

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, March 14, 1994**

8:00 p.m.

Date: 94/03/14

head: **Government Bills and Orders**
head: **Committee of the Whole**

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

MR. CHAIRMAN: We'd like to call the committee to order now. Order. The committee is reminded that we are in Committee of the Whole, not Committee of Supply.

Before we begin, we would remind for the benefit of the people in the galleries that this is the informal part of the Legislative Assembly, and members are allowed to remove their jackets, to have coffee or juice, and they're able to move around. So if you've got a program that shows where members are sitting, don't believe it, because in this committee people can move around. The only thing we ask is that committee members communicate with one another in very low whispers. That probably goes over their heads.

Bill 2 Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act

MR. CHAIRMAN: With that in mind, then, to begin tonight's discussion of Bill 2, we will call upon the Minister of Community Development for his comments.

MR. MAR: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. The Alberta sport, recreation, parks, and wildlife foundation combines the mandates of two Alberta Crown corporations: the Alberta Sport Council and the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. The Alberta Sport Council was established in 1984 to provide additional enhancement to the sport system in the province of Alberta. The Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation was created in 1976 to provide individuals and organizations with opportunities to make donations to be used for recreation, parks, or wildlife projects in Alberta or to apply for funding for such projects.

The merger of the Alberta Sport Council and the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation will result in efficiencies, allowing a greater portion of financial resources to flow to clients in communities served by the foundation. Combining the two Crown corporations will result in administrative and program delivery cost reductions which will be passed on directly to Alberta sport, recreation, parks, and wildlife participants and volunteer leaders. All grant programs will be streamlined and simplified, resulting in increased activity for the recipients to establish their own priorities to achieve greater efficiency. The foundation will mobilize and capitalize on Alberta's wealth of volunteers to carry out functions previously undertaken by the Crown corporations, resulting in further savings.

The focus and mission of the Alberta sport, recreation, parks, and wildlife foundation will remain on sport, recreation, parks, and wildlife. Recreation and sport enhance quality of life, contribute to efforts to reduce health care costs, help in reducing youth crime, contribute to the economy, and encourage individuals to be environmentally conscious.

For public input into the function and mandate of the new amalgamated foundation, 13 public group forums were held involving key volunteer leaders in the sport, recreation, parks, and wildlife and business community. The new foundation will

continue to seek public input and direction in its efforts to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Some of the key points which were raised during the public participation process were: the new foundation should operate primarily as an enabling body in support and encouragement of its partners versus acting as a direct program deliverer; the foundation must act as a guardian of the public interest in the development and enhancement of sport, recreation, parks, and wildlife programs; and finally, the foundation must take a proactive role in marketing the value of sport, recreation, parks, and wildlife programs as major contributors to the social and economic development of the province of Alberta.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Before we call for questions, comments, and amendments, I'd like the committee to entertain the introduction of guests. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no. Okay.
The minister without portfolio.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

MRS. MIROSH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I sincerely appreciate your interrupting this important committee to allow me to introduce to you and to Members of the Legislative Assembly three important guests who are members of the social planning review committee. I'd like to introduce Chris Jones, Rosemary Fennell, and Irene Salisbury. Would you please rise and receive the warm welcome.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. members. We now call upon Edmonton-Avonmore.

Bill 2 Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act (continued)

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have the pleasure of addressing Bill 2 this evening, the proposed amalgamation of the Alberta Sport Council with the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Just looking at this quickly, I'll point out to all members again that we have here a global budget of approximately \$14 million annually. I think it's a significant sum of money that behooves some further debate.

I would therefore like to kick off the debate tonight by taking a look at the first of the two partners, that being the Alberta Sport Council, which already directly controls nearly all of the areas to which its own funds are directed. It's an extremely powerful body with a rather significant amount of money in and of itself. For example, there's approximately \$400,000, I see, that goes to operate provincial-level games through the community games organizing committees, while some of the local committees involved in sports initiatives each receive about \$15,000 to operate some of the zone games.

Now, I am certainly the first to recognize the importance of this sports infrastructure insofar as it relates to Alberta and the need for dollars to support that infrastructure, because athlete development, sports development, and other forms of recreational development are indeed extremely significant to this province and particularly to the thousands of youthful members of our society who are involved from one end of the province to the other. Of

course, there are many others who benefit from the programs and services of the Sport Council. Not to mention seniors would be to leave them out and further the slight that's already been inflicted upon them, so I must signify them specially as being also full participants in this program.

The athlete development side of the portfolio, Mr. Chairman, suffices a tremendous amount of very healthy involvement by the registrants and provides enormous recreational and social benefits as well. Occasionally, as we have recently witnessed, it can also rightfully share in having helped groom world champions, as we've seen with Cary Mullen recently, Kurt Browning, and numerous others. All of this, I think, really serves to underscore and again to emphasize the importance of councils such as the Alberta Sport Council and therefore the need to debate any forthcoming changes that would impact on that council or on any of its delivery mechanisms and so on.

Similarly, the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, which is the other partner, willingly or not we'll see, in this prearranged marriage, must also be carefully discussed to protect the excellent work the foundation has done over the many years of its existence. In fact, I believe that the RPW Foundation is likely the oldest Crown corporation in the Department of Community Development as we know it today. As such, it carries an excellent reputation throughout the entire province for its many programs and services, which even include the arrangement of land bequests. They do an excellent job in encouraging people to bequeath their properties and lands to the foundation. I think a large part of their success, Mr. Chairman, would be the fact that people making that kind of a bequest, that kind of a donation probably are encouraged more to do so when they see this foundation, the recipient, not being directly controlled by government so they're not stigmatized by yet another thing being given from their pocket, if you will, to the government. There's a certain arm's lengthness to that process, which I would like to see protected.

The RPW Foundation also brings in a healthy chunk of its budget towards this amalgamation. This foundation, as you know, receives lottery moneys and uses these lottery funds to in fact support a lot of recognized provincial, regional, and local organizations, including about 35 recreation associations spread throughout Alberta. I think the foundation is well deserving of any praise we might give it for the excellent track record it has in that regard.

8:10

So I want to reiterate at the outset that no one here stands in the way of reducing costs or eliminating overlap or duplication or any other form of increased efficiency in program and service deliveries. That is not what any objection to this amalgamation is predicated upon, because this, we all recognize, is important to bring the government's financial mess under some semblance of control and order. The point here is, however, that the government and many of those in the Conservative front row are the ones who caused this financial depression. Yet here they are asking for even more direct involvement in the decision-making process, and that's the part that I am most opposed to.

I realize that there are some municipalities who in fact employ their own community development staff and that some possible duplication of effort therefore may exist between provincial and municipal levels of government. I think that is inevitable, and it is something that I'm sure the current minister has under review. However, I would also submit that there is a large chunk of Alberta where the provincial staff of the Community Development department have a much more obvious role and where perhaps that duplication does not exist, at least not so blatantly. Mr. Chairman, one can foresee in all of this a rather radical downsiz-

ing of the entire Community Development portfolio, if not its rather total demise, as I have said earlier. I think that's almost a given as I study through not only this amalgamation but some other actions within the department. I suspect that in the not-too-distant future, this will become all too clear after the government pushes through this amalgamation of the two foundations at hand.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that we should recall, of course, that there was an attempt during the 1989-1990 term to centralize some of the administrative functions of the Sport Council and of this RPW Foundation. There was a movement afoot a few years ago to bring them under one roof even then, and for very good reasons, I suspect, that movement was fought off. So one has learned that very careful and long-distance thinking must be at the root and at the heart of such initiatives.

It is clear from that particular amalgamation then having been fought off that if you don't take the time to debate these things and think them through more clearly than perhaps is the current case, sometimes you may wind up hurting those you are most trying to in fact serve. In fact, many of them may wind up turning against you, and I'm certain that last year's June election was clear evidence of the waning support for the Conservative government. Perhaps given that the amalgamation is going to be pushed through anyway, Mr. Chairman, there should be some consideration given to looking at this amalgamation not just for the Sport Council and the RPW Foundation, but maybe they should take that penultimate step and roll in the Wild Rose Foundation as well. Let's get one big foundation in there with only one staff and only one board of directors and save a whole bunch of money in the process. [some applause] Thank you, colleagues, for the applause. We're really interested in cost cutting as well, Mr. Chairman, but carefully planned out, so here exists an opportunity where they could examine that.

I think there's another issue that has to be factored in here as well, and that is that a much more comprehensive debate ought to be undertaken soon to follow up on the differing needs that exist among urban and rural municipalities. I have become keenly aware of how a certain policy developed in this House may well suffice the urbanites, but by the same token it seems to fall far short of helping out the ruralists. I think the converse of that argument can also be made. This kind of a debate I think would help us to better understand and would help to better clarify the role of the department's administrators, the functions of these foundations, and the type of, quote, community development, unquote, that Albertans really should be involved in. There's a lot of expertise out there, Mr. Chairman, as well as in here I should say, and it can help produce and bring about the types of efficiencies in our systems that I think would truly be reflective of what Albertans want and what we're capable of. This would further reduce administrative control, and it could even maintain current resources to user groups while also still helping volunteers take back control of their own destinies as a community.

Now, in the case of the Alberta Sport Council as well as with the RPW Foundation, the two partners in this marriage, I think both have earned their very good reputations at least in part by functioning in what has traditionally been an arm's-length fashion. That is to say that their decisions and their actions, their policies and their programs and so on have traditionally been made rather entirely on the basis of merit and need of the individual projects, the individual proposals coming before them and not as a direct result of undue political forbearance or political interference or political influence. In that light this foundation, the RPW Foundation, as well as the Alberta Sport Council must be protected from even the remotest possibility of political considerations that might otherwise affect the outcomes of sound decision-making.

Mr. Chairman, for any elected representative to stand in this House and say to Albertans that an MLA sitting on the board of directors of a Crown corporation does not signify political influence I think is wrong. This kind of a move will have the appearance of yet further power grabbing and possibly even, dare I say, manipulation and therefore should be rigidly avoided. You simply should not have MLAs sitting on these kinds of foundation boards whose largest responsibility is to give out grant moneys. Under that scenario there cannot be a sense of independence much less arm's lengthness on the part of the people making the decision.

8:20

In that regard, Mr. Chairman, I would be pleased to table here and now a notice of an amendment to Bill 2, section 2(1), which I would ask to be circulated now. It's a fairly straightforward amendment which simply asks the minister and this House to reconsider the composition of this very important board of directors who, I would re-emphasize, would have the ability to direct approximately \$14 million in lottery funds.

I would propose through this amendment that we strike out of clause 2(1) wherein the Lieutenant Governor in Council has the power to appoint:

the Lieutenant Governor in Council, among whom there must be one member of the Legislative Assembly and one employee of the Government who is under the administration of the Minister, and that we substitute in its place

an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly.

It's a very straightforward request that would allow for greater input by members of this House, and it would take away that political overtone which I don't think is going to be very well received in the community and certainly not by the recipients and/or user groups of either the Alberta Sport Council or of the RPW Foundation. This appointment of an all-party committee to look into who the board members might be for such an amalgamated foundation would also have the other desired effect, I believe, and that is to help this government move away from patronage appointments. I think we have seen many, many examples where people get appointed to boards . . .

Chairman's Ruling Decorum

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, the noise level sometimes exceeds a dull roar in here, and I wonder if I could call upon the Government House Leader and the government Whip to contain the exuberance and enthusiasm of some of their members for conversation and direct them to a satisfactory lounge where they may communicate with one another.

Debate Continued

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciated that interjection, especially since this is an item that I'm bringing forward to help the government get itself out of any kind of a political patronage wrangling. It's very straightforward, and it's a very simple, noble gesture that they could do. The minister could still hang on to the control that I know sometimes becomes necessary, but the all-party committee would have its say in the appointment of the board members. At the same time, we would also eliminate any further complication for any of the members opposite which might arise from them sitting on such a board. I think that's the thrust of this amendment.

The final part of the amendment deals with the fact that the foundation should have the right to elect its own chairperson as well as its own vice-chairperson. Tradition has told us that when

you get groups of people together, especially if they have the kind of expertise that I know the minister is looking for in these appointments, these board of directors members will have the good wisdom to elect from and among themselves the most capable person to carry out that particular task.

So again I would urge the minister and all members opposite to support this side of the House as we try to help streamline government and as we help try to avoid some political difficulties and other types of unforeseen circumstances which will inevitably arise if this Bill is to be pushed through the way that it is currently worded.

With that, I would pass now to some other honourable colleagues who might wish to speak to this first amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before I recognize any other member to continue debate on the amendment, hon. member, I must applaud you on having all your amendments on one piece of paper instead of a whole bunch of pieces of paper. So the question arises: do you wish to take these as four separate amendments or take them all in one?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: All in one.

MRS. SOETAERT: One at a time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm calling upon the hon. member who moved the amendment.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Mr. Chairman, the intention, for purposes of clarity, would be to deal with them one at a time. Wanting to speed up the process tonight, I simply presented them all on one page.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So that will confine us, then, in our debate on the issue to the first part of the amendment. With that in mind, we'll call upon the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Surgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [interjection] Yes, on the amendment. Thank you.

When we come to this House and we suggest amendments, we're often heckled because we don't suggest positive things for change. Yet when we do, the Government House Leader will grab the paper and rip it right in front of us so that we know how well he acknowledges our amendment. [interjections] Well, our feelings aren't hurt that easily.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. Could we let the hon. member speak?

MRS. SOETAERT: If we look at this amendment with just a moment of time instead of ripping it up without even looking at it, like our Government House Leader, we might have a look at . . . [interjection] The Minister of Family and Social Services.

This Bill purports to move towards fiscal efficiency; however, it falls flat on its face with the appointment of an MLA to the board. So we've once again achieved another lottery slush fund. These two boards as separate entities have functioned well and effectively and fairly without political interference. The hard-working volunteers that have toiled tirelessly for the benefit of Albertans have the right to be insulted by this suggestion, as if they can no longer function effectively without political interference. Those that support this Bill have to ask themselves: when every appointment to date has been political patronage, why is it

now necessary to further load the board with an MLA? If the purpose of the board is amalgamation, is to capture real fiscal efficiencies, why was the Wild Rose Foundation not amalgamated with these two boards?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, hon. member. Sorry to interrupt. Just so that we are clear on this – and the Chair was not – this first amendment is indeed all four of the amendments on this sheet, so you're free to discuss any or all of them. Thank you.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you.

Let's not make this just another collection of government power at the bureaucratic level. Now, instead of appointing an MLA, let's look at this amendment. Let's really read it through and consider possible appointments by electing members from the foundation as chair and vice-chair instead of putting on an appointed MLA. My question, too: will that appointment of the MLA be a paid position?

AN HON. MEMBER: No. Not now.

MRS. SOETAERT: Not now?

AN HON. MEMBER: Certainly not now.

MRS. SOETAERT: Good. Will it when the Bill comes forward?

Anyway, this amalgamation is a continuation of a collection of political power, such as the appointment of school superintendents, and we're just increasing the bureaucratic level. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind members opposite that the Auditor General clearly identified political patronage as the reason we ended up with NovAtel and the Gainers fiasco. How soon we forget. We are repeating those steps a mere eight months later. The patronage that contributed to NovAtel, Gainers, northern canola, et cetera, has already cost Albertans \$2.1 billion and has forced us to butcher programs of health care and education, social safety, and our seniors' program.

8:30

If there is any sincerity in this quest for fiscal efficiency, Mr. Chairman, then let's look at the necessity for appointing an MLA. It's a pointless procedure. If we want an arm's-length council, then we don't need the MLA. I think it is insulting to the present members. If we do so, we're saying, "We don't trust you," and I think that's a terrible crime.

I'd like to support this amendment and encourage members opposite to at least look at it and read it. I don't think that's asking too much in the whole scheme of democracy.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to take the opportunity to say a few words in favour of the amendment to Bill 2. I'd hoped that when I came in here tonight or one of these nights, I would have the opportunity to be speaking on that most important anticipated Bill, the freedom of information. Someday it's going to come. But seeing that particular Bill isn't here, it gives us the opportunity to speak on a Bill that is also extremely important, Bill 2, the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act. I will keep my comments to the amendment specifically but at the same time some references to other parts of the Act, because the overall concept does relate to

the thrust of the sheet of amendments that has been distributed by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

Now, when we look at the existing 2(1), we see a Bill containing what to me is an opportunity for blatant political interference in a process that in the past has not that blatantly wreaked of an opportunity for political influence. The most difficult part to digest is spelled out so clearly under 2(1) that I don't understand why the minister, when he was going through it, would not have caught it on his own. I know that there is a certain responsibility on the part of the opposition to watchdog these types of things, and we are doing it and doing it very effectively. We're going to point out to you the dangers of supporting the Bill as it was previously presented, without the amendments.

Now, in the past there were two separate foundations that, yes, disbursed some dollars, the same as this combined foundation would disburse some dollars, mainly lottery dollars. The difference – and it's a very, very important difference – is that previously the members on those foundations were members that were basically chosen by their peers within the community. In other words, they were chosen, recommended by groups out there; they weren't direct political appointments done at the whim of the government Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The reference in 2(1) is to "one member of the Legislative Assembly," and it says, "among whom there must be one member." It doesn't say there may be one member. "There must be one member of the Legislative Assembly." Now, that even allows more so the opportunity of much, much greater political influence. Then, to top it off: "and one employee of the Government who is under the administration of the Minister." How can you possibly ask that employee to be placed in a position where he or she can be totally independent when he or she is working under an Act that clearly spells out "under the administration of the Minister?" That employee obviously is serving a master, and that master is a minister. That takes away the possibility of any perception of independence, perception of total fairness. Perception in politics is everything. Perception is what the public out there sees, and it's what the public is going to feel is in that Bill, and unless there are changes as proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, that body will always exist under a cloud of suspicion.

It's very similar to a manoeuvre that was done by the previous minister responsible for what was a different title at the time, culture and multiculturalism, taking out one multicultural body and replacing it with another, where he chose to retain the power himself as to who sat on that particular body. So we have a very similar situation here where we're going back to a concept that seemed to be founded more under the previous administration. I would have hoped that with the new leader of the government side, the government party, the government, we would have seen things done differently. I visualized some sincerity when there was talk about stopping this political pork-barreling, this patronage, and doing things differently, doing things the way they should be done, doing things the way they've been proposed by this particular caucus for the last several months and the last few years; that is, to do these appointments and create these bodies in such a way that they in fact do leave a very favourable taste in the mouths of Albertans. This, Mr. Chairman, won't.

Now, the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore's amendment clearly does away with it. It substitutes that particular process with a new process, that new process being an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly. Now, what could be fairer than that? What could be received more favourably in the community throughout the province than that type of process where Albertans that are affected by the decisions being made by this particular body would say, "Well, we've got members of both parties there,

so obviously one's going to be watchdogging the other and vice versa to make sure everything is being done properly"?

So, Mr. Chairman, when we look at the first part of the amendment that has come forward, it makes it very, very clear that there is a vital need to support that amendment as proposed, for all government members to support it. The end result is that we end up with a Bill that I think we can all be proud of, that side of the House could be proud of, this side of the House could be proud of, and Albertans would be proud of, because it would symbolize to them a new way of doing things, a sincerity that that old way was a thing of the past and from here on we weren't going to see these types of political interferences set up that would allow favouritism or allow unwarranted opportunity for government members to influence a process that should not be influenced.

Mr. Chairman, it has to be particularly troublesome, I would think, to the member for – I believe it's Calgary-Mountain View that has been tentatively named to be that one member on this particular body. It's got to be particularly uncomfortable for that member to know that everybody in this Legislative Assembly knows there's a strong indication that he's been handpicked to be that member even before the Bill is in place. Already the process is being cooked to favour the opportunity for influence by the government members. Now, I would hope there would be some indication by the minister by standing up and concurring with the amendment being brought forward so we don't have to go on trying to drill it into the heads of government members as to why this is so vital, that we in fact can deal with this, get the process under way, get the Bill passed, and have that foundation in place the way it should be set up.

Now, Mr. Chairman, before I go on further with more comments – and I'll respect your advice on this particular one – do you want me at this time to make some comments on sections 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, or do you prefer I hold off till we deal with the committee stage when the amendments are all dealt with? Would you prefer I do that later?

8:40

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, we are in fact on the amendment which is to section 2 by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore, so 3, 4, and 5 would be inappropriate at this time.

MR. WICKMAN: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I could attempt to make some link to it, but I don't think that's really necessary. I'll respect your advice on that and hold off with those additional comments, if they need to be said. It's possible that the hon. minister will stand up and say he concurs with the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore and properly amend the Bill so we don't have to attempt to continue to re-enforce it.

On that note, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to conclude my remarks on the amendment as proposed by the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore to allow other members the opportunity to speak.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

MR. GERMAIN: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I think we should make no mistake about this amendment in the Legislative Assembly this evening. This is an important concept that is being debated, and it is particularly frustrating when a senior member of the Crown, of the government, who is highly respected and looked up to by the new members of the government, takes the amendment and rips it up before he even has the benefit of the debate on the issue, and that follows another senior member of the government likewise doing the same. This would encourage

government private members to consider that maybe there is no merit in this proposed amendment.

Well, let's talk about what you do to the Premier of the province in this piece of legislation. The Premier of the province went on television and spoke about open and honest government. He then filed a press release and talked about it in the Legislative Assembly by way of ministerial statement, in which he said that we are going to take the P for pork out of politics. Now we have not three months later a piece of legislation coming before this Assembly in which there is built into the selection process a political bias.

Let's talk about what the amendment does. The amendment, Mr. Chairman, takes away the selection process that is proposed and replaces it with an all-party committee. Now, will that be harmful to the government members? How would that be harmful to the government members? Would that be healthy for the government members? Yes, it would be healthy for the government members. So why in this Assembly would this proposal be dismissed out of hand like the ravings of a lunatic? [interjections] It makes sense. It is logical, and it makes sense. I see that I've now woken up even the farthest reaches of the outer limits. We go way back into the outer limits to wake them up.

Now, Mr. Chairman, what is the other problem that we are trying to assist the government in avoiding here? The other problem is that if you have a government MLA that is legislatively put on this committee, there can never be any separation of the decision-making process that this particular council will come up with. This will be perceived as an absolute government extension. There will be no doubt about it. Is there anybody that could look at that section as drafted and say, "We might as well have the government do this; we might as well not have this foundation"? This is a very important structural amendment, and it goes to the very fundamental issue of how things are going to be run around here and how they're going to appear to be run.

I don't understand, when this side of the House puts forward a win/win amendment, why there would be nobody there that would have the courage to now stand up and say, "By golly, we'd better think about this very hard," because make no mistake, there's going to come a time of accounting on this particular amendment when those people who vote for a deeper entrenchment of government, of the P for pork in politics, are going to have to stand up and be counted, and it's going to be interesting to see if open and honest government means an all-party committee.

That's my submission.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to speak in favour of the amendment. The amalgamation of the Sport Council and the recreation and wildlife foundation appears at first glance to be tightening things up, making one board rather than two and just generally making things more efficient, which certainly makes common sense, but the objectives do become suspect as we look more closely. Questions come to mind, and they all seem to be directed towards making the two nonpolitical organizations one which has direct ties to the government. Because there are lottery funds involved, this would have the potential for political abuse or at least could be seen as having that potential.

The parks and wildlife foundation is valued by Albertans. Many members of the public are anxious to assist in the preservation and conservation of parks and wildlife in this province and to provide assistance for open space development in partnership with the Crown corporation. It has an excellent reputation.

This corporation has been successful in arranging bequests of lands and facilities even though its primary mandate is to distribute lottery money. When people donate land to the citizens of Alberta, they see it as being bequeathed to the public, not to the government. They see this land as being there for many decades to come, maybe named after a family member or in memory of the family itself, perhaps a family who has lived on that land for many years. If the board or administrative body is politically appointed, many people will hesitate. Politicians these days are the recipients of a very limited level of trust. People may wonder if the lands would be privatized in the future or admission be charged to the public or the use of the land changed in some way, but with an all-party committee the government could no longer intervene directly in this plan. The plan, indeed an MLA being part of the board and having voting rights as well as an employee of the government, one who is under the administration – the government could no longer intervene directly.

The objects of the foundation are less clear than under the previous Bill. I would rather see the words management conservation or preservation of lands under the new Bill, as it was in the original, for this is really important. Volunteers or those who are considering donating land need to trust that this organization will be nonpolitical and that the lands will be used as they were intended.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay.
Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. [interjections] And thanks to colleagues for those kind words.

Mr. Chairman, I am rising to speak in favour of the amendment to section 2 of this Bill that will amalgamate these two foundations. My colleague from Fort McMurray touched on the unfortunate circumstances that senior members of government decided to debate this amendment by ripping it up and throwing it in the garbage, but it's consistent with the approach of this government to the kinds of concerns Albertans are raising about the direction and the attitude this government is taking. We needn't wonder what the purpose of this is. Let there be no mistake. This is a power grab, pure and simple. That's exactly what it's all about.

You know, Mr. Chairman, when we look at the previous Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation Act, there's a very similar provision to section 2(1) that we're debating now. That says that there's a corporation created "consisting of not more than 12 members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council." Period. That's it. That's all it says, because you see under previous Conservative governments, there wasn't this insatiable preoccupation with a power grab. That's exactly what we have here. It is the intent of this government to make sure there is political interference at every possible level, including the amalgamation of these two foundations to form the Alberta sport, recreation, parks and wildlife foundation. That's absolutely shameful.

Members opposite have to understand that Albertans are looking for new direction, not old direction. There are enough new dogs over there that can do new tricks, and we don't have to follow the same kinds of difficulties we've had before. My colleague from Fort McMurray talked about the need for perception that the government is not involved simply in patronage appointments. We have to take the P out of pork here. I guess pork would be "pals of Ralph Klein." Is that what pork would be here? It sounds like that's what it would be.

8:50

We have to in fact vote in favour of this amendment. We have to remove the direction this government is going in. We have to convince Albertans that the purpose of this Act is to in fact streamline government, which is what it's supposed to be and not simply be a smoke screen for another power grab, because, Mr. Chairman, once you take out that provision to section 2(1) about having a requirement built into legislation that one of the members of the foundation must be an MLA and one must be an employee of the government who is under the administration of the minister, Albertans will believe that the reason for this Bill is to streamline government. If you leave that in, Albertans will clearly understand and will clearly conclude that this is nothing but a power grab.

Mr. Chairman, to continue speaking to the amendments, in section 2(2) we again are simply looking for new direction from the government by having the words "The Lieutenant Governor in Council" struck out and substituted with "The Minister." I think, again, that's just an important aspect to moving in the direction we need to see this government moving as it streamlines government, as it moves in new directions.

Mr. Chairman, I'll conclude my comments by saying once again that this is absolutely fundamental. This is an entirely new direction that this government is taking. This cannot be tolerated. It cannot be allowed. Albertans will not stand for it, and I urge all members to vote in support of the amendment.

Thank you.

DR. PERCY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak in favour of this amendment. The reasoning is very straightforward. These types of organizations work if people perceive them to be arm's length. If you're going to get volunteers to come out, they want to be involved in something that is viewed as nonpartisan, arm's length, and dedicated to enhancing the community regardless of political stripe. At this stage, as we're trying to get the fiscal house in order, it's of the utmost necessity that we try and put in whatever vehicles we can that channel the power of volunteers to work and work on behalf of the community.

I think the particular problem here is with the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. I mean, people give land to this foundation, they give cash to this foundation because it's perceived as arm's length and dedicated to the community at large. Once you start appointing a government MLA, a government employee to that, you lose the arm's-length relationship.

Again, the object is to get people involved so they'll view things in a nonpartisan sense. So this amendment simply wants an all-party committee to be responsible for nominating the 10 people. Obviously the government would have the majority of the members. They are the government. So this amendment should not be interpreted as a death threat, as somehow undermining the power of the government. They would still have the power in the committee, but there would be the openness, the transparency in terms of the appointment, and we would lose that perception that a government member is there to monitor. If you want people to give bequests, you want them to give of their time, you want them to give of their cash, give them a vehicle that's arm's length, that they think is theirs, not the government's.

I think this amendment can achieve the aim the government wants, which is to streamline, to enhance delivery. It can provide greater clarity in terms of defining who ultimately is responsible for the direction, and it deals, Mr. Chairman, with the issue then of the perception of government interference. This foundation should be arm's length, and the best way of ensuring that is to ensure that the appointments are made by an all-party committee.

Then let the chips fall where they may as a consequence of the deliberations of that committee, but the deliberations would be open, the qualifications of the appointees would be there on the record, and people would think it was their institution. They would commit their time, their money, their land, their cash to it rather than a perceived government entity.

I would really urge members on the government side to view this as not being an effort to grandstand, manipulate but to ensure that we get the best out of what possibly is a good idea that has one or two flaws that can be amended and enhanced.

I conclude my comments with that, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Norwood.

MR. BENIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to speak in favour of the motion. I am extremely concerned that during this session there seems to be from the other side a massive fear of, an obsession about change. Whenever a suggestion is made that an all-party committee of the Legislature look at something, there are problems across. I never realized how important the previous session was. I must tell you – and I hope these words will not come back to haunt me – that I never realized how much this House has to say thank you to the former House leader for the government, the Deputy Premier, who with the people on this side, the House leader and the leader of our party, along with the Premier, created a whole new atmosphere in the House by opening up the process. We have subcommittees looking at estimates. There was change, a change that obviously would not have taken place if the present House leader for the government had been in his office. There was a change, a reform. [interjections]

Mr. Chairman, do I have the floor or the person from I believe Cypress-Medicine Hat?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order. [interjections] Order. It's a legitimate question, hon. member. Indeed the Chair has recognized you and invites you to continue on this amendment.

MR. BENIUK: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I think it is very, very important to note that there has been from the other side a most radical, reactionary movement setting in compared to what had been under the previous Government House Leader, the Deputy Premier. I do believe one has to ask why this is taking place. Is it because of the Government House Leader being changed, or is it that the members on the front line across fear that if they open up the process some more within their own ranks – and keep in mind they have the majority of votes. Every member there can have a strong say on who will be named to the various boards, and it would not be restricted to one man or two people on the front lines on the government side.

The former Government House Leader – and I never realized how important this was when I walked into this House – set in motion with the leader of my party and with the leader of his party and with the House leader on my side events that transformed the way business is done in this House. Now, Mr. Chairman, there is a reversal taking place. As I look at this motion for an all-party committee of the Legislature, I am convinced that if the former Government House Leader were still in his position, this motion would pass and other motions like this would pass and there would be more reforms, a better understanding, and we would be able to serve the people of this province in a more equitable fashion. There would not be this fear of supporting change that has now gripped the government side under its new Government House Leader. I do hope that the Deputy Premier would reconsider and once again become the

Government House Leader so reforms could once again come forth and better deals could be done in this House.

I do thank you.

Point of Order Relevance

DR. L. TAYLOR: Point of order. Relevance, *Beauchesne* 459.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We're aware of the relevance. What is your point?

DR. L. TAYLOR: The point is that who is our House leader has no relevance to this amendment whatsoever, and I would suggest that the member either sit down or make some common sense of what he's saying.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, when the members have completed their speeches and seated themselves, their speech is now over. So there isn't a point of relevance at that point.

Edmonton-Meadowlark.

9:00

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. I've been sitting and listening to the arguments put forward by my hon. members with regards to this particular amendment and have been trying to figure out what the government rationale would be for not recognizing the merits of the particular amendment. One of the reasons that has come to mind is in terms of wanting to have a direct link from the foundation directly into the government caucus, but when I think of some of the various other situations that are occurring with this particular government and in particular with this minister, there seem to be some absurd inconsistencies with regards to the approach used in this particular Act versus what we've seen happen with an area such as the women's advisory council. We were told by this minister, who's acquiesced to the demolition of the women's advisory council, and by the Premier, who said that really there's no need to have a unified voice for women in this province and that there is no need to have that direct link to caucus, that each of the women could have their own. So when I take that rationale and superimpose it on what we're seeing in this particular section within Bill 2, what appears very clear is that what is good for the Sport Council is not good for women. You wonder what the priorities are of this government that they can negate the rights of over 50 percent of the population to have direct input into caucus.

I would like to just make a brief mention of one other situation, where again there is no direct link to caucus but there are some important roles that this particular board undertakes. That's the board of governors of colleges where again it's not seen as necessary to have an appointed MLA on that particular board, yet here in the sport foundation it is. It leads to the question as to: why really is it necessary to have an appointed MLA? Is it for the purpose of establishing that link between the foundation and caucus? Or is it, as my hon. members have mentioned, to make sure that the P in politics, the P for pork remains in the appointments that occur?

Thank you very much.

DR. PERCY: I decided to speak again on this Bill, Mr. Chairman, trying to bring home an analogy that might bring the point. For example, take CKUA, the effort to make that more self-supporting. If you sort of think: what would happen if you had a board of directors that was dominated by government members,

where there were one or two members on the board of directors? To what extent would people voluntarily contribute to CKUA? They wouldn't, because they would say, "Well, this is a government entity," or, "This is going to put a government spin on things." To the extent, then, that you're setting up a foundation – and nobody on our side has said "Don't do this," because it does make some sense in terms of streamlining and delivery – the issue is getting people involved so they will contribute their time and their money and their land. I mean, that's what the Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation historically has drawn on. To what extent will people do that if there is a perception that it's a government entity? If the object, then, is to bring out more voluntarism, more voluntary charity, I think the best way of achieving that is to make it as arm's length as you possibly can. That holds true whether you want to set up CKUA and try and make it self-supporting or a foundation like this.

So again, the issue isn't the streamlining and the consolidation. That makes some sense. The issue is making this arm's length so people will give more and give their time. I think that if you have an all-party committee, and again, if it's dominated, as it would be, by the government side – the odds are that there might be a government MLA on, if it was the wish of the government. But there would be the transparency in terms of the debate and the discussion that would make it far more easy then for people to say: "Well, it went through the political process. It's been validated. It was an all-party committee. So, yes, I'll give my money to it because it's Albertan and it's going to do good things for Alberta." People won't do that if they think it's going to do good things for the government. There is a difference between what's good for the province and what the government perceives is good for it. Certainly people out there think in those terms.

We want to make this as inclusive as possible, Mr. Chairman. So again, let's stand back from the rhetoric and just ask: "What will make this more effective? What will enhance the volunteer base? What will enhance the probability people will give this money?" I wager that if we set it up with an all-party committee that makes the choices, we'll get much greater participation by the people who count: volunteers and people who make the bequests and give cash.

I'll conclude my comments with that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Edmonton-Rutherford.

MR. WICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to add a few comments to my earlier comments as well, and they're directed mainly at the reaction that was given by a number of the government members when, I felt, the Member for Edmonton-Norwood made a very, very valid point, and it was missed. That miss may be intentional, but it was mocked to a degree, too, which I found absolutely shocking. The point that was being made was that in this particular term, in the very beginning, there was supposedly a new style of conduct that was being initiated within this Legislative Assembly.

All we have to do is look at what's happened in the last several days. This morning, for example, an all-party subcommittee – and I use that reference "all-party" because the amendment here of course refers to "an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly." Well, many of us saw an all-party Legislative Assembly committee in action this morning, chaired by the Member for Little Bow. The minister from Vermilion-Lloydminster was there, the Member for Medicine Hat, the Member for Lacombe-Stettler, the Member for Lethbridge-West, my colleague from St. Albert. We all participated as an all-party committee to look at Municipal Affairs and to ask questions and

to work together. I'm sure that if the Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster were listening to me and had the opportunity to respond, he would stand up and say that it was a good process this morning; it was a really good process. It was a good process because it involved both caucuses; it involved members from both sides. That's the very, very important point that the Member for Edmonton-Norwood, at least from my point of view, that I picked up, was trying to point out.

What was the reaction in response to that point that he was making? A great deal of mockery. The Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat stands up on a point of order that has absolutely no bearing. They mock anything that they feel may be meaningful, may be threatening to their power base. They prefer to keep it that way, unfortunately. I think the member made a very, very valid point when he referred to the Deputy Premier. If the Deputy Premier were here, I would venture to say that he would stand up, and he would give some direction to the members that this in fact is a worthy amendment and it should be considered and it should not simply be mocked at.

On that note, Mr. Chairman, I'll conclude to allow other members to add their views.

9:10

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say a few words on this, and it basically boils down to the issues of whether or not we're going to convey to the people of Alberta the idea that we are involved in a government that is putting their interests first. We've heard a lot of arguments this evening about the need for foundations to reflect an arm's-length approach from the government to give the people of the province a feeling that they are in control when they're donating to these foundations either in terms of dollars or in terms of their time. I think it's very important that we get this kind of independence set up.

Generally when we see a new amendment or a new Bill being put forth that's going to change the structure of an organization – here we have a Bill that's going to put together two individual foundations into a new one, and they're creating a different structure for the board that will oversee the operation of this foundation. That must mean that because of this different form there must have been some problems with the other structure that was operating for the sport foundation and for the recreation foundation. We've heard all kinds of arguments for why this should remain at arm's length without influence from direct involvement by government members on the committee, why we should have an independent process of an all-party committee set up to put together and identify the members that will be serving on this foundation board. I would like to challenge the minister to provide us with some examples of why the boards under their previous structure did not work. Why does he need to have this direct pipeline into the boards under this new structure? If the boards were working adequately before, this new structure should not have to reflect the potential control from the Legislative Assembly. If the minister would have those kinds of examples he could provide us with, it would give us a better judge as to whether or not this was really needed or whether we could actually work with an arm's-length board.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore in summation.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to just underscore what I believe is the thrust of the amendment and the

thrust of the argument in support of that amendment coming from this side of the House. There is, as has been eloquently phrased by all members from this side of the House, an issue and a point of principle here that we feel is being violated and one that we feel is not in keeping with the promises that have been made in this House much less the promises that were made during the election time of last year. In particular I recall promises being made for less government. Now, less government to me means less involvement by MLAs in the direct affairs of things which the community, and specifically the volunteer community, is fully capable of doing on its own. That would be less government. Less government would be embracing the concept of reducing the number of MLAs from 83 to 65, which is an initiative, a bold one I might add, from members in the Liberal caucus. That would be less government. That's what we're talking about here, and that's the point of principle at play.

Less politics was another promise that I recall. That's at the heart of this amendment. Less politics is very, very central to this debate, because what we want to be sure that we have here is decisions being made without regard for political fallout. Now, some people here have more familiarity with what that statement means than others, but let me give it to you this way: less politics means taking out the pork, as has been eloquently phrased by the Member for Fort McMurray. Less politics means taking out the patronage. It means taking out the perks. Anything with the P word would be what this stands for. Less politics would mean not having an MLA sit in a position where he or she would pretend to be on an equal and even basis with other people who don't have the power that is vested in us when we cross the threshold into this House every day. That's what less politics would mean. That's what this amendment is all about. I can't understand what all the tremendous opposition is from the governing party of the day. It absolutely eludes me, and I don't understand why they're fighting so vociferously to have this entrenched in legislation. If you wanted to have some kind of a connection with what's going on in the community or what's going on in these boards of directors, surely there's a more appropriate way of the government staying in tune and in touch with their so-called appointed boards. I mean, they have this power to fully appoint members from the community as they wish and as they see fit anyway, but here we see an attempt at direct control of that particular board.

No one can convince me that you walk into a room as an MLA sitting on a government committee with volunteers from the community who come there in earnest, who come there with a sense of contributing yet don't want to feel dominated – no one can tell me that this kind of an appointment, Mr. Chairman, will result in anything even close to that. Because we all know that the minute you're sitting with government members, there's a need to listen to their point of view more carefully, there's a need to absolutely perhaps embrace what they're saying, and there's a need to act according to what their wishes are. For them to totally compromise themselves in this way absolutely makes no sense whatsoever. We were told that there's going to be less interference, no more patronage. Here's a chance to show that, to demonstrate that. There is nothing whatsoever wrong with the process if it eliminates that interference. Now, if you wanted to have an MLA sit on one of these committees in an advisory capacity or in some other unofficial way or attend as a guest, you would still accomplish the same thing. Why, then, when there are other vehicles for getting the government's point of view across to a board of directors, do you want to enshrine this in legislation? It suggests to me that there must be some other reason for this taking place. Why else would they be holding on to this precedent-setting clause?

I would like also to raise the point that in the slogan we care, we listen, I wonder who it is that told the government to put an MLA on to one of these foundation boards whose responsibility is largely to dispense moneys. Mr. Chairman, I would challenge them to tell me who it is that said that. Which Conservative was it? At the same time, I want to flag for them that there's a danger here of this precedent being set, because I don't recall any of the other lottery foundations, at least not the ones in this department, that have this kind of an imposition on their flexibility, the imposition being that of an MLA sitting on a board of directors with full voting privileges and being thought of as an equal with the other volunteers. I don't see that in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, unless there's something coming, and maybe that's what this precedent is all about. I don't see it.

AN HON. MEMBER: Surprise, surprise.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: I hear somebody shouting "Surprise," and maybe it is coming. Maybe this is the advent of even more of that kind of political interference. I would certainly hope not. Mr. Chairman, the government has to stop running away from its own shadow. This is all this is. You don't need to do that.

MS LEIBOVICI: You're getting applause from that side.

9:20

MR. ZWOZDESKY: I appreciate the applause from the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'm sure that he's thought this thing through a little bit, and perhaps he's not even in agreement with it.

The issue is that the precedent must not be allowed to be set here. We're dealing with \$14 million annually, and perhaps that might even be going up. Who knows? The precedent here is that you risk being looked at as buying votes, because you've got government power on this otherwise effective volunteer board. I would like to caution the government in this regard. Don't step into this one. Whoever is putting this forward, don't step into this. I can't be convinced in my heart that the Minister of Community Development has initiated this of his own accord. I can't embrace that notion. I've heard him speak at public functions, and I know, I think, where his heart lies with regard to some of this. So I'm wondering what the ulterior motive to it is.

The point here is that perception in this business appears to be virtually everything, and the perception here is rather entirely wrong. I don't know what it would take to convince members opposite to stand back and take a more sober look at this. I don't understand why some members opposite would be shaking their heads at this. Is there a fear that the people elected to these boards aren't capable of doing these things? The Minister of Municipal Affairs in a debate a week or two ago attempted to chastise me for having pointed out the fact that the new chairman of this amalgamated board is in fact a known Conservative fundraiser, supporter, and friend of the Premier's. That may well be the case, but he chastised me on the basis that was this a chap, whose name I believe is Sherrold Moore – is that right? – who wasn't capable of running this foundation? Well, that's not the point. Of course, any of a number of people out there are capable of running the foundation.

The issue here is one of trust. Do they not trust each other? And sit right here, Steve. Have a chair. Do they not trust the people that they put on to these boards? Do you not see some valid reason for having some kind of noninterfering board do its own thing? Isn't that what this should be all about, that you entrust those roles and responsibilities to the most capable people out there in the volunteer network, people who have expertise in

all of these areas? I'm not taking a shot here against the hon. Member for Calgary-Mountain View, because I know that he has some credentials as well and he'd love to bring them in. All I'm saying to him and to others is that you don't have to legislate this. You don't have to do that.

I think the other side of this is that we see here that putting an MLA on to this board also has a real cost factor to it. MLAs have precious little time to do all the things that are required of us to do, and here we are loading him up with some added responsibilities, which he may or may not have time for in the greater flow of things. I suspect he could do just as good a job representing the concerns as a volunteer as the other members on the board will, but traditionally what will tend to happen – and we've seen this all too often – is that you get members opposite taking on these positions, Mr. Chairman. They take on these positions, and they get paid honoraria for their work. There's a cost factor right there that can pile up to be a significant amount of money over the course of a year, or in the case of this government three or four years, whatever the length of their stay might be.

Secondly, there's a cost of expenses related to that MLA sitting on that board and attending meetings, as is required of a full-fledged board member. They are required to be at meetings. They are required, therefore, to travel to wherever that meeting is, and it could be in Edmonton, it could be in Calgary, it could be in Fort McMurray. Who knows where? Well, no, it would never be in Fort McMurray – would it? – but it could be elsewhere around the province. It could be in Municipal Affairs' own riding. Who knows? Maybe he'll be inviting them. So there are costs related to that requirement, and if a board member is to do his or her job fully, to the best of their abilities, it's incumbent on them to attend all of those meetings. It's not as if you can just send a substitute, but under another scenario that would be possible. They could send a substitute. They could send the Deputy Speaker to one meeting; they could send the hon. Minister of Labour another time. They could send any of a number of people to attend and put across the government's message or, in turn, to receive from the people, from this volunteer group, what it is that the community wants expressed. There's a tremendous ability here to build a nice network that would see the concerns of the community addressed in a much more professional manner than otherwise would be allowed by this Bill.

I caution the government on the one hand to please look at this. There is no embarrassment or shame in accepting what is a sensible resolution, a sensible amendment, and I submit that that is exactly what has been brought forward. I never imagined that there would be a problem with something as simple and central to the democratic process and noninterference as this series of amendments.

In this amendment we also see another slight to the volunteer community that otherwise would serve on the board of directors, and that is the issue of not allowing them to elect their own member from in and among themselves. I don't see what the difficulty here is quite frankly, and I don't think the Municipal Affairs minister does either, judging by his reaction. I'm sure he doesn't. What we have is a screening process that I would like to believe has already taken into account how to bring people on to this and other boards who have the talents, the abilities, the skills, the familiarity, the background, the experience in these many areas to help accomplish the purposes of that particular board and that foundation. If that screening process works and works well, then I suggest that the logical extension of that is that so too can that group of very talented volunteer individuals choose from themselves who should be their chairperson, who should be their vice-chair. To suggest anything to the contrary, Mr. Chairman,

is to suggest that they must legislate who the chairperson must be, they must legislate who the vice-chair must be because there's a lack of trust or because there's something wrong, something flawed in the process of the appointments to begin with. I don't believe that. I would like to think that the process is much more refined than is being suggested.

These foundations have been around for approximately 15 years, perhaps a little bit more in the case of the RP and W Foundation, and I think that foundation has stood well in the community. It has been revered for the work it's done. It has been saluted from every standpoint, and there's a reason why a foundation such as the RP and W has succeeded to that extent and has attracted the accolades. It's because instead of doing the politically correct things, instead of making politically sensitive decisions, they just made the right decisions. They weren't interfered with, Mr. Chairman, and here's an opportunity for them to have the best of both worlds, for the government to still have somebody on there.

I can understand that there's a need for a liaison in the communication. I have no problem with that, but you don't need to put it into the legislation package, and that's what drives this argument for me. To suggest that they don't even trust the members on the foundation to elect their own chairperson I really think is a slap in the face to the many, many volunteers who are there. It also suggests that there might be some other motive for them doing that, and that might be that perhaps they might see the MLA chairing this at some point. I mean, we already have a tremendous amount of inequities with the application of some of these particular affairs. I want to just comment briefly on the process of grant allocations. Can anybody on that side of the House tell me that the process of grant allocations will be any different with or without an MLA sitting on that committee? Of course it will be. We already have significant evidence here showing that grants are received on a much larger and perhaps more frequent basis in Conservative held ridings than in non-Conservative held ridings. That's not something that I think the government has acted on quickly enough to try and correct. There are grants in smaller amounts coming to other ridings, as we all know, but here you have the opportunity to get away from that notion of political interference, and that opportunity is not being taken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. members, could you bear with us and let us all hear the words of the Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

9:30

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you. It's an issue, Mr. Chairman, of accountability. These Crown corporations already present significant opportunities for politicians to become involved through things like cheque presentations in their own ridings. I look forward to the day when the minister calls me up and says, "Gee, we have a grant coming to a group in your constituency, and I'd like you to at least be present when the cheque is presented." That would show a nice openness to the government.

I think the whole issue of accountability is further addressed with the fact that there seems to be very, very little, if any, debate here in the House on the process involved with these rather, shall I say, sometimes superficial allotments and renderings. Any association that has some constructive alternatives should be allowed some vehicle through which to express those alternatives. Mr. Chairman, on this side of the House we have tried very hard to convince this government of a very simple amendment that would protect that due process, on the one hand, and at the same time would, I hope, put up a cautionary flag where we see them heading into an area that we know can be volatile, we know can

be dangerous, and we know should be avoided at all costs. It's a very simple set of amendments calling for a very sobering look, as I've said, and I would hope that members opposite would embrace the notice of amendment as presented.

I'll sum this up, then, by formally moving, if I might, that Bill 2 be amended in section 2(1) by striking out

the Lieutenant Governor in Council, among whom there must be one member of the Legislative Assembly and one employee of the Government who is under the administration of the Minister and substituting in its place

an all-party committee of the Legislative Assembly.

Thereafter we see some housekeeping items that are in line with that first amendment. In section 2(2) I would move that we strike out "The Lieutenant Governor in Council" and substitute in its place "The Minister".

In this amendment I would suggest that in section 2(3) we substitute "The Foundation shall elect one of the members of the Foundation as Chair, and one other Foundation member as Vice-Chair" in place of what's there in 2(3).

Finally, I would humbly ask that all members here support the final point on this amendment page by striking out in section 2(4) "The Lieutenant Governor in Council" and substituting "The Minister."

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Edmonton-Avonmore has moved that the amendments to section 2(1), 2(2), 2(3), and 2(4) of Bill 2 be moved now. Are you ready for the question on the amendment?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question has been called. All those in favour of the amendment, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Defeated. Call in the members.

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:34 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

For the motion:

Beniuk	Hanson	Percy
Collingwood	Langevin	Soetaert
Dickson	Leibovici	Wickman
Germain	Nicol	Zwozdesky

Against the motion:

Ady	Forsyth	McFarland
Amery	Gordon	Mirosh
Black	Havelock	Oberg
Brassard	Herard	Paszkowski
Burgener	Hierath	Pham
Calahasen	Hlady	Renner
Cardinal	Jacques	Smith
Clegg	Jonson	Sohal
Day	Laing	Taylor, L.

Doerksen	Lund	Thurber
Dunford	Magnus	West
Evans	Mar	Woloshyn
Fischer		

Totals: For – 12 Against – 37

[Motion on amendment lost]

MR. DAY: Well, Mr. Chairman, speaking back to the Bill, actually, and to the process, it's been interesting. History has actually been made here tonight. History has been made. Since the years I've been in here, this is the first night I have heard at length praise by an opposition member for the Member for Barrhead-Westlock, and it's well-deserved praise. I want to emphasize that. As for the Member for Barrhead-Westlock, I want to make it clear, I come not to bury him but to praise him. This was remarkable tonight. I don't know if the Member for Edmonton-Norwood is looking for a lottery ticket centre in his riding or whatever it might be, but that's history-making, and we're very warmed by that.

I'd like to say in terms of the process for anybody who may be uninitiated in this process – and that would be the four people in the province who read *Hansard* – they should know that there's a point of process going on here and it is a measure of the maturity of debate, because when you're in a debate and in fact you've made your point and you've made it clearly and you know that it's not going to be accepted, you wait for the day when you can prove that you were right and the government was wrong. But what do we see here? We see the most basic of housekeeping, amalgamating type Bills. One of the most basic you'll see, a nonsubstantive Bill, and what do we see? We see a classic filibuster. We see everybody speaking on one amendment, and then we see three more amendments coming. It's going to be the same type of thing.

We also hear shrieking from the opposite members. We were polite and listened to them and didn't shriek, but we get the shrieking back. They say this is without precedent. There are MLAs who sit on the Northlands board, who sit on the Remington museum board, who sit on Syncrude: all have major financial decisions to make. The Remington board – I already said that one – the Historical Society, on and on we go.

Mr. Chairman, given the fact that to continue this at this particular hour of the evening would only be to play party to a mindless game, I move we adjourn debate on Bill 2.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader has moved that we adjourn debate on committee stage of Bill 2. All those in favour, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carried.

Bill 4

Employment Standards Code Amendment Act, 1994

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of Labour wishes to make some comments relative to this stage of his Bill.

MR. DAY: Very briefly, Mr. Chairman, because again this is a fairly basic Bill. What it does is liberate employees in the province. We've already talked about that. It goes after delinquent employers. It makes them pay. It even has jurisdictional abilities to go to other jurisdictions. I think what we're seeing here is another filibuster. I think we're going to see members opposite – I'm hoping I'm wrong – just mindlessly opposing.

We're going to see lineups of employees still continue. We're going to see some small percentage of employers continue to abuse employees. I've stated very clearly and very succinctly that there is not going to be any charging of fees to employees who are filing complaints or wanting investigations. That particular section deals with vexatious and with abusers, and that's the amount.

So I'm hoping that we'll see this debate quickly conclude on Bill 4.

9:50

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before calling on Edmonton-Meadowlark, I would remind members and remind the chairman as well that in fact we have an amendment as proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, and that is what we are debating now. The amendment, if you recall, was to amend section 6 by striking out sections 76(h) and 76(k).

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark, are you speaking on the amendment?

MS LEBOVICI: Of course I'm speaking on the amendment. [interjections] Is there a problem? There seems to be. I'm not going to digress at all from the amendment or from Bill 4, because I think that would be totally inappropriate and not at all something that the Chair would tolerate.

One of the comments that the hon. House leader stated really I think hits to the heart of what we as the Official Opposition are doing. He seems to be almost afraid of a filibuster, and he seems to be throwing that word around with a lot of disrespect. What we have right now is not a filibuster, but it's reasoned debate. My colleague from Edmonton-Avonmore has put forward amendments, the amendments that were just defeated, and I'm sure that the Alberta public will be more than ready and willing and able to make judgment as to the appropriateness of our amendments and the defeat of those amendments. The subsequent defeat of the amendments was very simply to ensure that the PORK politics that we've seen in this province do not continue. Just for clarification, PORK does stand for Pals of Ralph Klein. So I would like to make sure that what we are seeing right now is not any attempt to undermine the democratic process within this province, and that is unfortunately the reading that I received from the House leader.

In conversations that I have had with the House leader and vice versa, I thought I made my concerns very clear with regards to this particular Bill and the amendments that we put forward in good faith. If the House leader determines that that was not in good faith, then I guess that is something that he should put forward and then we can have a point of order on it. I would, however, give the House leader the benefit of the doubt that in effect he recognizes that we are performing our role as the loyal opposition.

The amendments that were put forward dealt with sections 76(h) and (k), and what they dealt with was the area within the amendments to the Employment Standards Code specifically with regards to

- authorizing the Director to charge fees for the purpose of recovering all or part of the costs of the Government in administering . . .
- without limitation, costs related to
 - (i) conducting audits . . .
 - (ii) the filing of complaints . . .
 - (iii) the investigation and mediation of complaints,

- (iv) the processing of appeals,
- (v) the issuing of documents,
- (vi) the filing, registering and enforcing of orders, and
- (vii) the provision of other materials or services by the Government,

and that the director then would be able to figure out somehow who is liable to pay for those particular services, the amount, and the manner in which this is to be paid and/or recovered.

Now, the Minister of Labour seems to want to put within this particular Act the fact that if it is a vexatious or frivolous complaint, then this particular section, 76(h), kicks in. My comments are and the amendments address the fact that if that is the intent of the minister, to only deal with vexatious or frivolous complaints, then this particular section should address that and only that. He should not leave it to say "without limitation," which is what it says right now.

The Minister of Labour indicated in his opening comments that we are, I guess as he would like to call it, filibustering this particular Act. I would like to say that we are trying to improve the conditions within this Act to ensure that there are no fees.

Point of Order Questioning a Member

MR. DAY: A point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. member, the Government House Leader is rising on a point of order.

MR. DAY: Actually, according to the rules of debate, I'm simply rising to ask if the member opposite would entertain a brief question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Edmonton-Meadowlark, are you prepared to entertain a question at this time?

MS LEBOVICI: Sure.

MR. DAY: Thank you. I'm going to assume sincerity on the part of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark in terms of this question about employees possibly being charged. The question is this, Mr. Chairman. If I were to demonstrate that the regulations would be given consideration in terms of drafting this protection in and in fact make sure that the regulations would be such that could be accommodated and agreed to by members opposite and do that by in fact myself bringing in an amendment saying that the Act would not come into force until proclamation and waiting until the regs are in place and then proclamation to address these concerns – because I don't want to get into the whole debate again about legislation before regulations. I'm publicly saying that I'll stand by my remarks, address those concerns, and bring in an amendment saying that the Act would come into force on proclamation. That should handle it, and I've said it publicly. Would the member agree to that and move on with the vote on her amendment?

MS LEBOVICI: I appreciate the sincerity of the Minister of Labour, but the problem with that – and we've seen that with the Safety Codes Act. It's taken three years for that Act to be proclaimed, and in the meantime the regulations, orders in council, et cetera, that can occur are not subject to debate within the House. I don't think we are in disagreement in terms of what the intent of this particular Act is. I think what the disagreement is is whether it should be within the Act or within the regulations. Within the Act it allows for public debate. The regulations do not allow for public debate. The Act provides for a broader frame-

work than I think is required to allow the minister to institute the kinds of fees that he is looking at providing to those people who are vexatious or frivolous. So again I think I would rather see that those exclusions, if they are exclusions, or the specifics, if they are specifics, are within the Act itself. I can't address the importance of that point enough. Having dealt with labour negotiations both on the union side and on the management side of a bargaining table, you do not put anything within a collective agreement that you will later regret or that you wish to take out at a later point in time.

What the Act provides for is a structure, a framework. It is a barebones document and should therefore not provide for the kinds of specifics that we are seeing in here. That can be addressed within the regulations but within the framework, and if the framework is only to deal with vexatious and frivolous complaints, if that is what we are looking at in terms of cost recovery, then I will state publicly that I do not have a problem with that. I think that is not contrary to what the intent of the provision of services is to individuals who are accessing employment standards. But again that is not what this particular piece of legislation is providing for.

If this is what the framework is, then let's set it out. Let's make the amendments that say, "Notwithstanding the above, this will only apply to vexatious or frivolous complaints," or let's make it subject to section 92(4)(a) or (b), et cetera, or let's look at the amendments that we have proposed. Again, I do not think we are in disagreement in terms of what the intent is, but we are in disagreement with regards to the language that's provided within this Act.

Debate Continued

MS LEIBOVICI: The Minister of Labour has indicated – and I'd like to correct this statement – that by addressing this particular issue we are slowing down the process of providing services to people who are wishing to access the services of employment standards. I would like to correct that, in that we are not slowing down services; the services are still being provided at this point in time. If anything, we're slowing down the levying of an additional tax on people who may potentially be using these services. So there is a difference with regards to opinion on that clause.

I think I will now allow other members within the opposition to address this particular issue.

10:00

MR. DAY: Well, it's nice that you would allow the members. Actually, the Chair determines that, and the usual process is back and forth, but I appreciate the gesture to your own members.

Well, I've stated clearly not only the intent but what the government is prepared to do to demonstrate the intent. That's still not acceptable. Given the hour, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill 4.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Government House Leader has moved that we now adjourn debate on Bill 4 and the amendment we still have before us. All those in favour of this motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move the committee do rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. SOHAL: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports progress on the following: Bill 2 and Bill 4. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Assembly concur in this report? All those who agree, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Carried. So ordered.

head: **Government Bills and Orders**
head: **Second Reading**

Bill 11 Dairy Industry Amendment Act, 1994

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it certainly gives me pleasure to speak to Bill 11, the Dairy Industry Amendment Act.

With the amendment to the industry Act we would propose that sections 31 and 35 be repealed. Section 31 requires the dairy manufacturers' plant to post security to cover the value of producers' milk shipped prior to payment. Section 35 outlines how payments are to be made in the event of producer claims. Repeal of sections 31 and 35 removes the Alberta public from the liability of payment to producers in the event of a processor bankruptcy.

Section 58 is amended to accommodate an industry-initiated security to be set up by processors and producers or indeed both. At present bonding provided by the dairy processing industry is approximately \$250,000, which is a fraction of the \$26 million value of milk delivered to processors between payments. Negotiations to obtain producer security have taken place for two years without the processing industry agreeing to provide adequate security. No movement will take place to resolve this issue as long as government is carrying the liability for any potential shortfall. Following the legislative change to remove the public from the liability for producer security, the department and the Dairy Control Board can help facilitate a process to find a solution that is agreeable to the entire industry. The legislative change comes into effect on proclamation. Therefore, the present producer security remains in place, giving the industry time to reach a proper solution, so we're not creating a scenario whereby there is no coverage and the security isn't there. We're going to allow for proper consultation to take place before the enactment of this piece of legislation.

I would ask that everyone support this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to address the amendments to the Dairy Industry Act as proposed by the minister.

What we find here is basically a Bill which is going to move the industry in the direction that the government has been telling us,

getting the government's involvement out of the industry, letting the industry operate under its own auspices and under its own control. I guess the issue that comes up is basically the idea that the process they're following is in terms of downloading again to the producers. I notice that one part of the amendment is to deal with making the potential bonding activities extend beyond the aspects of just the processing sector to include both the producers and the processors as a possible target for the levies. I would just like to have the minister explain the reaction of this from the producers' side.

The previous Bills were set up so that the taxpayer, through the government and the processors, was involved in the bonding of the payments due to the processors. Now we're seeing a transfer of that liability from the taxpayer over to the processors and potentially on to the producers themselves. We could see some instance here where we're just transferring from one set of the public on to another when we're in essence trying to make the processing sector itself more responsible, so the idea is that this Bill should be limited possibly just to the processing sector.

Other than that, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a movement in the right direction. With the appropriate redirection of the responsibilities, I think this is a Bill we should all work to support.

Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 11 read a second time]

Bill 12 Brand Amendment Act, 1994

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the hon. minister of agriculture moving second reading on behalf of Grande Prairie-Wapiti?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: I so do. Just to advise that indeed what this is going to do is allow for the consolidation of the branding process, whereby rather than revolve and have people apply for their brands once every four years, as we have in place today, it will allow for a permanency to the brand. The person will apply for the brand once in a lifetime. This of course will allow for the freedom of the producer, rather than having to keep reapplying on a revolving basis. It will also allow government to free up some of their staff to basically become more effective and more efficient. The flexibility is incorporated in this Bill that indeed if a person runs out of time, hasn't made the proper application, there will be a six-month stay period that will allow this to take place. In the process it provides us with some of the added efficiencies we're trying to incorporate into our governmental process. There will indeed be a saving of close to \$200,000 in this one move alone. That's something that's important to us when we're trying to develop our financial house as far as being financially responsible.

We've discussed this with the industry. The industry is totally supportive of this concept. As a matter of fact, this is something that is really being industry driven and something the industry has asked for, and we're simply responding to the industry. It fits the mode of our government and our needs as of today. So I would ask that the House support this Bill. It's one that will help the industry; it's one that streamlines government and one that fits the criteria of the day.

10:10

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to speak to the amendment to the Brand Amendment Act, 1994. This, I think, is a good move again. It's a movement that most of the members of the industry are willing to support. I think what we've got here is basically a Bill that will help to decrease the administrative costs of looking after the identification of animals across the province. Also, the extended time period is going to be of advantage to people. They won't have to deal with it on a regular cyclical basis. This also basically will provide everyone with an option to renew their commitment to their brand and to the identification process.

The issues that come up in connection with this Bill. In section 21(b) the minister has the option to make regulations. It states that the minister will have the opportunity to impose different fees based on "different categories of persons or services" being provided. This needs to be explained a little more in terms of how the regulations here might be applied. We can see options here where what you're going to have is a discriminatory or differentiated branding fee service. I think the budget we have been looking at that was presented on the 24th is indicating that the minister is intending to put a fee of \$200 on this through the regulation part of the process. I might suggest that that part of it be reviewed, but we'll deal with that when we get to the budget debates. It seems this is a much higher fee than what necessarily would be required. The historic fee has been \$25 for a four-year period and then a \$20 renewal fee each year after that. Two hundred dollars for a lifetime registration seems to be a little bit excessive in terms of that context when you look at the cost of a normal lifetime, maybe 30 to 40 years for the ownership of a brand.

The other issues. In terms of the implementation process, I would suggest that the \$200 registration fee or any registration fee should probably be prorated for persons who are in the latter part of their career as a farmer or rancher. The cost of a \$200 registration to a brand would seem to be excessive, so I would suggest that the minister may want to take into account some kind of prorated fee for people who are approaching retirement so they don't have a large lump fee to be put in place right at the end, maybe with only two or three years left in their planning horizon before retirement.

I guess the suggestion that comes out also in terms of the structure of the Bill – under the current process for brand renewal, every four years basically we have a mechanism in there to check and make sure that brands stay current. Under this process, if we have a brand owner who decides to sell out his cattle, they're all taken out, the brand is still registered to the previous owner, and the new owner rebrands under their own registered brand. That brand that the person going out of business has stays on the books as being held by that owner. I see no process in this Bill or indicated in the regulations where there would be a mechanism for the government to clear brands off as people went out of business, so I'd ask the minister basically to look at that part of the Bill and make sure it's either incorporated directly into the Bill through an amendment or else it shows up directly in the regulations part of the process.

Other than that, again, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a good Bill which the industry supports, and I think I'd recommend that the members support it as well.

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 12 read a second time]

Bill 13
Livestock Identification and Brand Inspection
Amendment Act, 1994

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an enabling Bill that allows the minister of agriculture to arrange agreement between neighbouring provinces that will break down a fee-structured trade barrier that currently exists. The Bill gives the minister of agriculture the authority to allow cattle that are in Alberta to leave the province to another inspected market in a neighbouring province without being inspected, thus incurring only one inspection fee. Currently no cattle can leave the province of Alberta without brand inspection and a fee for service, with the exception of markets at Dawson Creek and Lloydminster. The new legislation will allow the minister to designate any other market or markets in either a neighbouring province or even Manitoba and farther east.

The industry, such as the Alberta Cattle Commission, Auction Mart Association, cattle dealers, and the like, have always felt they were penalized for marketing their cattle in another province by the double inspection fee. Saskatchewan recognized this problem and designated some Alberta markets as points where Saskatchewan cattle could go and incur only one inspection fee. This resulted in a large number of other markets complaining that it was an unfair practice and a competitive edge for those designated markets. In recent times more markets were designated; however, this still did not satisfy others that were not so designated.

Each province will collect its own inspection fees at the inspected marketplace, therefore no significant revenue decreases will be realized in Alberta.

At present a total commitment to changing this duplication is under review by the livestock marketing services branch, and a committee has been struck by the four western provinces to work out the deficiencies in the current brand inspection service between the provinces. Their objectives are to standardize the policy and forms wherever possible and allow them to market their cattle anywhere for one inspection fee.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the Assembly to accept this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to address the issues of the amendments to the Livestock Identification and Brand Inspection Act. Basically, again this is an Act that I think is making changes. It allows the minister of agriculture to enter into negotiation and agreements with the other provinces. This is the approach the industry has asked for, and I think it brings about a good representation.

The issues that come up and the cautions, I guess, that would be directed to the minister in terms of the negotiations and the interests of Alberta livestock producers would be to make sure that some degree of control is maintained at the destination points.

This basically would bring the standards in the adjoining provinces up to the levels of inspection we have here in Alberta, which are generally above those in the adjoining provinces. So basically it's more a matter of making sure that the integrity of the system is not jeopardized as these negotiations are carried out and that Alberta producers, our cattle owners, are looked after in terms of the ability to control the movement of their livestock and the identification of livestock being sold for slaughter in other provinces. Basically this becomes a jurisdiction issue in terms of how the authority is allocated for livestock moved out, who gets to inspect the brands, who gets to in essence challenge whether or not the brand is legitimate. So I would just basically ask that these kinds of things be taken into consideration as the minister enters into negotiations with our adjoining provinces.

Thank you.

10:20

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have listened to the comments from my colleague from Lethbridge-East and understand that Bill 13 represents a positive step and one the industry is looking for, but I have a specific concern. I know how seldom, when a statute is brought forward for a single amendment, how difficult or how unlikely it is that it will come back for other adjustments down the road. So I want to raise a concern and invite the government to consider some modification to this.

My concern relates specifically to matrimonial cases, or family law cases, where one of the partners in a marriage is attempting to attach the receipts from the sale of cattle. I've seen this to be actually a very problematic kind of issue. It's a situation where if it's a woman who's looking for support on an interim basis and her solicitor contacts the brand office in Stettler, there are difficulties, and there can't be a formal attachment of those moneys. I think it's something that ought to be resolved; it's something that can be resolved. I want to invite the minister responsible for the brands office in Stettler to look and see if there is not a means of being able to allow somebody pursuant to a proper court order in the appropriate circumstances to attach those funds as they come through the brands office. It can't be done now. I think it ought to be available in appropriate circumstances. I would hope that since we're opening up the Bill in any event and looking at this kind of amendment, it would be possible for the government, which has already gone on record as talking about the importance of being able to make sure support payments are enforced in an aggressive and consistent way – I think there's something that could be done here in terms of a modification to Bill 13 to address this important purpose and this important mischief.

Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 13 read a second time]

[At 10:25 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.]

