (C. Morton, personal communication, July 26, 2004).

The Gove Report was a strong indictment of the child welfare system of BC. As Gove himself said, Matthew's death demonstrated the gross inadequacies in the child protection system and led him to the conclusion that the province's child welfare system needed to be restructured (British Columbia, 1995, p.135). One of the key recommendations of the Gove Report was the creation of a Transition Commission that would move the Ministry from its current structure to a new integrated working model. Gove was clear that the new structure could not and should not belong to a single ministry,

nor should it be given over to senior civil servants (British Columbia, 1995). Primarily he believed that the political leaders of the day must commit themselves to reform and that without that commitment, change would not take place. He put it this way:

This first step, however small, is critical. Political leaders should commit themselves and their governments to systemic reform. Such a system entails a major shift in values, and it will succeed only if elected representatives accept and commit to the need for change. If a new way of protecting children and youth and assisting their families is not embraced by the political leaders in this province, a new child welfare system will not succeed (British Columbia, 1995, p.286).

One of the complaints from child welfare workers in British Columbia has been that change has not been so much about better service as it has been about saving money or keeping out of the newspapers. It is possible that the Gove report would never have been written if Matthew's death had not been carried in the media. It is also possible that CPR would not have taken place if the government had not wanted to engineer cost savings. Systemic change is not easy nor is letting go of old ways. One needs vision, leadership and courage. It can be difficult, given the changing political winds, to engineer change over a number of years. With a provincial election likely to happen every three to five years, most governments tend to be cautious about embarking on changes that might bridge an election. That might prove politically embarrassing if the changes were not going particularly well. In British Columbia, in the last twenty years, we have shifted from the right to the left, to the right to the left and back to the right of the political spectrum. This has made it difficult to stabilize the child welfare system. As Gove put it, "British Columbians must commit themselves to values that will guide the process of change and direct the government in laying the foundation for a reformed child welfare system that places children at the centre" (British Columbia, 1995, p.246-247).

An interesting side note to this is that the Ministry of Social Services had already begun an ambitious change agenda and an ambitious collaboration agenda prior to the work of the Transition Commission. The Child and Youth Secretariat had been part of this change agenda based on recommendations from British Columbia's Ombudsman Report #22. The work of the Child and Youth Secretariat was happening just as the Gove Commission began its work. The work of the Child and Youth Secretariat involved nine Assistant Deputy Ministers working together to create a new strategic plan for children's services. This was the commitment of government to the Ombudsman's office. The work of the Child and Youth Secretariat and the Gove Commission collided. The end result was that the work of the Child and Youth Secretariat was moved to the Transition Commission. It had been determined that there should be only one major group formally making recommendations for changes in the British Columbia social services system. It is also ironic that one of the strongest Assistant Deputy Ministers at the Child and Youth Secretariat table was the Deputy from Education, Cynthia Morton, who emerged as the head of the Transition Commission (Children's Ministry Bureaucrat #1, personal communication, July 14, 2004).

Cynthia Morton was hired as the first and only Transition Commissioner. She was appointed to the role on February 1st, 1996 and presented her final report on September 17th, 1996. What was to have been a three-year process, eighteen months of study and planning and eighteen months of implementation, was over in less than eight months. The new system was going to follow four broad principles. It was to be child centred, integrated and comprehensive, accountable and grounded in participatory decision-making (Morton, 1996). Project teams would be recruited from the five ministries that had

historically worked with children would do the work: Social Services, Health, Attorney General, Education and Women's Equality.

This seemed fine in theory, but in practice, proved to be much more difficult. Staff assigned to the Transition Commission from the ministries had a difficult time seeing a larger vision of service. There was no commitment to a single Ministry for Children. In addition to the lack of commitment, there was the issue of quality. One of the participants said that ministries did not in every case put forward the names of the most stellar bureaucrats for secondment to the Transition Commission. So the commission had a group of uncommitted and less than stellar bureaucrats charged with the responsibility of bringing about systemic change that few of them actually wanted (Children's Ministry Bureaucrat #1, personal communication, July 14, 2004). A staff member from the Transition Commission stated that,

By this time there was already tension in the office and some staff were openly hostile to the idea of a coordinating team. It seemed to be an issue of power and control again, not of getting on with the work (Rimer, 1998, p. 59).

Morton, who believed that all of the ministries saw the world through their own glasses, shared this opinion. There was no unified vision of children. Everyone thought that what he or she did was good and that his or her piece of the system did not need to change. There was no trust between systems and it appeared that no one spoke the same language. Staffs were very territorial and often the people coming to the common table had nothing in common (C. Morton, personal communication, July 26, 2004).

It was hardly surprising that after years of working in a non-integrated system workers would struggle to come to terms with new teams, new directions, new roles and new practice philosophies. As well, the changes were being demanded due to the death of

a child in the care of the Ministry. Difficult change is made the more so when one is being faulted at the same time. As Rimer (1998) put it, elected officials and senior bureaucrats need to be convinced that their system is part of the problem and that changes to it are part of the solution (p. 60).

Cynthia Morton was a Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Education when asked to take on the role of Transition Commissioner. She believes that she was asked because of a track record of being able to implement change. She saw the role as challenging and an opportunity to do something new in government, an environment where one does not often get a chance to do something new. As well, Morton cared about the children's agenda and felt that she could make a difference to that agenda (C. Morton, personal communication, July 26, 2004).

The work of the Transition Commission was to implement the recommendations of the Gove Commission. It was not going to be easy. Morton recalls that there was huge resistance from most ministries who were to be impacted by these changes. The one exception was the Social Services Ministry. They were under siege and willing to entertain any changes that would make a difference in how well they could do their jobs. The Social Services Ministry was seen as the weakest in terms of power and organization and it saw this as an opportunity to gain power and influence. All of the other ministries believed that they had something to lose (C. Morton, personal communication, July 26, 2004).

As the work of the Commission progressed there was a development that had a large impact on the office of the Transition Commissioner. One day in question period in the B.C. Legislature an Opposition member asked the Minister of Social Services why a number of deaths of children had not been referred to the Child and Family Review Board

and instead had been referred to the Ministry's own internal Audit and Review Division. The question was important because the issue followed so closely on the heels of the release of the Gove Report. The Opposition suggested that the Ministry's internal process could not be relied upon to offer a fair and open hearing and that was why the cases had not been referred. The Minister was caught in a dilemma. The cases had not been referred to the review board and the Minister needed to come up with a reason. He suggested that he had doubts about the review board's independence. Tribunal members were deeply concerned and also offended when the Minister suggested that the reason the cases were not referred to the board was because it lacked independence. The chair of the board spoke out publicly and challenged the Minister's assertions. Once again, child welfare and the deaths of children were in the media. The Minister eventually apologized for his comments and the cases were referred to the Review Board. It was immediately clear upon review that the death of Matthew Vaudreuil was not unique and in fact many children had experienced similar questionable service while in Ministry care. Ministry service had, in part, been a factor in their deaths. This was an enormous concern to the child welfare community and to the general public.

Instead of the work of the Transition Commission calming the general public, criticism of the Minister in the Legislature and in the media escalated. The concern was that the government was not really responding to the Gove Report in any substantive way. By September, the Premier asked the Commissioner to provide a report on how to proceed more quickly. The Commission had had eight months to work on bringing the Gove recommendations to life. There were internal issues at the Commission office related to turf and power. There was external pressure from both the Legislature and the media.

Morton believes that this issue and Minister Streifel's handling of it were the final straw. This issue short-circuited the work of the Transition Commission and led to the creation of the Ministry for Children and Families. The decision of the Premier was that the timetable had to be moved up because the public believed that the child welfare system was not improving. Morton believes that the Premier did not defend his Minister or the Ministry because he knew that the Ministry was about to be blown up. It was just a matter of deciding when (C. Morton, personal communication, July 26, 2004).

The day before the report was released, Morton briefed the Premier on its contents. The only significant part of the Gove Report that Morton was not endorsing was the recommendation to move to community governance. The reason for this was that the province was in the middle of devolving the health care system to the community and Morton believed that it was not fair to the community to do a major devolution again (C. Morton, personal communication, July 26, 2004).

The Transition Commissioner recommended a new Ministry for Children and Families and that the new Ministry itself implement the Gove recommendations. So almost before it got started the Transition Commission was over. In an early report Morton made a statement that in the end would prove to be an excellent epitaph. She said,

Working toward a common philosophy and language is a key part of the change process, to help us best support children, youth and their families. It is difficult to find terms that have a common meaning among different professions and communities. Arriving at a shared understanding of our tasks and the needs of our clients - while respecting the distinct roles of team members - will help remove this barrier to co-operation (Morton, 1996, p. 4).

Unfortunately, the barrier could not be removed.

## **The Creation of MCF and the CPR Process**

“It was the hardest piece of work I ever did; it’s probably the hardest piece of work I’ve ever done. It was probably the best piece I ever did” (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

The creation of a new ministry out of the ashes of the old ministry is a monumental task. To do it in the bright light of media coverage and with huge political pressure just makes the task all that more daunting. Add to this the task of reforming the contract sector and you are dealing with monumental change.

The Contract and Program Restructuring (CPR) initiative focuses on restructuring the interrelationship between the Ministry and contracted service providers. The primary purpose of CPR is to re-organize the delivery of services through the contracted agency sector to improve services to clients. Service improvement is based upon the commitment that the delivery system should be structured according to the needs of clients rather than the historical relationship of the contract agency to a particular program or ministry (Allen, 1998, p. 5).

On September 23, 1996, Premier Glen Clark announced the creation of the new Ministry for Children and Families (MCF). The new minister was Penny Priddy and the new deputy was Robert Plecas. The Premier called Priddy to tell her that he was restructuring social service delivery and putting all of the children’s programs together and to ask her to be the new Minister. Priddy believes that other than Cynthia Morton, the Transition Commissioner, no one other than the Premier had any input into the decision to create the new Ministry (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

Robert Plecas was a lifetime public servant having entered the public service in 1973. He had served as a Deputy Minister until the first day of the Mike Harcourt NDP administration. Harcourt was being sworn in as Premier at precisely the same time as Plecas was being fired by George Ford, who at the time told him that this was not a very good decision and that Plecas would undoubtedly be back within a couple of years. Five

years later Plecas was approached by Frank Rhodes on behalf of Premier Glen Clark and asked to become the Deputy Minister of the new Ministry for Children and Families. Plecas agreed to take on the role as he had a real concern for children, having five children of his own. He had read the Gove Report and believed that the solutions advocated by Gove were reasonable. Plecas met with Premier Clark and was convinced that he could work with the Premier and that the Premier would put his authority behind the appointment of Plecas (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

One of the interesting sidebars to this appointment was that questions were raised about Plecas' loyalty, as he had been a senior advisor to the leader of the official opposition, Gordon Campbell. Plecas assured the government that he was a lifelong civil servant and a professional and that he would treat the job as any professional public servant would. As a courtesy, Plecas called Campbell and told him that he planned to take on this position. Campbell's response was positive and he stated that not only did he approve of the appointment but that he would be supportive of the appointment. Plecas agreed to take on the job on the condition that it was an appointment for a maximum of 20 months (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

The two documents that were to drive the work of the new ministry were the Gove Report (British Columbia, 1995) and the Morton Report (Morton, 1996). The new ministry would be built on six foundations; focusing on children, recognizing diversity, regional service delivery, integration of services, creating an open accountable accessible system and participation. By participation what was meant was that all constituents would or could be consulted and involved in the creation and implementation of this new ministry. This would include government, agencies, clients, and members of the

community. Those six foundations overlapped the four broad principles advocated by Morton a year earlier, which in turn followed the four principles of the Gove Report (universal, responsive, accountable and efficient child welfare services). The new ministry would move to create twenty regional operating agencies each to have maximum autonomy within their regions and maximum accountability to the ministry. This new ministry was to be up and running within six months which clearly would make broad consultation and participation difficult. All of the development projects of this new ministry were to be completed in the 1997-1998 fiscal year. This was an ambitious time line to be sure.

Plecas had worked with twenty-five different ministers and had been a Deputy Minister in ten different ministries. He believed that part of the success he had in working with Priddy was based on the experience that both of them had (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004). Priddy believed that the final determining factors in deciding to create the new ministry, involved issues related to the tenure of Dennis Streifel as Minister for Social Services. There was a great deal of media attention following the release of the Gove Report and the resulting changes in the Ministry. The media was reporting on a number of fatality reviews that had taken place and suddenly there was a concern that the Ministry was not effectively moving forward on a change agenda (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

As mentioned earlier, Minister Streifel stated in the Legislature that he could not send the fatality reviews to the Children's Commission because there would be a conflict of interest because the Commissioner reported to the minister. The Children's Commissioner did not support this position and the issue played out in the media. In the

end the fatality reviews were forwarded to the Children's Commissioner for review. In reviewing the files it became clear that issues related to the death of Matthew Vaudreuil were not unique to Matthew and that there were systemic issues that needed to be addressed. Priddy was at home at this time, recovering from illness and commented to me that she was unclear as to why the minister was not rescued by his colleagues. He was clearly struggling in his role and was unable to answer questions put forward by both the opposition and the media. The issue of the bad media related to the fatality reviews may have been the final straw for the Premier, who needed to see the recommendations of the Gove Report implemented as well as the need to assure a cynical public that things were getting better. Priddy suggested that Streifel may have been left alone as a political decision to allow the government to move quickly and decisively to implement the full range of Gove's recommendations (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004). The belief was that if the system was seen to be at least partially moving ahead on the Gove recommendations, then there was no need for aggressive, immediate change. On the other hand, if the public believed that the social services system was further collapsing, then this might provide the motivation to bring about immediate and drastic change.

The Premier and the Minister had agreed that the project of creating the Ministry for Children and Families could take up to two years. Plecas felt that two years was too long as it would allow time for those who were resistant to change to organize that resistance. Plecas asked for and was given six months. He was also given the right to create his own change plan and to pick his own executive team. Plecas saw the change agenda as only having three components; the amount of time, the amount of money and

the number of staff. In this change agenda he felt that he had control over all three components (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

The creation of the executive team was critical to the success of this six-month building plan. Plecas said that one of the smartest things he did was to phone colleague Thea Vakil and ask her to join his team as the detail/systems/financial expert. He asked a number of other Assistant Deputy Ministers to join his team in order to secure the respect of the social services community (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

Plecas spoke of the need for gender balance on his team. It is his belief that an all male team does not make particularly good decisions; thus, his team had more women than men on it. One notable absence from the executive team was Chris Haynes, a well-known Assistant Deputy Minister. He was excluded simply because Plecas was not convinced that Haynes could agree to making changes in a style dictated by Plecas. Plecas had a great deal of respect for Haynes but he knew that this project would not allow for consultation or debate. He knew that his style and the timeline he was on would eventually create tension between himself and Haynes, so he made the decision to avoid this particular problem (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

The transition team ended up being a 16 member team and would work together for six months. At the end of those six months there would be three or four jobs available. This would create a somewhat competitive climate that Plecas felt was positive. The first key date/goal was to be Christmas of 1996. Plecas believed that if by that date his executive was up and running and his twenty regional operating officers were hired then the project could be completed in the six months allotted (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

Plecas did not think there were any significant problems in getting the new ministry up and running. He had the time and the resources he needed, he had a good relationship with his minister and he knew he had the backing of the Premier (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004). Priddy saw the situation a bit differently. The first problem she encountered was the fact that in her mind, there were pieces missing from Morton's report to the Premier and those missing pieces had to be created and added into the mix. In her mind there was neither a clear statement of vision nor a rationale for that vision. Secondly, she had Plecas as her deputy and was not well acquainted with him. She only knew him based on his reputation from the early 1980s. Priddy came to know and respect Plecas and describes her relationship with him as one of the most useful experiences she ever had in government. However, the social services field was less positive and less charitable to the appointment of Plecas. In the end the social services field was not able to come to terms with the appointment of Plecas (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004). Because Plecas tended to make decisions and initiate change without input from the community service providers, those service providers resisted the change and were unwilling to trust him or to support him beyond grudgingly implementing his decisions.

The Ministry for Children and Families was attempting to manage an ambitious change agenda that included contract reform, the Ministry's own re-organization and CPR, a process aimed at service contractors. In addition, the social services sector was dealing with a new child and families act which had been proclaimed in January of 1996, the still relatively new CSSEA human resources and labour relations initiative and a premier who had been in power for only eight months. The CPR initiative was launched in the

1997/1998 fiscal year and had four goals that once again resembled the Gove principles / Morton principles / MCF foundations. The CPR goals were to

- redefine services from the client's perspectives;
- create better integrated and coordinated programs and services;
- streamline bureaucracy and administration to maximize dollars in front line services; and,
- use good business practices to provide government services as efficiently and as effectively as possible (Allen, 1998).

Priddy played a role at the beginning of the CPR project with regard to the principles of CPR and potential starting places for CPR. She struggled with keeping her hands off the CPR project because she knew the social services world and she had strong feelings about the social services community. She had to remind herself that her job was not to do CPR. Her job was to make sure her government's mandate was delivered (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

The CPR process was to be completed by April 1, 1998; however, it became clear to the Ministry that it was unlikely that all twenty regions would complete on time. The twenty regions were moving at different speeds, had different processes and different issues of complexity. As well, there was building resentment and resistance to the CPR process and its potential outcomes (Allen, 1998, p.6). The process was massive and province-wide. An enormous amount of time and energy was taken up in consultation. The consultation did not appear to bring the Ministry nor the contractors any closer to resolution and so issues such as ownership of assets, unions, liability and service specifics were not yet resolved. Plecas said that CPR was not part of his mandate when he took over the job of running MCF. He believed that if the system was to be client-centred, it would be essential for anything that had an impact on the client to reflect that. It made no sense ,

in his mind, to reinvent the Ministry without doing the same thing with the contractors (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

In order to appreciate the enormity of the task facing CPR, it is important to realize the size of the system being reformed. In the 1998-1999 fiscal year, the Ministry had a \$1.4 billion dollar budget and 4,756 full time equivalent employees. The Ministry also had over 12,000 contracts with over 6,000 service providers costing over 800 million dollars or 57% of the total ministry budget (Allen, 1998).

The Ministry itself was still caught up in re-structuring that had been happening in one way or another for the previous three years plus the work on contract reform, a separate piece of work that called for the standardization of contracting, reducing the number of contracts between government and providers, establishing common guidelines for administrative setting outcome expectations and moving to continuous multi-year agreements with long-term providers (Allen, 1998, p. 9). When I asked him why the Ministry initiated the CPR process, Plecas responded, "How could you do one without the other? They were as integral from the beginning in my mind as any change that we made. You could not make them incrementally. You had to make them together" (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

I was directing programs in three of the twenty regions when CPR began. It was an interesting process in any one region, but somewhat confusing in three. There appeared to be four sets of directives, one from each of the three regions plus a separate message from Victoria. It meant that from the period of time that we were involved in CPR, I had to attend lengthy, complex and differing meetings in as many as five Lower Mainland communities and at the same time run the agency. The Ministry had been very clear that

there could be no decline or reduction in services in order to allow staff to fully take part in CPR meetings. Although it was an exhaustive and exhausting process, agencies and agency directors were fearful of not taking part in the process as this could put one's agency at a disadvantage. Directors put in as much as twenty hours a week of CPR work in addition to running their agencies.

Priddy, in hindsight, recognizes that there were some flaws in the CPR process. Initially, the Ministry was not able to explain well enough to the public how in the end this would be better. MCF was simply not able to convince enough people that there were good reasons for this change initiative. The process was exhausting and every step felt like five. Priddy equated the system to the myth of Sisyphus who pushed a rock up a hill over and over again, only to find himself back at the bottom each time with the same rock (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004). Priddy summed up the CPR situation by saying that the process, although necessary, needed the buy-in of the people who were being impacted by it and that buy-in never happened in any significant way (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

MCF was clear that they saw CPR as a process that would result in better services to clients. MCF knew that there was the need for significant change in the contract sector. They believed that those changes could be achieved through the CPR process. Better service would be achieved in a number of ways. With fewer agencies doing contract work, provincial initiatives and training would be easier to organize. Large size could mean one stop shopping for clients. The Ministry itself could actually pay attention to contracts and outcomes and deliverables because the sheer volume would not be as daunting. The

Ministry also was dealing with fiscal challenges and believed that there were significant savings to be made in administrative efficiencies. As Allen (1998) said in this report,

In addition to assuming responsibilities for the service demands of the transferring programs, the Ministry was under pressure to develop new initiatives, especially in the area of prevention and early intervention and aboriginal services, and to realize improvement in service by filling gaps. While in relative terms this sector is not generally viewed as richly funded, it is commonly acknowledged that administrative waste occurs when there is duplication or fragmentation of service structures. It was assumed therefore that Contract Reform and CPR would generate substantial administrative savings (Allen, p. 10).

One of the problems that the Ministry encountered when it initiated CPR was that social workers saw themselves as unique and this belief caused them to build walls around themselves, which, in turn, created silos. There was also a split in the social work community between those who supported the Gove recommendations and those who did not. The social work community wanted to engage in a consensual process to determine what should be done with the Gove recommendations. Plecas was clear in stating that direction had been given, a plan for change was in place and there would be no consultation. He knew that even with a consensual process, the field would not likely support change in six or twelve or twenty-four months. So he decided to simply move the process along.

In the contract community, many agency leaders believed that the Ministry had a fiscal agenda that would take precedence over service issues in the CPR process. The problem was not simply the fiscal agenda. Many contractors believed that there needed to be a fiscal agenda. In simple terms, there were too many contracts and too many contractors. There was the potential for cost efficiencies and as a result, dollars for new program needs. The concern in the field was how to balance a fiscal agenda with a service agenda. They agreed that there could be administrative savings, but no one was

volunteering to go first. In the words of the comic strip character Dilbert, "Change is good. You go first." This was attractive to the government in that they could initiate new programs without having to actually commit new dollars. For this to happen, however, there would have to be fewer agencies and thus, fewer executive directors. If this was indeed to be the outcome, then it was not feasible that these same executive directors would be the ones to come to the table to decide how to help MCF achieve its goals. How would managers come to the table and honestly balance the needs of communities with their agencies needs and their own needs? No one minded change unless of course that change had an impact on them.

I was aware of the process because of programs that I operated on the Lower Mainland. In the North Shore region, fully 75% of contract agencies would no longer exist following CPR if the contract targets were met. It was the same in Simon Fraser and South Fraser regions. Dozens of agencies would not be able to survive because their MCF contracts would be given to other agencies in the name of efficiencies. Although many agencies have multiple funding sources, MCF is a principal funder for most social services agencies. The loss of even as little as 20% of MCF funding would make it difficult for most agencies to survive. Social services agencies are put together somewhat like a house of cards: there is a wide range of funding sources and programs. Pull one out and the whole house of cards can collapse. The agency that I worked for was 95% MCF funded with the rest of the funding made up of small grants and fundraising. We operated six programs. The loss of one would have been fiscally devastating; the loss of two would have been fatal.

Although the process ended in February of 1998, a full five weeks before the planned end of the process, several regions had completed the selection process and had announced who had won and lost contracts. In Simon Fraser region where my agency held two contracts, we lost one and were told that we had to merge with another agency or risk losing our second contract. In the other two regions where we offered services, the process was shut down prior to any announcements being made.

Plecas recognizes that the CPR process was not as successful as the creation of MCF. He believes that there are a number of reasons for this. First, the size of the two initiatives was different. While MCF had five thousand workers and a common employer, the contract sector had thousands of contractors delivering over twelve thousand contracts. Plecas acknowledges that he probably underestimated the complexity of the contract sector. In hindsight, he suggests that although the change could take place in a relatively short period of time, the change in culture and attitude would need five to seven years and during that time it would be critical to stay the course (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004).

Priddy found that the social services sector was very large and everyone wanted to be consulted. It was difficult to keep the process moving while giving time for the consultation that was being demanded. As well, Priddy believed that although the sector trusted her because of a long commitment to children and children's issues, there were misgivings about the appointment of Plecas. This mistrust of Plecas was a problem that never went away.

Although there was a great deal of respect shown by Priddy towards Plecas, in hindsight she wishes that she had kept a closer eye on the CPR process. By the time she

became aware that there were problems with CPR implementation, those problems were well advanced. She does not believe that she would have changed the CPR process, but she says now that she could have softened the process and thus made it more acceptable to the social services community (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004). In hindsight, Priddy reflects that if she and her Deputy had known each other better, then perhaps he might have trusted her political instincts and her understanding of community better and consulted with her more. Her analysis is that Plecas came from an earlier era of politics and was not overly interested in a consultative process, something he himself states clearly (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

A senior manager in MCF whom I interviewed said that process and consultation were important issues during this time period. Plecas was famous in the social services community for saying, "Process is for cheese." Many bureaucrats and many social service providers took this light-hearted comment very seriously as a criticism of how the field did its work. It was not a statement that Plecas was ever able to distance himself from (Children's Ministry Bureaucrat #2, personal communication, July 20, 2004).

Plecas had nearly completed the CPR process when he received a call from the Premier's office. The Premier wanted to move him from social services to the Premier's office and Plecas agreed. The Premier then decided to replace Plecas in the Children's Ministry with Mike Corbeil and to replace Minister Priddy at the same time. Neither Priddy nor Plecas built in succession planning and neither had any say regarding who would replace them. Both told me that they were disappointed in the direction chosen by the next leadership team. Priddy and Plecas had moved forward based on a strategic vision. They had created the Children's Ministry and had been close to transforming the

contract sector. I do not mean to suggest that their successes were completely unproblematic. In the social services sector, an autocratic approach can be very effective in the short term; however, given the sector's need for process, early success can come at a cost that is felt in the longer term. It is interesting to speculate what might have happened if Minister Priddy and Deputy Minister Plecas had been given the time to complete their change agenda, but that did not happen. Instead, the sector experienced a lack of completion of the strategic vision. The sector stumbled from crisis to crisis, from problem to problem and from reactive solution to reactive solution. This reactive method was the Children's Ministry's model of a change agenda: given a problem, one responds with a reactive solution and this in turn leads to a new problem that is solved reactively again.

### **Allen report**

“You are proceeding without a road map having not determined whether you are traveling by land or sea or air and you are traveling at the speed of light” (Children’s Ministry Bureaucrat #2, personal communication, July 22, 2004).

MCF had been relatively successful in creating the new ministry and the executive assumed that they could be as successful as quickly in the contract sector (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004). Five weeks prior to the proposed completion date for CPR, the new Minister, Lois Boone, ordered a review of the process to be completed within two months. The review was completed quickly and the Minister announced in July of 1998, that CPR would be discontinued immediately. She also announced the following specific outcomes of that discontinuation:

- The integration work carried out to date within the regions would be assessed in light of the Ministry's stated priorities.

- With some exceptions, existing contracts would be renewed from September 30, 1998 to September 30, 1999.
- All discussions with announced successful proponents of the RFP process were put on hold.
- All outstanding CPR Requests for Proposals were withdrawn.
- Any initiatives related to cross-sectoral amalgamations were put on hold. (Government Press Release, July, 1998).

CPR was dead and it appeared that an enormous amount of work had been done in vain. The answer to why this process failed depends on who one asks. The previous Minister, Penny Priddy said simply that the Premier, Glen Clark, blinked. He was concerned about the negative feedback and decided not to proceed in the face of it (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004). Robert Plecas believes that the problem lay with a relatively new minister and deputy who had never faced public criticism before and, unsure of what to do, pulled back (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 24, 2004). Tom Gove thinks that Minister Boone never really grasped what CPR was all about. Her Deputy, Mike Corbeil, did understand but he disagreed with the changes. Gove believes that the problems with the current British Columbia social services system date back to the time when Boone and Corbeil were in charge of the Ministry. Things have gotten steadily worse since that time, he maintains (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004). There is likely some truth in all of these explanations. In reading Allen's report, some sense of the reasons emerges. Allen (1998) recommended three strategic priorities for the Ministry. They are to build trust, to manage the change agenda, and to move forward. The failure of CPR probably lies within these three recommendations and the government's inability to meet them.

There was a belief in the contract sector that the key reason for stopping CPR was found in the third priority: moving forward. In Allen's (1998) description of moving

forward he states that the Ministry should move forward once it is satisfied that the essential conditions for success are in place. He goes on to say that these conditions include a better understanding of financial and labour implications and the need for extensive consultation. By labour implications, Allen is suggesting that the Ministry erred in its assumption that different unions would allow amalgamations between agencies and force workers from one union to join another. The unions were not willing to let members go to their competitors that easily. While unions may work closely with one another on a wide range of issues, they are nevertheless conscious of the power of their memberships. In the move to CPR the big winner would have been the BCGEU at a cost to smaller unions. It is conceivable that this issue could have been resolved but on the eve of implementation it had not been.

In the Minister's response to the Allen Report, she stated that one of the Ministry's activities would be to clarify roles and responsibilities for addressing human resource and labour relations issues with the Public Service Employers' Council, CSSEA and the HEABC and complete joint analyses on the implications of service integration (MCFD response to Allen, 1998, p. 7). The Minister could not have been much clearer. She appeared to understand at least this part of the problem.

Allen's twin issues of managing a change agenda and building trust were going to prove difficult in that the contracted agencies did not altogether trust the government and lacked faith in the government's ability to manage change. No less serious an issue were the financial implications. At the heart of this was the question of who owned the assets of a particular contract agency. If for instance, an agency purchased a home with a combination of dollars from a variety of sources and if that same agency lost its contract to

operate a resource in that home, who would now own the home: the original purchaser, the agency who now held the contract or the Ministry itself?

MCF had assumed that assets and resources would simply pass from one organization to another with little discussion. According to one manager (Lower Mainland Regional Operating Officer, personal communication, July 15, 1998), the Ministry had assumed that there would be no costs associated with the movement of contracts, only savings. The same individual also told me that the Ministry could not afford to buy the necessary assets to replace those they would lose if agencies chose to hold onto assets. With the imagined cost savings evaporating and a less than supportive unionized sector, the government had to decide whether to continue full speed ahead and problem solve as needed or shelve the project and look at other alternatives. It could not have been an easy decision to make. On one hand, vast amounts of time and energy resources and goodwill had been expended on CPR. On the other hand, there were serious roadblocks that would need time and skill to get around. Once contracts were cancelled and re-awarded, it would be too late to turn back. There were other issues as well. A senior MCF bureaucrat shared with me his assessment of the issues. He believed that while MCF managers had accepted the idea of CPR, contractors had not and he felt there were good reasons for this hesitation, such as:

- MCF had been created in a rush and people were still trying to sort out the impact on agencies of the new ministry.
- The contractors had never understood or accepted the appointment of Robert Plecas as the Deputy Minister. His outcome-based style was opposed to the sector's belief in consultation and consensus.
- There was a fear that the CPR process was going to create a climate of winners and losers and losing was not an acceptable outcome for many contractors.
- The sector was offended because they were being told that what they had been doing for twenty years was no longer acceptable.

- There was fear of the unknown and this was clearly the unknown (Children's Ministry Bureaucrat, personal communication, July 22, 2004).

The Minister announced a new 24-month plan that would achieve a new series of goals including a new integrated service delivery system, support to aboriginal peoples to deliver services on their own, sustained and innovative programs in the community living area and integrated Ministry infrastructures.

The contract sector was tired. In the previous three years they had gone through the release of the Gove Report, the creation of the Transition Commission, the creation of MCF and the Children's Commission, Contract Reform, CPR and now a new two-year planning cycle. It was difficult to imagine where people were going to find the time, the trust and the energy to move on to the next series of changes. As Allen (1998) had said in his report,

CPR is a significant and complex restructuring process. Most stakeholders we consulted stated that the process lacked a clearly defined framework or objectives, one set of rules and guidelines, and a common understanding about what was being evaluated. Many stakeholders had not seen the goals of CPR and had no prior knowledge of the restructuring changes proposed by the Ministry for Children and Families. As each of the 20 regions developed its own way of approaching the restructuring, rules and guidelines were seen to vary widely. For those stakeholders who were involved in the process, there was a sense that their input was not seriously considered (p. 30).

The contract sector had invested heavily in the CPR process and the combination of mixed messaging regarding the purpose of CPR followed by an eleventh hour suspension of the process had left people confused. The issue that needed resolution was trust and it would prove to be a very fragile component. Allen (1998) closed his report by saying,

At a strategic level, the review team recommended that the Ministry focus on building trust in the community and social services sector and effectively managing a significant change agenda that goes beyond CPR

Furthermore the Ministry should move forward but only after assessing and strengthening the CPR process (p. 43).

This was going to be particularly difficult with Lois Boone as Minister. To people who knew her, Boone was both compassionate and sensitive to the needs of clients. She had extensive experience with foster children but she would not allow her staff to capitalize on that experience by letting it out in the media. She felt that she needed to maintain distance as a minister. Being distant was not helpful in developing trust with the contract sector (Children's Ministry Bureaucrat, personal communication, July 22, 2004). Add to this a senior management group based in Victoria, most of whom were not visiting the field on a regular basis, and who were somewhat nervous about visiting agencies and directors, and the development of trust was going to take time and a lot of work.

### **Accreditation and Contract Reform**

“The Ministry for Children and Families is maintaining momentum on the ongoing government contract reform agenda. Our goal is to develop and award contracts based on recognized business and service delivery principles” (MCF briefing document, July 30, 1998, p. 3).

Following the decision by Minister Boone and Deputy Minister Corbeil to shut down CPR, the Ministry was still in the same situation it had been in prior to CPR. David Young, a provincial Regional Operating Officer, believed that CPR was stopped because of pressure from the provincial unions who were not convinced that CPR would guarantee job security. When Corbeil was named the new Deputy Minister, he set up a meeting with the twenty provincial Regional Operating Officers (ROOs). He arrived at that meeting with John Shields, the head of the BCGEU and set about chastising the ROOs for how they had treated the unions (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004).

However, there were too many contracts, too many agencies and inconsistent contract standards. As well, there were few standards and few agencies committed to external standards. This was not to say that good work was not being done; however, both Korbin (in British Columbia, 1993) and Gove (in British Columbia, 1995) had stated clearly that contracted social services agencies needed to improve in a number of areas related to delivering services to children and families in British Columbia. Korbin stated that community agencies had developed a great deal of expertise in identifying service needs in their communities and in program design and delivery (British Columbia, 1993, p. 33). Gove said that because the Ministry had no effective way to monitor the quality of services delivered by contracting agencies and individuals, contracting agencies were largely left to their own devices to ensure that their employees practiced competently (British Columbia, 1995 p.101).

CPR had not been able to improve contracting and had had no impact on standards. The MCF initiated a new process for change in January of 1999. David Young, a social worker and administrator, was put in charge of the process by Vaughn Dowie, an Assistant Deputy Minister in the MCF (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004). Young had been in charge of social services on the North Shore of Vancouver and had overseen the CPR process there. The contract sector was still feeling vulnerable following the CPR debacle. The feeling of many contractors was that they had been lied to and manipulated by Victoria government bureaucrats. Any new process would have to be led by someone who was viewed as more credible. Young had led what was viewed as a community-driven consultation process on the North Shore of Vancouver. He had listened to his contractors and his community. He was seen as community-based. There appeared

to be the chance of a process that would have more integrity. Young understood that trust was an enormous issue and when he stepped into his new role he knew that there was no trust and nothing to build on. In fact the sector was not even talking to the Ministry (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004).

The new Deputy Minister was Mike Corbeil and working with Corbeil was a career bureaucrat named Michael Shoop. The contract sector saw Shoop as Corbeil's diplomat while Shoop himself suggested that his job was to soften some of the messages from the Deputy Minister in order to make them more digestible (M. Shoop, personal communication, July 20, 2004). These two men, Shoop and Young, would take the lead in implementing accreditation and contract reform.

Agencies were anxious about what appeared to be yet another poorly planned, poorly implemented and painful process, which was how many executive directors and agencies saw the CPR process. Now, close on the heels of CPR, came a new process. The new process did not have a specific name, but it did have three parts:

- contract reform;
- accreditation; and,
- continuing agreements.

Contract reform was to be an attempt to review and revise the actual contracts that were used when MCF and an agency signed an agreement related to the delivery of a specific service. Accreditation would require agencies to work towards standards that would be observable and measurable. Finally, the continuing agreement was the prize offered to those who engaged in accreditation and who were in a position to sign new service contracts. It is important to realize the significance of continuing agreements to agencies. Up to this point, all agencies signed one-year agreements that were usually

renewed at the end of the year for one more year. The Ministry was not, however, under any obligation to renew the agreement, and this resulted in an unbalanced partnership. Contractors were all aware of agencies that had been in dispute with government and had not had their contracts renewed. Continuing agreements, on the other hand, would have a start date but no closing date. Although continuing agreements did not guarantee ongoing work, they would create a sense of a favoured status and it was clear that agencies with continuing agreements would be the last to be cut.

In order to make all of this happen, Young had to get up to speed and create some momentum, a process that was going to be difficult because he had no staff, no office space, no budget and little or no support from government. Add to this the resistance and suspicion from the field, the negativity within government and overall resistance to change and one gets a sense of the enormity of the task. On a more positive note, the Assistant Deputy Minister, Vaughn Dowie took a hands-off attitude to the work, leaving Young a free hand to proceed. As well, Shoop proved to be a solid ally in getting the field back to the table and ready to talk. The plan to link accreditation to contract reform and continuing agreements was quite creative. The field needed some form of inducement to trust and work with government again. This process was a great way to accomplish this goal (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004).

Young was given eighteen months to complete his project. The project had a wide range of tasks to be completed and eighteen months was just not a realistic timeline. Young, instead, presented a sixty-month plan to the Deputy Minister. He was not told no. As well as accreditation and contract reform, the work was to include outcomes-based performance, a new contract management system and a new training program for contract

management. Young put together a dedicated team to do this work, most of whom had not worked together before but who cared deeply about the work and about the vision for change. However, there were problems.

In hindsight, Young believes that government was not really ready to commit to continuing agreements. It was giving away too much control and power. As well as a lack of commitment on the part of senior Ministry managers, there was a lack of commitment from other ministries. This was important because many agencies were multi-funded and had contracts with other ministries. These ministries had no commitment to accreditation and no commitment to change.

Another area of resistance to the notion of accreditation came from lobby groups such as the BCACL, the Federation of Child and Family Service Agencies of BC, and the Multi-lateral Task Force on Post Secondary Education. These groups were interested in creating their own standards for competencies and the fact that the MCF had contracted for accreditation outside of the provinces was difficult for these groups to accept (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004). Accreditation was an important part of the Ministry plan to bring everyone together. In fact, the plan was for agencies to assist and support one another as they proceeded through a process that would result in an improvement in standards and accountability.

The MCF vision was that 25-30 agencies would be trained in accreditation every few months. It was determined that all agencies with budgets in excess of \$350,000.00 and where 50% or more of those dollars were supplied by MCF, would be required to complete accreditation by March 31, 2004. The first training took place in April of 1999. There were 25 agencies involved in the training. The training allowed agencies to do two

things: learn about the principles of contract reform and the details of a continuing agreement and choose which of two accreditation bodies they would use.

MCF had contracted with two large U.S.-based accreditation agencies: the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and the Council on Accreditation for Child and Family Services (COA). CARF is an Arizona-based organization specializing in drug and alcohol programs while COA, based in New York, specializes in child welfare programs. MCF chose these two organizations because there was no Canadian equivalent. Family Services of Canada has an in-house accreditation system for Family Service organizations that does not extend to other types of agencies. A number of provincial organizations had developed competency systems or internal standards, but there were no national standards.

MCF believed that agencies would sign up for the training, complete it and then complete accreditation in 18-24 months. The first group would help the second; the second would help the third and so on. This did not happen. Agencies participated in the training; in fact, some more than once. Few, however, ventured further than the initial training. One of the reasons for this was that MCF only required that an agency make a commitment to accreditation, not to actually become accredited. This was done as an act of faith, given the difficulty most agencies had had with CPR. (D. Young, personal communication, April 1999). In point of fact, by 2001 only two agencies had completed COA accreditation while 25 had completed CARF accreditation. Most of the CARF accredited agencies were in drug and alcohol programming rather than child welfare programming. Why were agencies so hesitant to commit to standards and to accreditation? Certainly, agencies spoke supportively about the need for best practices and how

important it was to offer the best services possible. Yet the vast majority of child welfare agencies ignored a model that had had great success in the United States where fourteen hundred agencies were accredited, a model that had MCF paying for the accreditation bill and a process that moved best practices from theory to practice. I was interested in knowing why contractors were so slow to respond to this change initiative. The stated reasons for non-compliance were lengthy and included issues such as

- dislike of American accreditation bodies;
- fear that MCF would abandon the process much as they had done in the CPR exercise;
- a desire to develop a made-in-British Columbia model of accreditation; and,
- a desire to wait for the results of the upcoming provincial election even though it was as long as two years away (M. Harris, personal communication, August 12, 2004).

In Chapter 2, I discussed Cunningham's argument (1993) that social service research is often mistrusted by the very workers whose practice it is intended to inform. Part of the reason for this mistrust is that many leaders in the social service sector in BC lack an undergraduate degree and most do not have a graduate degree. Those that do tend to have their degree in a direct service area such as counselling or social work. They are not trained as managers. This mistrust of academic research is combined with suspicion regarding change that is theoretically based. For example, most contracted service providers have resisted understanding and implementing service outcomes in their organizations. Instead, they have used simple outputs such as the number of workers employed, number of clients served, and so on. This resistance to research and to outcome measures may have also played a role in the resistance to accreditation. The primary reason given by service providers was that accreditation is an enormous amount of work and requires a significant shift in agency culture. It is not easy to do and requires

commitment, transparency and ongoing dedication. It simply proved to be overwhelming to many organizations.

The contract reform part of the process fared somewhat better. MCF decided to work in consultation with agencies to ensure that there would be input into the final product from both MCF and contract agencies. The result was two new contract documents called The Continuing Agreement and The Service Agreement. The Continuing Agreement was a reward for agencies. It was a stronger commitment on the part of the funder to the contractor. It implied the existence of a true partnership. In order to be eligible for a Continuing Agreement, an agency had to commit to outcomes, accreditation and have no outstanding unresolved issues with MCF. The Service Agreement was a basic contract stipulating what each side was committing to.

For those not working in social services it is hard to understand the importance of contract reform and the Continuing Agreement. Contracts represent success and security for agencies. The government determines who gets contracts and who does not get contracts. A loss of one or two contracts for a small agency can mean closure due to the reduction of attached administrative funds to pay the salaries of non-service staff, office space and all of the agency's other non-service costs. This is why contract reform and the promise of Continuing Agreements can be seen as a Holy Grail to agencies. Continuing Agreements mean that there is the possibility of genuine fiscal stability for the agency and job stability for its workers.

This entire process was a bold move on the part of MCF. It was an attempt to professionalize both the delivery of services and the relationship between funder and service agency. Service providing organizations that were not invested in outcome

measurements or best practice standards began, literally overnight, to work towards standards defined by international accreditation bodies. There was little or no warning that this change was imminent, nevertheless, many organizations embraced it immediately.

The social services sector has grown and developed over the years. There is more accountability and there are clearer standards for service delivery. In the 1960s organizations did not require criminal record checks, references or even resumes to work in the child welfare field. There was no formal interview process, orientation to the work or consistent training. There was no probationary period or formal supervision or evaluation. The sector has evolved in all of these areas and this change did not disrupt structure. However, other sectors did the same things earlier and have evolved further. Growth has occurred but it has been slower than in other sectors such as health and education.

In Chapter 2, I discussed Brown and Eisenhardt's conception of *complexity theory* (1998). Complexity theory, featuring a balance between chaos and structure, offers insight into how an organization can become and remain stable in a chaotic world. Certainly, in British Columbia, the social service field has often found itself in chaos. The creation of CSSEA, the closure of the Transition Commission, the creation of MCF, the entire CPR process and in particular the shutting down of the CPR process, are all examples of times when chaos was a day-to-day reality for service providing organizations. There was little stability and there a perception that no one in government was in charge.

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have offered the results of my data gathering. Based on the documents I have reviewed and the people I have interviewed, I have offered a chronology of events bearing on the subject of this study. I discussed the Korbin and Gove Reports and the events leading to the creation of MCF. I also discussed the major restructuring of contracts undertaken by MCF, through first the CPR process and later Accreditation and Contract Reform. Interviews have offered candid insights into the context of these events and their assessment of some of the reasons for decisions that were made.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss these results, highlighting problems that arose and relating these problems back to the central questions of this study. Those questions revolve around leadership during periods of significant organizational change.

## **Chapter 5 - Discussion**

This study produced an interesting range of results related to the findings from the interviews with participants. In listening to the tapes of the interviews, I looked for themes that would emerge from more than one participant. This is not to say that the unique comments of each participant are not valued, but what was of real interest to me was the idea that there might be common themes that existed across participants. I chose not to prove or disprove a particular theory. As I stated in my research questions, I wanted to ask key participants a series of questions related to change and their leadership of change and see what they had to say. Readers of this study are free to judge the statements of the interviewees in relation to these topics but that was not my objective.

My interview questions (included at Appendix C) focused on themes of leadership, change, values and philosophy, problems and lessons learned. In looking at key themes for this discussion I have broken the material down into three broad areas for discussion: principles and values, patterns in problems, and lessons learned in hindsight. A discussion of these themes will be followed by recommendations from the participants, my reflections based on my involvement in child welfare and, finally, conclusions.

### **Principles and Values**

One of the themes that I was particularly interested in was the role of principles and values in planning and decision-making. Greenfield argues that leaders will try to convince others of the values they themselves believe are good (Greenfield, 1984, p.166). This suggests that leaders have values and that those values are pivotal to their leadership.

My interviews clearly indicate that values and principles were present and that the participants were able to explain them to me in a clear and concise manner.

By taping the participants and then replaying those tapes, I was able to listen for specific information from each participant. I made detailed notes of what I was hearing and then grouped those notes into areas of similar beliefs or similar comments using a numerical coding system. Full results of this review are included at Appendix F.

Values appear to be important in social services. Everyone I spoke to either used the term values or principles or their statements spoke of values even when the word was not actually used. Terms such as best interests, balance, openness, professionalism, win/win, evidence-based change, trust and child-centred were used liberally by the participants. I wanted to know what the participants meant by these terms and how these values are acted out in practice. A more recent minister for the Children's Ministry believed strongly in the rights of children and in a child-centred service delivery system while he ordered a 25% cut in services. A past bureaucrat with whom I worked spoke passionately about collaboration and teamwork and then he over ruled the community in order to implement a system that he personally believed in. This behaviour is not limited to the government sector. Every executive director I know has spoken in favour of standards, yet many of these same people have then worked hard against accreditation. Many executive directors will speak of win/win situations and then strive to cut other agencies out of contracts. Most government and agency leaders will tell you that every change initiative needs to begin with a vision and that vision should be grounded in values. Yet what happens when there are different values that are not complementary? For example, what happens when the value of best-interest runs up against the value of a

balanced budget? What happens when I am asked to close one of my programs because another program in another agency needs the dollars to offer a more important or relevant program? Is my first loyalty to my agency and my staff or to the greater good of the child welfare system? In theory I can talk about the greater good but in reality I am expected to take care of my agency and my workers. It is the same thing in government.

A major priority for all elected governments is to become re-elected. If you are not re-elected because you have taken an unpopular but vision-based position, it is not likely that your followers will allow you to continue leading. So I am left to believe that although most social services leaders will speak eloquently about the importance of vision, they will not allow it to get in the way of other more important values such as winning and being successful. Heifetz (1994) talks about how easy it is to lead when you know the answers to the problems. This does not really require vision. It is simply a matter of managing change. This is supported by Kouzes and Posner (2003) who talk about moving from vision to action. Leaders have to be able to offer something to their followers or their employees. Most people in social services are not willing to put their jobs on the line in order to be true to a vision. As a result, workers will complain about caseload size, agencies about a lack of resources and staff about insufficient pay. Vision can get lost when faced with these simple day-to-day realities. A number of the participants were politicians. The politicians are not able to independently determine government direction. Most major decisions are made at the cabinet table and in many cases the Premier will be the final decision-maker. A number of participants spoke about the importance of working in conjunction with cabinet colleagues and the importance of appearances in implementation. Most decisions have to balance what else is happening in government.

What has been happening over the previous days or weeks or months can have an enormous impact on current decision-making. If a government or a ministry had some negative press or some failed projects, then it is less likely that they will move ahead on a contentious project. It would be far easier to do this if things were going well. The same rules apply to the participants who were bureaucrats. They may believe in a principled position but in reality they are required to take direction from their minister. A number of participants had concerns about specific government projects. Although they have the ability to speed up or slow down a project, they really are not able to simply say no or to move ahead independent of the direction of the elected officials.

In Chapter 2, I described Collins and Porras' "myths of success" (1994). They are:

- the myth that visionary companies share a common subset of values,
- the myth that while incidentals may change, core values and ideology remain firm; and,
- the myth that companies become visionary primarily through vision statement.

In the context of this study, their observations do ring true. With regard to common values, it is true that the Ministry often tried to impose standards on itself and on its contractors, calling them "values". Those standards did not, however, reflect the Ministry's true values; rather, they reflected what the Ministry thought should be valued. I include in this description values such as best practices, child-centred practice and community consultation. In practice, it was often hard to find these values in the Children's Ministry, a centralized, controlling organization that did little or no research and changed models and belief systems regularly and often for politically motivated reasons. Based on their actions, one can only assume that their true values were balanced budgets, staying out of the media and not challenging the status quo.

With regard to the myth that core values and ideology do not change, this appeared not to be the case in the Children's Ministry. The "core values" professed by bureaucrats and elected officials were rarely acted upon. The Ministry remained under-funded and contracted agencies remained over-controlled. These actions were not in keeping with the stated values of best practice and community consultation; rather they were in accord with an agenda of control and saving money. As discussed in Chapter 2, Collins and Porras (1994) state that core values should seldom change. Given the evidence of changing "core values" as they were professed, it seems more likely that the stated core values are not the true core values of the Ministry. Perhaps the true core values relate to power and control and status quo. It is certainly true that actions in support of these values have not changed in my time in the sector.

The third myth, stating that vision statements lead to organizational visions, is also disproved in this context. Over the years, the Children's Ministry sponsored many visioning sessions. Staff from various agencies were brought together, facilitators were hired, flip charts were filled with information and reports were created. This work and these reports had very little to do with the day-to-day reality of the majority of the workers and clients in the system. The visioning stopped as soon as the workers left the meeting. These meetings were viewed as ends in their own right and did not appear to have any impact on service delivery.

It may be that Ministry leaders had strong values that informed their decisions and their behaviour, but it was quite another thing to take those same values and impose them on an entire system. Because the Ministry is a politically driven system, there are changes in senior management every one to three years so there is little hope of consistency.

Ministers are moved to new ministries or moved out of cabinet and senior bureaucrats are rewarded by being moved into more senior ministries or moved to less sensitive ministries. This is the nature of politically charged systems. In fact, this system raises some interesting considerations as to who is running the system: is it the elected ministers or the career bureaucrats? The bureaucrats may move from ministry to ministry but they are still a part of the governing machinery. The elected officials may be in government for as few as two or three years before departure. Carroll and Ratner (2005) argue:

As a government, the NDP did not so much occupy the state apparatus as was occupied by it. Public administration, a ready-made condensation of past managerial practices, offered pragmatic and instrumentally rational resources for political agency (p. 187).

### **Patterns in Problems**

Every change agenda can expect to experience some difficulties. These difficulties or problems can be minor in nature or can be so large as to derail the change process. Each of the key events I have studied had some problems. All of the participants were asked to discuss what the problems of implementation were and each participant was very clear on this issue and seemed to know precisely what problems had been encountered. A chart showing the problems can be found in Appendix G.

#### **1. Different Approaches to Problem Solving**

What stood out in this area was the one individual who said clearly that there were no problems with implementation. This was Robert Plecas talking about the creation of MCF. Certainly the project was a success as far as Plecas was concerned. He was given a mandate and he fulfilled it in the time given. Every other person I spoke to regardless of

the level of success or failure of their project had no difficulty coming up with issues and problems. This is an unusual view of success or failure. There will be those in and out of government who would be critical of the creation of the Children's Ministry and of the process used to create it; however, Plecas takes the view that he was given a specific task and a timeline. He achieved the task within the timeline; therefore, he was successful. As noted in Chapter 2, Proehl (2001) states that if leaders hope to be successful, they must be able to both introduce and implement change. Plecas was able to do both of these tasks during his tenure with the Children's Ministry.

The contract sector focuses on the problems often to the point of not being able to move on to solutions. The social services sector as a whole is structured as a hierarchy but likes to use consensus as a decision making tool. This leads to some problems. On one hand you have people who are in charge of agencies, ministries or programs. On the other hand an impression is created that all voices are important and in some cases equal. Mike Harcourt (1996) said, "unfortunately, I would find, like Shakespeare's King Lear, that it is easier to give power away than it is to get it back" (p.125). This has a real effect on leadership and change. Within the system, there is a government and a community sector that both believe in consultation and consensus when possible. At the same time there are many bureaucrats who believe in hierarchical decision-making and limited consultation. It often makes for tension and for conflict when there are different processes being advocated for the same change event.

In Chapter 2, I described Dyer's (1984) seven-step change model outlining stages from conceptualizing the problem, through the data stages and action stages to evaluation. A precise seven-step change agenda would not be effective in the British Columbia social

service environment because it was too complex. Most agencies were reactive and made changes only when forced. This belief is supported by Lee (1997) who argues that in order for change to be accepted, the pain of the status quo must exceed the pain of change. Nevertheless, change was coming and it was being driven by a number of important influences. These included fiscal accountability, the governing party's political agenda, the need for the government to survive politically, and the personal style of government leaders. These practical factors played a much stronger role than would intricate theories of change set in an ideal environment.

Fiscal accountability is a reality for any government and it was one that the BC government in 1991 could not ignore. As the Korbin Report put it, "Human resources are the most costly component in the delivery of services to the public, consuming some \$10.9 billion as compensation costs - which represents 60 percent of the government's annual budget of \$19 billion" (British Columbia, 1993, p.1). This is particularly relevant when the government plans to spend significantly in areas that support its political agenda. For the NDP, these areas included funding for women's programs, upgrading of salaries for unionized employees and large projects that they hoped would create jobs.

There is a problem in social services leadership, both in government and in the private sector, when process is considered more important than outcome. The contract sector is able to honour process as long as it produces an outcome that is acceptable to the agency, not just acceptable to the greater good of the system. The reason is simple. The staff and the Board of Directors expect the executive director to take care of the agency, its staff and its programs. If in doing that he/she is able to also assist in the greater good, so be it; however, the main priority is to take care of the agency. Giving up programs for

the greater good does not fit with this directive. The result is dozens of people coming to a community table, going through the motions of a community consultation while at the same time guarding their own interests. Zaleznik's (1997) distinction between leaders and managers is instructive here. These community tables had many more managers present than leaders.

The problem is reflected in the data in this study. People who are in the position to make decisions come to the table with contradictory motives. The two priorities of meeting the best interests of children and families and also protecting one's agency can, on occasion, both be achieved without compromise. There are also many occasions where the contradiction takes place, is not acknowledged, and causes misunderstanding when managers try to explain why funding their agency is in the best interests of children and families. This is similar to an elected official trying to balance the need to do the "right" thing with the need to get elected. Participant after participant shared the opinion that social services is a very political arena. In this case political simply means balancing a variety of priorities. Those who do it will survive while those who do not rarely survive.

## **2. Role and Relationship of Media and Government Communications**

Many of the participants with whom I spoke were critical of either the media or government communications and sometimes both. In British Columbia, there has been a rather confrontational relationship between the government and the media. Mike Harcourt said,

Notwithstanding its professional role as government watchdog, the mainstream media's approach to the NDP during its first term in office was characterized by three kinds of negative reporting: trivial emphasis on, or knee-jerk response to, the government's toeing what appeared to

be a politically correct line; a downplaying of genuine achievements, or underreporting of news that reinforced government policy; and construction of “scandals” in which circumstances were exaggerated so that guilt could be ascribed to the government by the mere fact of NDP association (Harcourt, 1996, p. 299).

Dave Barrett (1995), a former Premier of the province, talked about how antagonistic his relationship was with some members of the media. He appreciated the pressure that the media works under but still felt antagonistic towards some of the members of the press gallery. Judy Tyabji-Wilson (2002) in her book about Glen Clark was very critical of the media. Tyabji-Wilson, as part of her research, interviewed a number of former politicians and asked about their thoughts on the role of media in politics. Bill Vander Zalm said,

The media are all looking for a story, and on a slow day they will take anything. Then a competitor will pick up the story and try to add an element, then it gains momentum. The media in this province has played a major role in what’s happened to the governance of the province. In my case, not only was it harmful to myself and my family, but the whole event, the publicity was bad for the province. Not only did it cost us economically, but people were watching, wondering what is happening in the province, wondering whether they should invest here (Tyabji-Wilson, 2002, p. 300).

Dave Barrett was also interviewed by Tyabji-Wilson (2002) and had this to say about the media:

I was in politics for about 24 continuous years and saw a dramatic change in the relationship between politician and the media. When I was first elected into opposition being in the provincial press gallery was a professional goal... Some of the most highly skilled journalists were there... There were many, many skilled people who were in the gallery during this period; they did a lot of research, and they did a lot of drinking. They [the reporters] were after facts, not gossip, and I enter that point now, because the biggest difference is that a significant amount of journalism today is gossip journalism, called “gotcha politics” by noted former journalist George Bain. I call it gossip politics (Tyabji-Wilson, 2002, p. 301).

Given the difficulty of the relationship with the media it is hardly surprising that the government created its own in-house media or Communications Department. The problems that this created were twofold. The first and most obvious problem is that no one outside of government sees the Communications Branch as a credible news source. It is viewed as supplying “spin” to government announcements. It hardly serves to neutralize the mainstream media’s attacks on government. The second problem is that this same agency within government serves to try and control the delivery of government information. Tom Gove, Jane Morley, David Young and both government bureaucrats I spoke to discussed how difficult it was to deal with the Communications Branch of government. Their goal of protecting the government at all costs was at times at cross-purposes with the need to tell the complete story. They battled with Gove’s staff as to who owned the Gove Report. (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004). Jane Morley in her role as MCFD Legal Council found it difficult to work effectively with the Communications Branch. She felt that they never really “got it” in terms of the issues related to Matthew Vaudreuil’s death and were unable to react to the complexity of the subject (J. Morley, personal communication, June 21, 2004).

I spoke to Jody Paterson, a reporter in Victoria and asked her for her take on the relationship between the media and the Communications Branch of government. Paterson talked to me about the evolution of the relationship between the press and the government. When she started her career, a reporter could call anyone in government and talk to them about almost any topic. Paterson is referring to the good old days because in the era we are now discussing, media access is limited and senior bureaucrats will either allow

communications staff to speak on their behalf or will have communications staff present when meeting with media (J. Paterson, personal communication, October 4, 2004).

I then asked Paterson when she began to see a change in how the government dealt with the media. She talked about changes that took place under the leadership of Premier Glen Clark. During his tenure in government, communications staff was used to block rather than facilitate media enquiries. This led to frustration on the part of reporters as the communications staff rarely was able to answer detailed questions. Things did not improve initially under the Liberals, in that the government was willing to offer up the minister whenever the media called. The ministers could and did make political comments but could not speak to the details of their ministry. That sort of information could only come from a Deputy Minister or an Assistant Deputy Minister (J. Paterson, personal communication, October 4, 2004).

Paterson, given her long history as a reporter in Victoria, was able to critique a number of governments and their response to media. She believed that the Liberals were easier to deal with than the NDP, in that the Liberals would try to respond while often the NDP would not. However, she particularly liked the Social Credit Party because she felt she had relatively unfettered access to the bureaucrats (J. Paterson, personal communication, October 4, 2004).

Finally, Paterson was able to speak candidly about the relationship between media and the government's and communication staff.

As for the relationship between media and communications, it varies from person to person, but I notice a certain snobbery in many media toward their communications counterparts. When the Victoria Press Club was starting up last year, there was a furious debate over whether PR people mostly government communication should be allowed to be members. In the end, they were given the OK, but I sense the press club

has never taken off as well as it should have, and that could be a factor. (J. Paterson, personal communication, October 4, 2004).

Paterson's insights can be summed up in a couple of points. In the first place, the relationship between politicians and the media has been evolving and in Paterson's opinion, not in a positive way. Secondly, she believes that there is a perceived difference between traditional media and government communications staff. The difference does not prove helpful in trying to get to the bottom of a story. The differences have something to do with a degree of arrogance on the part of the mainstream media in relation to government communications staff. The discussions with both Palmer and Paterson were interesting in that they pointed to an evolution in the role of media and government in the years prior to 1991. This evolution is supported by Connor and Lake (1988) who noted that change can be triggered by external changes such as the political and legal environment.

### **Lessons Learned in Hindsight**

Clearly, we need to learn from both our successes and our failures because this should make for better strategic planning. I asked the participants what they would do differently if they could go back and work on specific projects again. Each one mentioned some things that could have been done differently or that he/she would be more mindful of. You will find the specific suggestions from the participants in Appendix H.

The participants were all willing to share their experiences with me, along with their ideas about how to improve upon their past experiences. There were themes that emerged from lessons learned. The major ones related to the role of media in social services, the role of internal government communications divisions, and concepts of

change and change management. This is not to say that everyone agreed with all of these points or that there were not minor themes unique to one individual that were identified. These key themes are simply the most common ones across a range of participants. I will explore these lessons and a number of the minor themes in the next section of this chapter.

The participants displayed integrity and thoughtfulness. Each one of them took their work very seriously and years after the events was able to recall the details of their work, both positive and negative. There clearly were themes to the recommendations from the participants and although not all participants agreed on all points there were some points that stood out in the overall recommendations made. It is my intention to focus on these more universal recommendations.

As I reviewed the interviews certain themes came up repeatedly. There were three major recommendations emerging from the data that I was able to identify as well as six minor ones. The major recommendations had four or more participants speaking to the issue.

1. Be aware of the role of media in any change agenda. (7 participants)
2. Be aware of the role of the government communications division. (4 participants)
3. Be aware of concepts related to change and change management. (4 participants)

The minor recommendations had less than four participants and more than one participant speaking to the issue.

1. Be aware of the role of politics in any social services change agenda. (3 participants)
2. Be aware of the power of the social services bureaucrats and how they can stall even the best thought out plan. (3 participants)
3. Be conscious of time and time frames in any change agenda. (3 participants)
4. Look for champions at every level of any change agenda. (3 participants)
5. Be patient. (2 participants)
6. Be conscious of your own need for self-care. This is very draining work. (2 participants)

## 1. Major Themes

In the following section, I will explore the three major themes identified by the participants and discuss the implications of those recommendations.

### *The Media*

As part of this research I was able to spend time with two well-known local reporters; Jodi Paterson from the Victoria Times Columnist and Vaughn Palmer from the Vancouver Sun. Both agreed that the media does play an active role in both British Columbia politics and the British Columbia social services system. Paterson went so far as to say that the media played a negative role in the reporting relating to the death of Matthew Vaudreuil. She said, "I blame the media because we really did not know what we were doing". (J. Paterson, personal communication, July 20, 2004). Palmer saw the Vaudreuil situation as unique, noting that it is rare that the Social Services Ministry is seen as important by the media. To the media in British Columbia, Finance is important, Health is important and Crown Corporations are important. The Vaudreuil story captured the interest of the public and the media in a way that we have not seen since.

The media has the ability to capture the attention of the politicians. Every politician I spoke to in my research noted the importance of the media in getting a message out or in highlighting a problem. Joy MacPhail recognized that the public does not want child welfare problems in their collective faces and that's exactly what the media does. Penny Priddy spoke to me about the creation of MCF and the CPR process. She

believes, in hindsight, that she was too open with the media and that this cost her politically.

Bureaucrats are no less sensitive to the media. The two bureaucrats with whom I spoke told me that they were aware that negative attention in the media could kill a project no matter how good the project was. A good example was an attempt by the Ministry to recruit foster parents. A number of local businesses donated prizes for the Ministry to use and these were offered to current foster parents who recruited new foster parents. The program was a success and had no fiscal downside, but the media presented the story in a critical manner, suggesting that foster home recruitment was too serious a matter to treat as a contest. The idea was not used again.

There is a real conflict here. On one hand the Ministry wants to be able to move ahead on new initiatives. That is the responsibility and role of the headquarters staff. They know that even a good plan may have a downside or may encounter bumps in the road. This is quite common and expected. But if you know that hitting a bump at the wrong time may kill a project or may put you in a less than flattering light then perhaps you either kill the project at the first sign of trouble or come forward with less ambitious projects. A good example of this was the closure of the CPR process. With a new Minister and new Deputy Minister in place there was an outcry from the contract sector about this process (the proverbial bump in the road). The project was killed. Depending who I asked, different people were held accountable for that decision. Penny Priddy believed that Premier Clark ordered CPR shut down. Robert Plecas saw it as the responsibility of the new Deputy, Mike Corbeil. (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004). One of the MCF bureaucrats saw it as the choice of the Minister, Lois Boone. In the end CPR was

shut down because government did not want more trouble played out in the media. Vaughn Palmer of the Vancouver Sun told me that at roughly the same time that CPR was being shut down there was active talk in political circles that Glen Clark would have to go. "His administration was so shattered that its ability to follow through on anything was seriously compromised" (V. Palmer, personal communication, August 9, 2004). This opinion would be supported by Fullam (2001) who stated that it was important for leaders not only to have a moral purpose but also to be seen as having a moral purpose.

Politicians and bureaucrats need to be aware of the role played by the media in British Columbia politics. They need to determine if a plan can handle criticism in the media. They need to determine if they themselves can handle criticism in the media. They can do some early planning but more importantly they must learn to accept that there will probably be some criticism that might well end up in the media. Other ministries handle criticism without the apparent angst of the Children's Ministry. The media participants discussed the apparent conflict between media and communications branch. This might be part of the problem that government needs to address. Perhaps a little less "spin" and a little more honesty could help with this problem. Government news releases are not seen as anything more than advertising. If the government allowed its ministers and their communications staff more flexibility in how to present information, perhaps the media would be less likely to be critical of all government messages.

### *The Role of the Government Communications Branch*

Government Communications is a branch of government with responsibility for getting government messages to the public by using press releases or advertising. They

can also do this by giving information or stories or access to the mainstream media. The Communications Branch is not the same as mainstream media. Their goal is to control the flow of information and to try and put the best possible spin on that information. This can cause clashes with other groups in government. Gove told me that there was a real issue about ownership of his report. Communications staff believed that government owned it and that government should decide what parts of the report could be or should be released. Gove, on the advice of his own legal counsel, believed he had the right to release the report in its entirety, how he wanted and when he wanted. Gove said to me, “Communications wanted control, control, control, control” (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004).

Jane Morley, in her role as Children’s Ministry Counsel, found that the role of the Communications people was troublesome. She believed that some of the Communications staff were unable to see past the media headlines. Morley believed that in a ministry such as the Children’s Ministry, which is a difficult ministry to work in, the only hope is to go out and talk about the difficulties and complexities of the work. To try to “spin” the message is not going to be effective in educating the public (J. Morley, personal communication, June 21, 2004).

The message I was given by a number of the participants was that Communications Branch is intended to manage messages. Senior management has to learn how to manage the Communications Branch or else be subject to whatever slant or spin they decide to put on the event. This is much more complex than it seems. The Premier’s Office and the Premier’s staff usually control communications. Given comments from a number of the participants, it seems that the main priority of communications is to shut

down criticism of government. By contrast, a minister may wish to engage the public and other stakeholders in a spirited debate. Certainly the contract sector is sophisticated enough to recognize when an issue is being “spun”. They are less likely to take a stand and engage in debate when the obvious intent of government is to put a positive slant on a story.

### *The Role of Change and Change Management*

Since a major theme in this study is change, it is not surprising that a number of the participants thought that an understanding of change was important to the success of any change agenda. No one was clearer on the importance of this concept than David Young, former Assistant Deputy Minister for the Children’s Ministry. He believed in the 20/60/20 rule of change. This rule states that 20% of the field likes change, looks forward to change and in fact lobbies for change. A further 20% of people are resistant to change regardless of the current situation and regardless of the positive impact of the change on the field. Neither of these two groups is likely to change their perspective or their positions. As a change agent, the task is to convince the other 60% of the merit of change and resist wasting energy on the 20% that will never embrace it. If successful, there will be enough support to carry forward with the change agenda (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004). Young’s principles all relate to a positive change agenda. He values partnership, collaboration, joint leadership and mutual respect. He is patient and gives people the time that they need to come to change willingly.

In Chapter 2, I introduced Tichy's (1983) discussion of planned change. Tichy said that planned change involves the development of a strategic plan followed by decisions regarding the change technology and finally the creation of an implementation process.

When Tichy's theory is applied to social services in British Columbia there are problems. If we use CPR as an example these problems become evident quite quickly. In terms of a strategic plan, the government maintained that the CPR plan was to improve the quality of service. Contracted service providers, on the other hand, believed that the real purpose was to reduce costs. For strategic change to be effective, the government would need the support and cooperation of the contracted sector, and ideally of the unions as well. The gap between the government's statements and the perceived hidden agenda led to an insurmountable credibility problem.

In relation to change technology, the decision was made to use community-based consensus building to achieve the strategic plan. Unfortunately, the contracted sector did not trust the government's motives and believed that the outcome of the discussions had already been determined. Coordinating these community consultation meetings was expensive for the government as well as complicated. Communications technology was rarely used to facilitate discussion and as a result the sector could not keep up with the complex discussions.

Implementation proved to be no less of a problem. The process unfolded weekly with no sense of overall vision. Consultants were brought in at the halfway point and there was no contingency planning for the inevitable problems that crop up in a large process such as CPR. Finally, just when implementation was starting to unfold, the provincial government changed both the Minister and the Deputy Minister. A few weeks later, the

new Minister shut down the entire process. In Chapter 2 I quoted Tichy (1983) who notes that change agendas need to be planned and part of the planning must relate to the navigation of problems. There is little evidence that this happened in the Children's Ministry.

The social service field is not a particularly sophisticated system, as compared to the health and education systems. Health and education both have a history of the use of standards, leadership, technology and strategic planning. The social service field, on the other hand, does not have formal educational hiring standards, formal service standards, planning standards, or the hardware or software needed to support complex communication and innovation. There are number of agencies that lack even simple computer and communication systems. In order to move ahead, the sector needed relatively simple solutions to complex problems. Issues such as communication systems, fiscal restraint, unionization, best interests of children, standards and governance require a sophisticated approach to problem solving which is difficult to achieve at the best of times. Given a social services system that lacks a unified voice, lacks consistent training, is concerned about the job security of the very people who are at the table, one can be assured of resistance from the sector based on a combination of misunderstandings and hurt feelings.

One of the Children's Ministry bureaucrats whom I interviewed saw the need for a vision as a starting point for change. Without vision, change was difficult. In this person's opinion, the Children's Ministry had very few people who had a vision. Although vision is stated as an important part of the change process by a number of the participants, the need for vision is not universally supported in the literature. Collins and Porras (1994) while

discussing myths of success, discuss the need for vision as one of those myths. It may be part of a change process but it is not an essential element. Without a vision to look to, bureaucrats were reluctant to invest in change and so they stalled change. This is what happened to the Transition Commission.

The second Children's Ministry bureaucrat whom I interviewed was very well read on change theory and was clear on what would and what would not work in a change agenda in the contract sector. He believes that if you want people to change you have to model change. You cannot keep doing things the same way and expect different results. If you want a sector to change you have to listen to the people in the sector and bring them along with you at a speed they can handle. You have to be able to balance good process with the need for outcomes. This individual was annoyed at former Deputy Minister Plecas and his contention that process is for cheese. You cannot simply dismiss process because you do not like it. (Children's Ministry Bureaucrat #2, personal communication, July 20, 2004).

Former Transition Commissioner Cynthia Morton believed strongly that any good change model had to be evidence based. She said, "There were a lot of good examples of change across the country. We did not have to reinvent the wheel" (C. Morton, personal communication, July 26, 2004). Morton's position was very similar to that of Tom Gove who commissioned twenty-two research papers done as part of his review so that he would be able to determine what would be good policy. He wanted to ensure that any changes that he recommended would be evidence-based. Many of the participants believe in the importance of learning from the experience of others. Yet the desire to build a new model seems to be at the centre of the change model in British Columbia. I commented

earlier about the strong similarities between various recommendations for change. This may be the desire of bureaucrats and government officials to put their own stamp on government or a ministry. Many of the bureaucrats and officers I spoke to had worked in or around child welfare for a long time. They all spoke of having a vision of how the system could be improved. When finally given the opportunity to put their beliefs into practice, it is not difficult to imagine individuals wanting to be the person who “fixed” the child welfare system.

In Chapter 2, I introduced Brown and Eisenhardt's (1998) argument that one reason for the difficulty in managing change is the inability of most managers to plan effectively, particularly when the direction of change is uncertain. This was certainly true in the world of social services where long-term, planned change was difficult to bring about in the face of fiscal uncertainties and the difficulties of managing the lives of needy children and families. As well, the sector was not particularly receptive to change or conversant regarding change theory. As one administrator told me, most service-providing organizations were small and most managers did not have advanced degrees. Many had not studied change at all and saw it, to the extent that they did consider it, in very simple terms. Change that involved more work or less money or new expectations was unacceptable to them. Change that implied criticism of an organization or its services was unacceptable and would not be supported, nor would change that resulted in loss of contracts or closure of an organization (D. Sabourin, personal communication, June 15, 2004).

## 2. Minor Themes

Besides these three major themes there were a number of lesser themes that emerged from the interviews. Although these themes did not come up as often as the major themes they are significant.

### *The Role of Politics*

The influence of partisan politics on a social services agenda was an important factor to several of the participants. Penny Priddy, former minister of the Children's Ministry, believes that Premier Glen Clark shut down the CPR process due to criticism (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004). This point of view is supported by David Young who believes that the unions had the Premier's ear and that they were unhappy about the impact of CPR on unions. Young describes a meeting he attended with all the MCF managers following the decision to end CPR. The meeting was with new Deputy Minister Mike Corbeil and BCGEU President John Shields. Corbeil proceeded to tell the MCF managers, in no uncertain terms, how they had done a poor job in working with the unions. (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004). Cynthia Morton, former Transition Commissioner believed that child welfare is too vulnerable to partisan politics. Any changes can be changed back depending on what direction the political winds are blowing (C. Morton, personal communication, July 26, 2004).

One of the Children's Ministry bureaucrats that I interviewed believes that it was politics that terminated the work of the Transition Commissioner. Because the initial work of the Transition Commission did not result in the media or the opposition reducing pressure on the government, the Commission became vulnerable to the harassed

politicians. This person said, “The politicians were being hammered on this. The creation of the Transition Commission did not lower the temperature”. (Children’s Ministry Bureaucrat #1, personal communication, July 14, 2004).

The one exception to this rule was found in a story told to me by Tom Gove. He described a meeting with Minister Joy MacPhail and most of her senior staff. He was in the process of briefing them for the first time on his findings. While the bureaucrats tried to find fault with some of the smaller details found in the report, MacPhail did not. She silenced her staff and asked if they were actually listening to Gove. She was devastated by the report and was prepared to do nothing less than accept the full weight of the report and all of its recommendations. Gove was very moved by this both because of MacPhail’s obvious concern for the plight of children and for her willingness to use her influence to bring about change. (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004). Here was an example of a particular politician deciding to not “spin” a story. She was applauded for her compassion and was able to move ahead on her agenda. This was a case where a politician put principle before pragmatism. In this particular case, the results were positive and caused no damage to the politician in question. This style of leadership is supported by Fullam (2001) and his comments about leaders needing to have a moral purpose.

### *The Role of Social Services Bureaucracy*

The social services bureaucracy was found to be a real problem by a number of participants. Both of the Children’s Ministry bureaucrats that I interviewed suggested that their experience was that the senior bureaucrats could stall even the most positive project if they did not believe in its merit. They did not see senior bureaucrats as being invested in

change but rather in preservation of the status quo. (Children's Ministry Bureaucrats, personal communication, #1, July 14, 2004 and #2, July 20, 2004). This position was supported by David Young who found a great deal of resistance to change from the bureaucracy when he was trying to implement both contract reform and accreditation (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004).

In Chapter 2, I discussed the shift from the 1950s view of leadership as defined by innate traits (Bryman, 1986) to the paradigm prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s that viewed leadership as behaviour that moves people towards shared goals (Rost, 1993). I noted Rost's argument that the 1980s led us back to a trait-based understanding of leadership that remains in vogue today. There are four levels of formal leadership in the social service system:

1. the elected leaders, one of whom becomes the Minister in charge of social services;
2. the range of bureaucratic leaders who work for the Minister, including the Deputy Minister and the Assistant Deputy Ministers as well as various other senior managers;
3. the Chief Executive Officers or Executive Directors of the contracted service providers and their senior managers, delivering contracted services on behalf of the government; and,
4. the leaders who offer project-specific expertise, including the heads of committees or commissions and consultants brought in to address a specific issue or task or concern.

In British Columbia, all of these levels of leadership can be found in social services and each level had a role in the change agenda of the era under discussion. Some engineered change, some resisted change and some embraced it. Some were leaders, some managers, some innovators and some were determined roadblocks.

The key message from all of the participants in this study was that when looking to implement changes one must not underestimate the power of the bureaucracy to stall that

change. Ministers and deputies come and go while bureaucrats tend to stay for far longer. The bureaucrats can simply wait until a senior bureaucrat leaves or an idea becomes stale. More than one of the participants believed that status quo was very important, suggesting that change implies that the current model is unacceptable or ineffective. These bureaucrats had worked hard and were proud of the work that they had done. For someone to come in, order a significant change and then tear down years of work was unacceptable. One of the participants discussed how provincial bureaucrats were out of touch with the field. They were making changes without either consultation or an understanding of the realities of the staff they would need to implement these changes. In situations where information is candidly shared and goals explained, there is more acceptance at all levels in the system. When it is clear that there is a public agenda and a private agenda, people begin to stonewall change.

During the ten year time period covered in this study, a number of factors contributed to the government adopting a reactive rather than proactive attitude. This in turn led the government to turn away from certain longer-term strategic goals such as the creation of the new Child and Family Services Act, the full implementation of the Gove recommendations and the restructuring of the contract sector. These factors included the death of Matthew Vaudreuil and the resulting negative press, a war of words between the Minister of the day and the Children's Commissioner and changes in some management in the Children's Ministry. The child welfare field is a government responsibility that is enormously vulnerable to media scrutiny and public criticism. Planned change is often overtaken by the reactive change needed in response to a potentially embarrassing issue.

While planned change is probably almost always the government's intention, in practice events can and do get in the way.

### *Change Agenda and Time Frames*

A number of participants spoke of the importance of time and timeframes to any change agenda. Tom Gove suggested that his recommendations could be implemented in thirty-six months; eighteen months to plan and eighteen months to implement (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004). Robert Plecas, on the other hand, believed that it should take no more than six months to implement the Gove recommendations related to the creation of a Children's Ministry. Any more time would allow for resistance to build up. (R. Plecas, personal communication, July 29, 2004). David Young took the long view and was willing to allow people the time they needed to get on board a project such as accreditation. He believed that people were well intended but worked at different paces and in different ways. (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004).

There are very different principles and values operating here. Tied to the issue of time is the issue of patience. The contrast between Young and Plecas is interesting. Plecas believes wholeheartedly in outcomes and tight timelines and control. His system resulted in the creation of MCF in six months. Young, on the other hand, who believes in looser schedules, consensus building and good process, was able to successfully launch accreditation in British Columbia in the contract sector. These were two different men, with two different views on patience. Both had limited success.

What makes this difference even more interesting is to take apart these change agendas. Plecas was very successful in transforming the Children's Ministry, but was not

able to achieve the same success in restructuring of the contract sector. Young on the other hand was effective in creating change in the contract sector but was less effective in making changes in the Children's Ministry. Perhaps the two sectors approach change in different ways and knowing the difference can have an impact on the chances for success. The Children's Ministry is a formal bureaucracy with an easily understood hierarchy, clear rules and regulations, and a province-wide mandate to deliver services. The contract sector is informal, not bureaucratic, and contains a wide range of hierarchies and non-hierarchies and an equally long list of different rules and regulations. As well, contracting organizations are for the most part localized to a specific geographic area. To send a message to all Ministry staff one has only to send a simple email out on the government communications system. To send the same message out to all contract workers could take months. There is no central communications system, no single database and no central hierarchy.

Both sectors are capable of change, but a different strategy would be needed for each. The government being a top-down management system with relatively sophisticated communications systems and consistent service designs can move quickly to facilitate change. Where that system stumbles, is in its ability to accommodate differences, create and implement from scratch and to meet multiple needs. As well, the government system moves very slowly and has a difficult time adjusting to a shifting landscape.

The contract sector struggles to speak with one voice, struggles to meet the fiscal needs of all of its members and struggles to find agreement regarding complex changes. Where the contract sector excels is in finding room for all of the different voices and being able to champion the needs of small communities or small groups within larger

communities. Knowing the strengths and limitations of the two systems and building that knowledge into change agendas would certainly make a positive difference in any potential change agenda. This need for awareness is certainly supported in my discussions with participants. Where Plecas believed himself to be successful in transforming the Ministry, a system that he understood, he was less successful with the contract sector, a system that he acknowledges he did not understand.

### *The Need for Champions*

The need for champions was a theme that came up a few times directly and several times indirectly. The time period covered in this study was a difficult one for leaders and managers. There appeared to be plenty of administrators but a lack of leaders and visionaries. During the ten years discussed here, there were seven different Ministers of social services, as many Deputy Ministers and many more Assistant Deputy Ministers.

In some cases government leaders did offer genuine leadership, even if that leadership was short-term and project-specific. Joy MacPhail ordered the creation of the Transition Commission to implement the Gove recommendations and was not prepared to accept anything less than full implementation. Vaughn Dowie, an Assistant Deputy Minister, brought in accreditation knowing that there would be resistance both inside and outside of government. Penny Priddy was the first Minister of the new Ministry for Children and Families and had a strong desire to create an open and inclusive ministry. All of these leaders had a vision of what they hoped to accomplish.

For every true leader there were three or four less than competent managers. This was true at the ministerial level, at the senior bureaucratic level and in the contracted

agencies. Part of the problem lay in who was chosen to lead while part of the problem involved politics and timing. A simple example would be the failure of CPR. As I have stated above, CPR was a process that started poorly and finished equally badly.

Nevertheless, it was close to completing its goal of restructuring the contract sector when it was shut down.

In Chapter 2, I introduced Rost's (1993) argument that it is a mistake to use the terms "leader" and "leadership" interchangeably. Not all leaders are capable of leadership, he maintains, and not all leadership is accomplished by designated leaders. This point is important in the world of social services. There are large numbers of executive directors in the sector, many of who sit on provincial committees or advisory groups. While their presence in these roles may constitute leadership, it is wrong to assume that it always does. In many cases the true leaders are managers, senior workers, academics or consultants.

Both of the bureaucrats whom I interviewed spoke of the need to have people at a variety of levels who believed in the change agenda being promoted. One suggested that there was the need to recruit prior to a change process beginning while the other said that you could find champions once you had begun the process of change (Children's Ministry Bureaucrats, personal communication, #1, July 14, 2004 and #2, July 20, 2004). On the topic of champions in the change process, David Young made the following points.

- Allow for attrition of champions. Not everyone can stay the course.
- Allow for new champions to come on board at different phases of a project.
- Let your local champions do your local training. It will have more impact.
- Grassroots champions are key to the success of any change agenda (D. Young, personal communication, June 20, 2004).

The problem with this particular set of recommendations is that they are not easy to implement in a government hierarchy. Given a strongly unionized workforce and a large number of senior managers who have been in one position for years, it is very difficult to create a change model where people could be added or subtracted at will. There is also the issue of status quo. There is often resistance to change from the very people who are being told to implement those changes. Other than the highest levels of management and a few consultants, all positions have to be posted and a formal hiring process implemented. Those hiring processes would be hard pressed to prioritize champions. More often than not, the applicant with the most seniority gets the position. Among the private social service agencies, the turnover rate tends to be low and most Boards of Directors are as unsophisticated as the Executive Directors they supervise. They lack the tools and the skills to properly supervise and assess senior management. Considering that most board members meet for 20-30 hours a year, it is clear that they do not have sufficient time to complete the task they are responsible for. This belief is supported by Macdonald (1998) who discussed issues of isolation from the real work of the organization.

### *Patience*

The issue of patience came up on more than one occasion during the interviews. Some of the participants, Plecas and Clark are two examples, are not noted as being particularly patient. They are also known as outcome-based leaders. On the other hand, participants such as Young and Priddy are known as patient and process-focused. One of the participants suggested that you needed the right person, with the right skills for the

right event. This would make an enormous difference in the likelihood of success (Children's Ministry Bureaucrat #2, July 20, 2004). The problem, once again, relates to the available workforce. It may not be that you have the right person available for the job. If you do, that person may not be interested or available. If they are interested and available, it may well be that the person is low on the seniority list and is passed by in the hiring process. A second problem is that the social service sector is not known in government as a good-news appointment. Many strong middle and senior managers would prefer to go to other ministries in order to advance their careers.

Another issue relating to patience is the impact it has on the contract sector. Because the sector is not consistent in its structure and professionalism, it can be very difficult to engage in a change process that is not patient. The sector simply cannot move ahead as quickly as a branch of government because in reality it is hundreds of little branches, each unique, each separate and each governed independently (Children's Ministry Bureaucrat #1, July 14, 2004).

This becomes a large problem when the Ministry decides to embark on a change agenda and wants to work with the contract sector as part of that change. What the Ministry can accomplish in weeks may well take the contract sector months. The two hierarchies do not interact particularly well. The following chart illustrates the problem.

**Figure D - Comparison of Management Hierarchies**

<b>Ministry</b>	↔	<b>Contract Agency</b>
Line Worker	↔	Line Worker
Manager	↔	Manager
Regional Director	↔	Executive Director
ADM *	↔	Executive Director
DM *	↔	Executive Director
Minister *	↔	Executive Director
Premier *	↔	Executive Director

\* Limited contact with agency Executive Directors

These differences make meaningful dialogue and shared change very difficult. The problem is less severe with the few large contract agencies, but becomes very problematic with the hundreds of small and medium sized agencies, all of which want a voice in any changes impacting upon them.

### *Self-Care*

Finally, there is the issue of self-care. Change takes time and energy. One can get caught up in the changes and forget to take care of oneself. Gove talked about how exhausting the work on his report turned out to be. He was faced with long workdays and extensive travel. (T. Gove, personal communication, August 11, 2004). Priddy talked

about the emotional cost of the work in the Children's Ministry and the impact it had on her health. (P. Priddy, personal communication, June 8, 2004). MacPhail was, for a time, uncertain as to whether or not she could continue as minister given the emotional strain of the job. She said, "one has to learn to close off a door to one's personal emotions" (J. MacPhail, personal communication, July 22, 2004). The workload and the work hours of many politicians and senior bureaucrats is staggering. Many work 14-18 hour days and do that seven days a week. They are on call when at home and cannot go out in the community and assume anonymity. They are vilified in the media and their personal lives become public. This is not work for the faint-of-heart.

For anyone who has worked in the child welfare field, it is a well know adage that you have to pace yourself if you are going to stay in the field and be effective in the work. You have to take time for yourself and put the work into perspective. For a number of the participants, that lesson was learned in hindsight. This is not an easy problem to fix. The pace of work for government managers and politicians is fierce. People routinely work at their desks for 12-18 hours a day. Lunch, if it happens at all, is either a working meeting or you take it at your desk while you make calls. Many people work a six or even seven-day workweek. The government and the contract sector all talk about balance and workplace wellness. You will often see posters and promotions in government offices but the workload does not decrease and the caseload does not go down. Crisis management is a regular reality. In the end, the work has to be done and saying that you are taking some wellness time or you are going home because you have completed your 35-hour workweek is simply not acceptable.

The major and the minor themes illustrate a degree of compatibility between participants. Although not everyone brought forward all of the same themes, there were no themes that were contradictory in nature. The participants were not at odds. Themes such as media, communications, the bureaucracy and change process came up again and again.

This is not surprising in that the participants all worked in the same system, in the same era and were all known to one another. The events they participated in overlapped and some worked on the same events at the same time. That being said, there are a couple of items that I will explore in the next section of this dissertation. Those are: personal style and evidence-based change versus situational change.

### **Implications**

I have worked in the social services sector for over thirty years. During that time, I have worked in dozens of jobs in scores of agencies all across Canada. For the past thirteen years, I have worked in management positions in British Columbia. I have lived through all of the changes and change agendas described in this study. I attended the public meetings of both Korbin and Gove. I was a member of the British Columbia Children's Commission and both won and lost contracts in the CPR exercise. My agency was one of the first in British Columbia to achieve accreditation and to receive an ongoing contract from the Children's Ministry. I have taught and lectured on these topics at colleges, at universities and in conferences for over ten years. I have access to many decision-makers and enjoy talking with them about the ongoing evolution of the Children's Ministry. I undertook this study in order to better understand the system and the leaders who have such an impact on the work of social service agencies. Having taken

some time to discuss the views of the participants in my study, I will now reflect on the themes identified in the research from the context of my own experiences in the social services field.

### *Communications*

I was surprised at how important the issue of communications was to many of the participants, whether it was communications within the Ministry, the Ministry's communications division or the role of mainstream media. There was a general fear or possibly a dislike of many facets of media. The media itself was self critical about its role in the social services system. I got the impression that many of the people who deal with media are untrained about media relations and having had a bad experience, shy away from all contact in the future. The media tends to call agency managers whenever there is a problem involving service or the health and welfare of children. It is rare that a manager gets a call to discuss good news stories and many managers are not trained in how to interact with the media. As a result of this lack of training and a genuine fear of being misquoted or made to look foolish in the media, most managers shy away from any dialogue with media. As an agency director I have had many opportunities to work with media. What I learned quickly was that I should treat everything as on the record. In addition, I learned not to assume that the media are interested in advancing my agenda. They are not villains but professionals doing a job and they have the potential to cause me dismay unless I am careful of how I interact with them. I also found that if in doubt, I should say nothing.

There are a number of reasons for government and contract managers to take formal training in media relations. First and foremost is to learn how to work with the media in order to get the message out to the public. Being trained also means learning to avoid pitfalls and mistakes. This is critical when trying to control a bad-news story that has the potential to damage the Ministry or the agency. Good media skills can also help an agency in getting positive messages out and helping with fundraising.

It is interesting to me that a number of the participants spoke of the frustration of having to deal with government communications staff whose job it is to try and put a positive “spin” on a story. On one hand we have some people who lack the skill to deal effectively with the media, while at the other end of the spectrum are people who do not want to have their relationship with the media managed. It is interesting that views of many of the social services participants are consistent with the media participants.

### *Bureaucracy*

I also found that many contractors significantly underrate the role of the bureaucracy. I have spent a great deal of time lobbying politicians and ministries and deputies only to find out that the lesser ranks of the bureaucracy have the ability to speed up, slow down or completely stop even the best laid plans. My experience is that ongoing, regular, low-key meetings with bureaucrats at a regional level seem to be more productive and yield better results for an agency than the higher profile less frequent meetings one gets with a Minister, an MLA, an MP or even a Deputy Minister. In talking with the study participants, it became clear that bureaucrats and not politicians were implementing the

majority of the initiatives. These were the people who would be deciding how and on whom dollars would be spent.

The role of politics in social services needs to be acknowledged. By politics, I mean the role of advocating, lobbying, positioning and partnering that takes place in social services and that has always taken place in social services. I recognize that this is not a conventional definition of politics but I am using the terms as it is used among the participants in this study and the sector within which they operate. In the social services politics is understood to mean influencing ones funders. The more sophisticated leaders, particularly those from the larger agencies, develop relationships with senior bureaucrats, sitting MLAs, Cabinet Ministers and the opposition parties. They use their relationships to influence decisions that will have an impact on their agencies. It is seen as an important part of a leader's job and those who do not do it or do not do it well are seen to be at a disadvantage in negotiating contracts or simply surviving in a very competitive sector. The issue of politics is a reality both within and outside of government. Within government, bureaucrats look to move ahead, advance their careers and advance their agendas. It is much the same for agency managers. The issue of politics is not often spoken of formally but is an ever-present factor in the social services community. There are at least two ways to look at this issue. On one hand, agencies and bureaucrats could choose to not allow politics to be part of the relationship between contractors and government. All meetings could be on the record. Minutes of meetings could be recorded and posted. Lobbying could be a less private and more public business. The other way to look at this is to set up some basic guidelines that act to govern lobbying and allow for agencies to play on a more level playing field. Courses could be offered so that new managers could learn some of the

keys to successful ethical lobbying. The issue of politics in social services and in government is not going to go away. The real question is whether or not anyone wants to regulate the practice of politics. It seems to me that the larger agencies, having been successful historically in lobbying government ministries both on and off the record, are not unhappy with the current system of contracting. The smaller and often less successful agencies might want a different system in place. Of course, there is no guarantee of greater success for these agencies under a future system than what they are achieving now under the current system.

The topic of change agenda came up again and again in the participant interviews in the context of the themes related to time factors, patience, champions and self-care. I must admit that I was a bit surprised and disappointed in the recommendations from the participants that related to how to proceed with a change agenda. There was nothing new here. All of the ideas are known and all of the ideas are tried and true. In the culture of social services, change can have a variety of meanings. It can mean adding or subtracting programs, resources or funds from the system. It can mean new faces at a decision making table. It can mean someone in a position of authority putting his or her stamp on the system. It can even mean finding language to explain alleged changes in things that have not actually changed at all. Only one of the participants talked in depth about the literature that relates to change and this was because change was a current area of interest for him and he was currently researching the topic. But if these were real solutions then perhaps we would not have as many problems with an ever-changing, unfocussed, uninspiring social services system. There seems to be a strong consensus to keep trying the same old solutions again and again. When, on occasion, a new idea is tried, it is implemented in the

same old way. This is hardly surprising given that the same social services bureaucrats and agency managers keep reappearing in the system. A minister is dependent upon his/her senior administrators in moving forward on a change agenda. As well, many bureaucrats are quite conservative in their approach to change. Being conservative enables many bureaucrats to survive in a system where failure can result in termination. Being conservative starts to become someone's personal style. This is once again an example of management as opposed to leadership (Gilmore, 1988) as described in Chapter 2. I know and have worked with many of the participants and I can speak from firsthand experience about how important personal style is to a change agenda. Where someone like Plecas can facilitate change in the Ministry, he is less effective in the contract sector. Where someone like Young can be effective in changing the contract sector, he will struggle in the government bureaucracy. Both men said as much.

One of the issues that came up in my readings and in my interviews was the issue of planned, evidence-based change versus situational or "spin" based change. The social services system often tries to initiate change based on evidence or best practices. Examples of this would be the move to accreditation or the Gove Report, especially the research papers commissioned by Gove as part of his report. As long as all things remain constant, these changes will proceed as planned. But in the world of social services, rarely do things remain constant. There is seemingly constant change and activity. However, core values seem to remain intact as discussed in Chapter 2, Collins and Porras (1994) note that core values seldom change. So the implementation of the recommendations of the Gove Report by the Transition Commission were cut short because the bureaucracy was not prepared to support the implementation. The creation of the MCF resulted from

the inability of the Transition Commission to carry through on its mandate. This was situational change as opposed to evidence-based change. Add to this the government's insistence on putting the best possible face on all change agendas and change becomes truly situational. A good example of this would be the CPR change agenda. The government announced this change as an opportunity to bring about a much better and more responsive contract sector service delivery model. Agencies were going to be consulted and this was to be a service driven rather than a fiscal agenda. This was "spin". It was going to be difficult to get buy-in from agencies if they were fearful of losing contracts and dollars. Well into the process, the government shut CPR down. Communications branch stated that the Ministry was discontinuing CPR but not abandoning the work and the progress to date. This was "spin". The CPR process had not resulted in change, had damaged the fragile working relationship between government and agencies and had wasted resources and time. In his follow-up report, Allen (1998) stated that MCF had to build trust and it had to be more honest in regards to its fiscal agenda. The plan was ill conceived and poorly implemented. There was "spin" going into the process and "spin" coming out.

This ties back to the issue of politics and child welfare. You can have the best plan and still have to change because of political considerations. Plecas was moved out of MCF just as CPR was starting because the Premier's office needed him. The media attention to the death of Matthew Vaudreuil was the spark that started the work of the Gove Commission. The failure of the Transition Commission drove the creation of MCF. The failure of CPR was the reason for contract reform and accreditation and yet nowhere will you read about failures. Few if any governments are willing to publicly acknowledge

failure, due to the fear of the consequences at the next election. So governments have communications staff whose job it is to put the best possible “spin” on each and every government initiative.

*Planning and Follow Through on Change*

The requisites for any change agenda are clear: plan carefully using research and experience, put together a plan complete with timelines and responsibilities, measure as you go and evaluate. This is rarely the reality, however, in a Children’s Ministry change agenda. Part of the reason for this is the overly political nature of a Children’s Ministry. In talking to the participants it was clear that everyone instinctively understood what was meant by political and why this applies to the Ministry. My understanding of the issue is that any ministry in charge of the well being of needy children and with a mandate that promises to protect those children has to be very concerned about public perceptions, making decisions in the Ministry very political. This sensitivity has increased over time, as the media has become more vigilant and more willing to report problems in service delivery. As stated by Carroll and Ratner (2005), it was a particular problem for this NDP government:

As we have seen, the local mass media did play an important role, not only in weakening the support base but also in deflecting the government's agenda away from radical initiatives that might have attracted bad publicity (p. 190).

Because of the political nature of the Children’s Ministry, decisions are often made on short notice and with little planning. Examples of this include the Gove Report, the Transition Commission, the creation of MCF and the CPR process. Processes such as the Korbin Commission worked out well, in part, because of solid pre-planning. Solid pre-

planning should include a clear sense of vision, a clear understanding of who the stakeholders are, a realistic timeframe, adequate resources, and an understanding of fiscal impact. Add to this a willingness to stay the course and implement the plan and you have a good planning model. As noted by Proehl (2001), most change agendas feature these characteristics. There may be one step more or one step less but the core principles of change are relatively constant. Each of the projects that I listed was missing one or more of these prerequisites. Gove lacked a government commitment to fully follow through with the recommendations. The Transition Commission did not have stakeholder buy-in. MCF lacked lower level stakeholder buy-in and CPR did not have a clearly stated mission, a willingness to stay the course or a government commitment to implement. The Korbin Commission, on the other hand, had all of the necessary requirements for change and succeeded in its mandate, which was to inform the government but not to implement change.

One of the real problems with follow-through is finding the political courage to do so. This is a difficult goal to achieve given the politics of children's services. If the media is reporting a situation that reflects poorly on the Ministry, it is important for the government to respond quickly in order to be seen as decisive. Unfortunately, this does not always lead to good policy or efficient, effective change.

If you are able to plan change, it is critical to carry through on an agenda. In many cases, there will be opposition. Many people are uncomfortable with change. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) talk about people not so much fearing change as fearing loss. It may be a loss of position, authority or autonomy. It is hard to imagine change without some form of loss, and the fear of loss can result in resistance. This should be understood as part of any

change agenda. Let people know at the onset of change what they can expect to see happen and work with them through the fear of loss or the loss itself. It is more likely that people will support an initiative that they believe will be completed than one where the conclusion is in doubt. No better example exists than the demise of the CPR process in which some opposition developed and someone “blinked”.

As a member of the contract sector, I have seen the impact of this type of problem. The sector is conservative to begin with and if there is any doubt as to the Ministry’s commitment to change, then the sector will wait to see what is going to happen. It is difficult to build up any sort of momentum when this happens. Contractors have put time and energy into a wide range of change agendas over the years. More often than not those change agendas were not followed or were cut short.

Too often it seems that we do not learn from either our failures or our successes. In Chapter 2 I discussed various change models. Dyer (1984) outlined a seven-step process that featured a formal evaluation step. The purpose of this step is to ensure that there is an opportunity to learn from both successes and failures. Many of the problems that stopped the CPR process were repeated in 2003 as the Ministry tried to reform the contract sector. Many of Gove’s recommendations showed up in Morton’s recommendations and many of Morton’s recommendations found their way into the Allen Report. Good ideas keep being recycled without necessarily being implemented. I found this particular issue fascinating. Why is it that the social services sector continues to revisit the same issues on such a regular basis? Why is it that study after study and report after report continue to highlight the same issues and to offer a summary of the same sorts of recommendations? Perhaps one of the keys to understanding this apparent problem is to look at the heart of the

recommendations, which usually involves money. All the needed changes, be they standards, training, reorganization or more services, require more dollars. This is not just a short-term financial fix or a limited financial fix but significant dollars and ongoing dollars. Why does this not happen? It happens because social services must compete for dollars with Health and with Education. While Health and Education impact on huge numbers of voters, social services do not. So, what government would take health dollars and give them to social services?

Without a firm and continuing commitment to adequate funding, all of the recommendations of any change project will be much more difficult to implement. Gove (in British Columbia, 1995) talked about the need for a system that was universal, responsive, accountable and efficient. These are principles that you will find in every child welfare or social services report written in the last thirty years. Almost every report written about the social services sector since the Gove report has been critical about the government's lack of commitment and follow-through. It is somewhat ironic that there appears to be no problem finding sufficient resources to do re-organizations and studies and commissions. A number of participants commented that in relation to the studies reviewed in this paper, cost was not a factor. That same commitment does not appear when implementation costs are discussed.

In her annual report of 1999, the Child, Youth and Family Advocate said that since 1995, services to children and youth had been the subject of considerable discussion, debate and change but five years later there was a marked lack of progress toward comprehensive and integrated services for children, youth and their families (Office of the

Child, Youth and Family Advocate, 1999, p. 5). The following year the same advocate in her annual report said,

Over the past decade, much has been written about the needs of children and youth who require government services. Extensive research has been conducted, substantive reports produced and recommendations made about the need for real change. Despite all of this activity, British Columbia has made little progress in ensuring that these young people's needs are met. For the most part, it has been a case of all talk and no action (Office of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate, 2000, p. 7).

The office of the British Columbia Children's Commission, although not as critical as the Advocate, still had major concerns. In the Children's Commission annual report in 1998, the Commissioner stated, "although we have noted some improvements in the child-serving system during the last year, each of our major areas of activity illustrates the need for continual vigilance to meet the needs of children and youth" (Children's Commission, 1998, p. 18). In 1999, the Commissioner stated in her annual report, "the evidence – as shown in this report – suggests that while we may have improved in some areas, there are many areas where we still must do better" (Children's Commission, 1999, p. 45). Finally, in 2000, a new Children's Commissioner said in his first annual report, "we are still a long way from a system that we need for a healthy future and that the children, youth and families of this province are entitled to" (Children's Commission, 2000, p. 1).

The comments of these social services watchdogs are troubling. The Child Advocate reports to the British Columbia Legislature, while the Children's Commissioner reports to the Attorney General of the province. Both do annual "state of the nation" reports. Both are clear that there is limited positive change taking place. They say this at a time when the government has actually gone through an enormous amount of change. In fact, it had been years of constant change, driven by a desire to improve the quality of life

of high-risk children and families in British Columbia. This critique could not have been encouraging to the government. I know that it was not to the contract sector.

Governments are also concerned about the risk of litigation when things go wrong. More and more clients and former clients are coming forward to formally complain about their experiences in government care. The residential school complaints, the clients from Jericho Hill School for the Deaf and many individuals have taken legal action against the government. One would think that this alone might motivate a government to improve its systems, its risk management practices and its scrutiny of contracts.

As I complete this study, the sector is going through yet another change agenda, this one focusing on accountability, downsizing of the number of agencies and cost cutting. The major recommendations of Gove, the ones that would significantly change the system and the ones that would cost the most, remain unfulfilled. Furthermore, the watchdog agencies that reported on these failings have been shut down. The sector is looking over its collective shoulder in the hope of finding its future.

## **Conclusions**

Reviewing documentation and conducting personal interviews with participants has given me a wide range of information to work with. I began this study looking at the relationship between change and leadership. Over the ten years being studied there were a number of change agendas, none of them particularly successful as far as the social services community was concerned. As a result, there appears to be less willingness to try new initiatives because of a fear of failure. and fear of no follow through.

I do not think that it is realistic to expect that all social services innovations will be successful, any more than all innovations are successful in the medical system or in education or business. Unfortunately, because of the political nature of social services, it is often difficult for the Children's Ministry to acknowledge that some things did not work and that there were lesson learned from the failures. All ministries have to contend with political decision-making. The government may decide to restructure the regions in the Health Ministry. The Education Ministry may close a school. Children will die in the health care system and sometimes a child is abused in the education system. The Children's Ministry is not unique in terms of tragic stories but the fallout appears to be more severe. In fact, there are many more deaths that occur in the health system than in social service organizations. On an annual basis children die because of medical malpractice significantly more often than they do due to errors or negligence on the part of the Children's Ministry Yet, the health system does not appear to be in perpetual crisis. Ministries other than the Children's appear to be more stable, to see change as evolutionary and to have fewer catastrophes to explain. The Children's Ministry appears to be defensive and perpetually in flux. In spite of this characterization, the Ministry continues to practice the art of denial. The CPR exercise that was discussed earlier in this paper was described as a failure by everyone I spoke with, and yet the Minister of the day, Lois Boon, in her press release regarding CPR, stated, "It is our responsibility to step back from the CPR process and ensure that we are doing this right" (Ministry for Children and Families, 1998, p. 1). That statement did little to appease the public, the agencies or the ministries and staff. It was viewed as yet another example of an inexperienced minister trying to get out from under the weight of another problem. This type of response makes it

difficult to move ahead having learned about what went wrong and then apply that learning to the next process.

What is needed for effective systemic change? The results of this study suggest that it is not a terribly complicated answer. To bring about change you need the following:

- a vision;
- stakeholder buy in;
- adequate resources, including sufficient financial support and an adequate workforce;
- sufficient time; and,
- political will.

I created this list by going through the comments from various participants and determining what made some events work better than others. The literature related to change supports just these sorts of change requirements. Dyer (1984), Fullan (2001), Gilmore (1988), Proehl (2001) and Tichy (1983) all talk about the need for a vision and a plan. The plan needs to take into account stakeholders' resources and will. A good example of these components can be found in reviewing the CPR process. The vision was not clear, the stakeholders were hesitant and resources were being taken away. There was limited time allowed and when criticism began, the government backed off. In fact, non of the five principles were present.

With a commitment to these five principles, change is not guaranteed but the likelihood of change is much higher. Child welfare and social services are not easy arenas to work in. Most if not all jurisdictions struggle to balance fiscal realities with perceived needs. The field needs research in relation to what works and what are better ways to communicate that information. It also needs the opportunity to try innovations without the fear that failure will result in a loss of contracts or positions.

Governments need to be less fearful about child welfare. It is not realistic to say that we can protect all children all of the time. There is a difference between a system doing all that it can to safeguard children and failing and a system that is not doing all that it can and failing. The question that emerges is how to define a well running system and who determines that status? Quite often the debate is about the amount of money being spent on child protection. The provision of adequate resources to a program is a key to its success but adequate resources do not ensure that dollars are spent wisely. Adequate resources, wisely spent, will not always ensure that all children will be safe. Children die everyday, in loving homes cared for by loving families. There is nothing wrong with setting high standards for the care and welfare of children. There is however, a problem when the benchmark is higher for children in government care than for those in home care. The problem is, how do we train people to care for children in care better than they care for their own children? I am not sure that we can. It will take a brave and skilful leader to acknowledge the limitations of the child welfare community and then follow through on that acknowledgement by supporting workers who do good work even when the results are not what we hope for.

Leadership for change in social services has to start with the elected government. This does not mean that there cannot be consultation with stakeholders, but the government sets a direction, supplies the resources, defines outcomes and suggests timelines. Without this leadership, we can't expect substantive change in social services. In completing this study, I have learned a great deal about change in social services and a great deal about the people involved in those changes. I have enormous respect for the authors of change in social services. It is a most difficult role to take on and I am

convinced that the people I met and interviewed do their work with the hope that it will result in positive change in the lives of children and youth. When I look at the social services system in 2001, however, and compare it to the system of 1991, there has not been nearly enough positive change to justify the enormous amount of time, energy and dollars that went into the ten year time period. I do not want to impugn the integrity of the leaders involved in the events but these were not the sorts of results that were hoped for and supposedly planned for. What we have is good honourable people being relatively unsuccessful in implementing positive, visible, measurable change. In fact the only success was the creation of a new Children's Ministry by Penny Priddy and Robert Plecas. Plecas was the architect of that change agenda. He completed his work on time and within budget. He and his minister would call the creation of this Ministry a success while many others both inside and outside of government might debate this judgement. Yet it would be safe to say that both within and outside of the Ministry, he was mistrusted and disliked by the majority of stakeholders. Strangely, people who were less successful were generally better liked.

Having worked in a number of provinces and sat on several national committees, it is clear to me that the Children's Ministries in Canada all struggle with the same problems to a greater or lesser degree. There is the problem of funding. There is the problem of restructuring, something that seems to happen with various degrees of regularity in Children's Ministries across the country. There is the sad problem of how to explain the deaths of children in the care of the Ministry. Children's Ministries are unique in comparison to other ministries but not unique in comparison to one another. The problems that plague Children's Ministries in British Columbia can be found in other provinces as

well. I was a director of a mandated child protection agency in another province and the issues I dealt with there are the same issues I see in the British Columbia Children's Ministry today. Just as the other ministries do not view the Children's Ministry in British Columbia particularly positively, I found the same attitude in another province 20 years ago. When I attend national meetings of child welfare professionals, our stories and our experiences are remarkably similar. I am left to believe that the social services culture is out of step with the rest of government. Success appears to be defined differently and failure is simply viewed as a foregone conclusion.

### **Limitations of the Study and Future Research**

This study deals with a ten-year window of time in one ministry. I selected a small group of participants and a small group of events. The events were chosen because I knew about them and had experience with them. The participants were chosen because I had access to them and they were involved in my chosen events. As I have said earlier in this study, other researchers might have chosen other events and other participants. I do not believe the results would have been significantly different.

This gives rise to the question of what further research might be done on this topic. A comparative study of leadership and change in several provinces might prove interesting. A study of leadership and change in other countries and other cultures might offer some insights. I would caution that different cultures approach child welfare in different ways and simply applying a model from one jurisdiction to another might not be effective. A study in leadership in other areas of government such as Health and Education might provide valuable data in the study of leadership and how it compares to that existing

in Social Services. Any future research would ideally focus on a British Columbian context. In this way it might prove to be more acceptable and accessible to a British Columbia system.

I have taken much pleasure in working on this dissertation. In spite of what sounds at times like a negative assessment of the overall Children's Ministry and its many contract agencies, I am always hopeful and optimistic about the future of social services. One cannot work in this system and be effective without being optimistic. What do we need to do in order for this system to become healthier?

Fullam articulated a vision of what leaders need to do in order to bring about effective change. His ideas would resonate well in a children's ministry.

Transforming the culture – changing the way we do things around here – is the main point. I call this reculturing. Effective leaders know that the hard work of reculturing is the sine qua non of progress. Furthermore, it is a particular kind of reculturing for which we strive: one that activates and deepens moral purpose through collaborative work cultures that respect differences and constantly build and test knowledge against measurable results – a culture within which one realizes that sometimes being off balance is a learning moment (Fullam, 2001, p. 44).

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**Appendix A (Part 1)**

**Timeline of Key Events and Key Individuals**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>
<b><u>SOCIAL SERVICE EVENT</u></b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Death of Matthew Vaudreuil</li> <li>▪ Creation of Korbin Commission</li> </ul>	Release of Korbin Report	Creation of Gove Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Release of Gove Report</li> <li>▪ Establishment of Transition Commission</li> </ul>
<b><u>OTHER KEY EVENTS</u></b>	Election of N.D.P. Government, Mike Harcourt, Premier				
<b><u>MINISTER</u></b>	Joan Smallwood	→	Joy MacPhail	→	→
<b><u>DEPUTY MINISTER</u></b>	Lynn Langford →	Bob Cronin →	Sheila Wynn	→	→

**Appendix A (Part 2)**

<u>YEAR</u>	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
<u>SOCIAL SERVICE EVENT</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Proclamation of CFS Act</li> <li>▪ Creation of MCF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CPR Starts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Closure of CPR</li> <li>▪ Allen Report</li> </ul>	Contract Reform		Election of new government
<u>OTHER KEY EVENTS</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection of Glen Clark as Premier</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Home of Premier Clark searched by RCMP</li> <li>▪ Selection of Dan Miller as Premier</li> <li>▪ Former Cabinet Minister Dave Stupich found guilty of fraud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection of Ujjal Dosanjh as Premier</li> </ul>	
<u>MINISTER</u>	Dennis Streifel → Penny Priddy	→ Lois Boone	→ Lois Boone	→	Gretchen Mann-Brewin	→ Ed John
<u>DEPUTY MINISTER</u>	→ Robert Plecas	→ Mike Corbeil	→ Mike Corbeil	→	Sharon Manson Singer	→

**Appendix B (Part 1)**

**Key Events Tied to Key Leaders**

<b><u>CHANGE EVENT</u></b>	<b>Korbin Commission 1992-93</b>	<b>Gove Report 1994-95</b>	<b>Transition Commission 1995-96</b>
<b><u>IDENTIFIED LEADERS</u></b>	Judy Korbin (a) Joan Smallwood (b)	Tom Gove (a) Joy MacPhail (b)	Cynthia Morton (c) Joy MacPhail (b)
<b><u>OUTCOMES OF CHANGE</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of CSSEA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of Transition Commission</li> <li>▪ Shift from family focused to child centred practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creation of Ministry for Children and Families</li> </ul>
a) Expert Consultant			
b) Elected Official			
c) Bureaucrat			

**Appendix B (Part 2)**

<b><u>CHANGE EVENT</u></b>	<b>Creation of MCF 1996</b>	<b>CPR 1997</b>	<b>Contract Reform 1999-2001</b>
<b><u>IDENTIFIED LEADERS</u></b>	Penny Priddy (b) Cynthia Morton (c)	Penny Priddy (b) Robert Plecas (c)	Mike Shoop (c) David Young (c)
<b><u>OUTCOMES OF CHANGE</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Centralizing of child specific work in one ministry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incomplete process resulting in trust issues in the contracted sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuing agreements</li> <li>▪ Accreditation</li> <li>▪ New contracting system</li> </ul>
a) Expert Consultant			
b) Elected Official			
c) Bureaucrat			

## Appendix C

### Participant Questions

#### List of Questions for Participants

- 1) What role did you play in the (list specific event)?  
Probes
  - How did you come to this role?
  - What were you doing prior to this particular role?
  
- 2) What were the major factors that influenced your decisions regarding (list specific event)?  
Probes
  - What was the context you were working in?
  - What were the internal versus external factors that influenced your decision-making?
  - How much individual choice did you have in making decisions related to \_\_\_\_\_?
  
- 3) What were the major problems in implementing (list specific event)?  
Probes
  - Internal to the ministry?
  - External to the ministry?
  - Were the problems predictable?
  - Were the problems workable?
  - What did you do about the problems?
  
- 4) Were there guiding principles that you used in implementing (list specific event)?

## Probes

- If there were none, why not?
  - If there were some, why those particular principles?
  - Were the guiding principles yours or someone else's?
- 5) Did you follow a specific change agenda and if so what was it?

## Probes

- Why that particular change agenda?
  - Were there other change agendas you rejected?
- 6) In hindsight, how do you feel about your role in (list specific event)?

## Probes

- If you were successful, why?
  - If not, why not?
- 7) What impact did (list specific event) have on you personally?

## Probes

- Did you make changes to your style of leadership?
  - Were you satisfied in your role as a leader?
- 8) In hindsight, knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?

## Probes

- Would the changes have been possible?
- What did you learn?

## Appendix D

### Participants

List of Participants	Role
Glen Clark	Former Premier of British Columbia
Thomas Gove	Former Head of Gove Commission
Martin Harris	Agency Executive Director
Brian Harper	Agency Executive Director
Joy MacPhail	Former Minister for Children's Ministry
2 Senior Ministry for Children and Families Staff Members	Interviews done in confidence
Jane Morley	Former Counsel for Children's Ministry
Cynthia Morton	Former Chair of Transition Commission Former Chair British Columbia Children's Commission
Vaughn Palmer	Reporter; Vancouver Sun
Jody Paterson	Reporter; Victoria Times Columnist
Robert Plecas	Former Deputy Minister for Children's Ministry
Penny Priddy	Former Minister for Children's Ministry
Lower Mainland Regional Operating Officer	Interview done in confidence
Doug Sabourin	Agency Executive Director
Michael Shoop	Former Assistant to Deputy Minister for Children's Ministry
David Young	Former Assistant Deputy Minister for Children's Ministry

## Appendix E

### Consent Letter

Exploring the Process of Change in British Columbia Social Services  
1991-2001; The Benefit of Hindsight

You are being invited to participate in a study related to leadership and change that is being conducted by Bruce Hardy, M.Ed./M.A.. Bruce Hardy is a graduate student in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. You can reach Mr. Hardy at 604-596-4321 or at [bruce.hardy@options.bc.ca](mailto:bruce.hardy@options.bc.ca). As a graduate student I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D.. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Roy Ferguson. Dr. Ferguson can be reached at 250-721-7983 or [rferguso@uvic.ca](mailto:rferguso@uvic.ca).

The purpose of this research is to review ten years of change in the British Columbia social services system and to look at the role of leadership in that change. This study is important because there has been little previous research on this topic.

You are being asked to participate because you were directly involved in at least one of the change events being discussed in this dissertation.

If you agree to take part in this research your participation will include a 1-2 hour interview conducted by Bruce Hardy.

You will be given a copy of the transcripts to review and comment on as well as being given a copy of the analysis to review.

If this poses a difficulty or concern to you, you can certainly choose not to participate in the research. If you choose to participate in the research, your anonymity cannot be guaranteed because your role was key to the change event being discussed and, as such, it will be difficult to hide your identity.

The material collected (transcripts and tapes) will be stored under lock and key in the researcher's office. Once the paper is completed the tapes and transcripts will be destroyed.

The data collected will be used as part of a dissertation and will be published at the University of Victoria. In addition to being able to contact the researcher or the supervisor, you may verify the ethical approval of this study or raise any concerns you might have by contacting the Associate Vice President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4362).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

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Name

---

Signature

---

Date

## Appendix F

### Participant Values/Principles

<u>PARTICIPANT</u>	<u>VALUES/PRINCIPLES THAT DIRECTED HIS/HER WORK</u>
1) Joy MacPhail Former Minister of the Children's Ministry *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Best interest of the child. This was discussed and agreed upon both at Cabinet and then in the Ministry. Cost was not viewed as a priority.</li> <li>- Parental values. Ms. MacPhail's son was the same age as Matthew Vaudreuil and this fact was never far from her mind. She had some difficulty separating personal from professional responsibilities.</li> </ul>
2) Penny Priddy Former Minister of the Children's Ministry *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking into account the opinions and values of the field.</li> <li>- Will what we do make a difference for families?</li> <li>- Ms. Priddy kept a picture of her grandson on her desk in order to remember the needs of children.</li> <li>- Try to balance prevention with protection.</li> <li>- Prioritize capacity building.</li> <li>- Prioritize long-term planning.</li> <li>- Be as open as possible with the media.</li> </ul>
3) Children's Ministry * Bureaucrat #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</li> <li>- The principle of kids deserving to have rights while in the care of government.</li> </ul>
4) Bob Plecas Former Deputy Minister for the Children's Ministry *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be clear on roles.</li> <li>- Be professional.</li> <li>- Prioritize the needs of children.</li> </ul>
5) David Young Former Assistant Deputy Minister for the Children's Ministry *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pick champions who will work on the values in the field.</li> <li>- Create win/win situations.</li> <li>- Create an atmosphere where people want to be part of the changes.</li> </ul>

<u>PARTICIPANT</u>	<u>VALUES/PRINCIPLES THAT DIRECTED HIS/HER WORK</u>
6) Cynthia Morton Former Chair of the Transition Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Best interests of the child.</li> <li>- Evidence-based change.</li> <li>- Sharing information openly between systems.</li> </ul>
7) Jane Morley Former Legal Counsel for the Children's Ministry *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To get to the truth.</li> <li>- Not to be defensive in my work</li> </ul>
8) Children's Ministry * Bureaucrat #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen to people (reflective management principles).</li> <li>- You cannot move any faster than the field.</li> <li>- You have to act differently if you are going to be seen as doing things differently.</li> </ul>
9) Thomas Gove Former Chair of the Gove Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A child-centred system.</li> <li>- Ensure that the system is effective.</li> <li>- Ensure that there is value for dollar.</li> <li>- Mr. Gove kept a picture of Matthew over his desk.</li> </ul>

\* I am using a neutral title for the Children's Ministry because there were a variety of name changes.

## Appendix G

### Problems

<u>PARTICIPANT (AND EVENT)</u>	<u>PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTATION</u>
1) Thomas Gove, Former Chair of the Gove Commission (Gove Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficulty in getting minister materials in a timely manner.</li> <li>- Difficulty in dealing with Ministry of Communication staff in regards to releasing the report.</li> </ul>
2) Bob Plecas, Former Deputy Minister of the Children's Ministry * (Creation of M.C.F.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There were no problems in implementation in regards to the new Children's Ministry.</li> </ul>
3) Bob Plecas, Former Deputy Minister of the Children's Ministry * (C.P.R.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The ministry lacked control of the contractors and this made change more difficult.</li> <li>- Initial expectations were too high.</li> <li>- Collision of values. The field valued a consensual process more than the deputy.</li> </ul>
4) Children's Ministry * Bureaucrat #2 (Contract Reform and Accreditation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The ministry itself was unclear as to what it wanted to do and where it wanted to go.</li> <li>- Headquarters staff was not known in the field and were fearful about going out into the field.</li> <li>- The ministry's approach to change tended to be bloodless and mechanical.</li> <li>- The minister was not able to earn the trust and respect of the field.</li> </ul>

<u>PARTICIPANT (AND EVENT)</u>	<u>PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTATION</u>
5) Jane Morley Former Legal Counsel for the Children's Ministry * (Gove Report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The work did not start on neutral ground as Counsel for the Commission already had a theory of the case.</li> <li>- The role of the communication staff was troublesome. They never appeared to "get it".</li> </ul>
6) Cynthia Morton Former Chair of the Transition Commission (Transition Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There was huge resistance from all ministries to the implementation of the Gove Report.</li> <li>- As a traditionally weak ministry, social services had little or no influence at the Cabinet table.</li> </ul>
7) David Young, Former Assistant Deputy Minister, Children's Ministry * (Contract Reform and Accreditation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was very difficult dealing with the nay-sayers inside and outside of government.</li> <li>- There was a great deal of resistance to change.</li> <li>- There were problems dealing with the communications staff.</li> <li>- Initially contract reform had no budget, no office space and no staff.</li> </ul>
8) Children's Ministry * Bureaucrat #1 (Transition Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The media was on top of the issue of child protection and this made it difficult to proceed in a non-political manner.</li> <li>- The individual ministries did not send their most stellar employees to work on the Transition Commission.</li> <li>- The bureaucrats did not want to see the Gove recommendations implemented.</li> </ul>
9) Penny Priddy Former Minister for the Children's Ministry * (creation of M.C.F.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Morton Report to the Premier was brief and so there were pieces missing in the vision. This made it difficult to implement.</li> <li>- The field was not prepared to accept and embrace Robert Plecas as the Deputy.</li> <li>- There was an expectation that the work could and would be done quickly.</li> </ul>

PARTICIPANT (AND EVENT)PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTATION

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|---|---|
| 10) Penny Priddy<br>Former Minister for<br>the Children's Ministry *<br>(C.P.R.)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was impossible to get around the province to inform everyone what was happening.</li> <li>- The sector wanted more consultation.</li> <li>- We did not use good management principles.</li> </ul>   |
| 11) Joy MacPhail<br>Former Minister<br>Children's Ministry *<br>(Gove Commission) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I was not as active in this process as I should have been. I could have made more of a difference.</li> <li>- We were unable to explain to the sector how C.P.R. would be better than the status quo.</li> <li>- The discipline of social workers in the Kootenays made it difficult for people to trust us.</li> <li>- Robert Plecas was not liked by the contract sector.</li> </ul> |

\* I am using a neutral title for the Children's Ministry because there were a variety of name changes.

## Appendix H

### Lessons Learned

<u>PARTICIPANT (AND EVENT)</u>	<u>LESSONS LEARNED</u>
1) Joy MacPhail, Former Minister of the Children's Ministry * (Gove Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In hindsight Ms. MacPhail wishes that she had ordered a process that was more collaborative than a public inquiry.</li> </ul>
2) Penny Priddy, Former Minister of the Children's Ministry * (Creation of M.C.F.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In hindsight Ms. Priddy would have been less open with the media.</li> <li>- In hindsight Ms. Priddy would have softened the government's approach to change.</li> <li>- She would have chosen strategically to be more on the offensive and less on the defensive in the Legislature.</li> </ul>
3) Penny Priddy, Former Minister of the Children's Ministry * (C.P.R.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take a more active role in C.P.R. given the sectors distrust of the Deputy.</li> <li>- Given some regions more flexibility in implementation and given other regions ultimatums.</li> <li>- Talk more to the Premier as the process unfolded.</li> <li>- Use different headquarters staff in some roles.</li> </ul>
4) Children's Ministry * Bureaucrat #1 (Transition Commission)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learned to respect the bureaucracy and its ability to stall even the best ideas.</li> <li>- You need leaders who can articulate a vision and people to move that vision along.</li> <li>- In any change agenda you need to nurture and care for your people.</li> </ul>
5) David Young, Former	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not allow more than 18 months for</li> </ul>

<u>PARTICIPANT (AND EVENT)</u>	<u>LESSONS LEARNED</u>
Assistant Deputy Minister for the Children's Ministry * (Contract Reform and Accreditation)	a change agenda. More time will result in more resistance. - You need to adequately resource any change agendas. Do not try to do it off the side of a desk.
6) Cynthia Morton, Former Chair of the Transition Commission (Transition Commission)	- Change in social services is too vulnerable to leave to the politicians. If you want to ensure Commission change, legislate it. - Ensure that budgets are firmly entrenched.
7) Jane Morley, Former Legal Counsel to the Children's Ministry * (Gove Report)	- Do not underestimate the role of the communications staff. - Try to look for common ground whenever possible.
8) Children's Ministry * Bureaucrat #2 (Contract Reform)	- Pick your fights wisely. M.C.F. did not always do so. - You cannot initiate change from inside headquarters. You have to get out and sell it. - Be prepared to be more pointed with one's own colleagues. - Set realistic timelines. - People who are involved in change agendas need to take care of themselves
9) Bob Plecas, Former Deputy Minister for The Children's Ministry * (Creation of M.C.F.)	- Nothing. The project went as planned, on time and on budget.
10) Bob Plecas, Former Deputy Minister for	- If you are leaving a project partway through you need to assure that there is

<u>PARTICIPANT (AND EVENT)</u>	<u>LESSONS LEARNED</u>
Children's Ministry * (C.P.R.)	successorship planning. - Be more aware of the complexity of the sector.
11) Tom Gove, Former Chair of the Gove Commission (Gove Commission)	- Be more aware of the role of communication staff in government processes. - Give government a chance to reflect on recommendations prior to releasing recommendations to the public. - Allow more time for consultation

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