

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: **Monday, April 24, 1995**

1:30 p.m.

Date: 95/04/24

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

At the beginning of this week we ask You, Father, to renew and strengthen in us the awareness of our duty and privileges as members of this Legislature.

We ask You also in Your divine providence to bless and protect the Assembly and the province we are elected to serve.

Amen.

head: **Introduction of Visitors**

MR. ROSTAD: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly the ambassador of the Slovak Republic, His Excellency Anton Hykisch. The ambassador is accompanied by his wife, Eva Hykischova, Mr. Jozef Horský, the commercial counselor, and Mr. Ludo Zanzotto, the honorary consul of Slovakia in Alberta. His Excellency was appointed ambassador to Canada in January of 1993. This is his first official visit to our province. We're pleased to receive the ambassador at this point in the Slovak Republic's history. Slovakia emerged as an independent country only two years ago and has shown strong interest in forging close ties with the west. Alberta is interested in furthering trade and investment ties with the emerging market economies of central and eastern Europe, and we welcome the ambassador's visit in this spirit. I'd also like to recognize the important role played by the Slovakian consul in Calgary, Mr. Zanzotto. I would ask that the ambassador and party rise in the gallery and receive the warm recognition of the Assembly.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert.

MRS. SOETAERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table a petition signed by 1,397 residents of Alberta petitioning the Legislative Assembly to

1. De-insure the performance of induced abortion under the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan Act.
2. Use the community-based resources that are already in place that offer positive alternatives to abortion.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to file a petition with 6,944 signatures calling on the Legislature to amend the Planning Act and the Municipal Government Act to give municipalities authority . . . to prohibit all performances in live peep shows.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I have copies of all the petitions that were just filed by the hon. member. What should I do with these? You don't need a double filing; do you?

THE SPEAKER: No.

MR. KLEIN: Okay. Thanks.

head: **Notices of Motions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MS HANSON: That's right, sir, yes. I would like to move Standing Order 40 on the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation. Last week marked the 25th anniversary of the founding of the church corporation, and since we were unable to pay tribute to this important occasion in the House during Easter recess, it's incumbent upon us as legislators to recognize this remarkable organization.

head: **Introduction of Bills**

Bill 31 Securities Amendment Act, 1995

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 31, the Securities Amendment Act, 1995. This being a money Bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this Bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, what Bill 31 does is update our securities legislation to accommodate the needs of our rapidly changing capital markets.

[Leave granted; Bill 31 read a first time]

Bill 37 School Amendment Act, 1995

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 37, the School Amendment Act, 1995.

Mr. Speaker, many of the amendments being introduced today are of a nature designed to correct some of the cross-references and to make some adjustments necessary to the implementation of the government's plan for the restructuring and refinancing of education. Other amendments relate to the outcome of the extensive public consultation completed by the MLA implementation teams since the passage of the 1994 legislation.

[Leave granted; Bill 37 read a first time]

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to table a letter from Mr. Mohammad Khorrami from Killam, Alberta. He asked me to bring this letter to the Premier's attention. It raises his concerns about health care restructuring in the province.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Career Development.

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I introduce to you and to members of the Assembly Mrs. Sophie Luchkovich and members of her family. I had the privilege along with the Lieutenant Governor and other members of the Assembly today of presenting a commemorative poster and a book to Mrs. Luchkovich on behalf of the people of Alberta in honour of her

late husband, Michael Luchkovich, to recognize his accomplishments in enhancing the understanding of contributions made by Canadians of Ukrainian heritage.

I would ask Mrs. Luchkovich and her family to please stand as I call their names. First of all, Mrs. Sophie Luchkovich; her son Myron Lusk; her daughter Carol Brown and her husband, Doug, and their daughter Rene; her grandson Desmond Luchkovich and his wife, Paulette, and their children Angela and Amy; her grandson Gregory Lusk and his wife, Jean; her granddaughter Brenda Chalifoux. Also accompanying the Luchkovich family is Michael Kostek, chairman of the Luchkovich selection committee for the scholarship fund, also Leon Lubin, director of the Alberta heritage scholarship fund, Peter Savaryn, who originally proposed Michael Luchkovich for the scholarship, and Walter Sharek and Bill Chmiliar. I ask all members to give the Luchkovich family and those accompanying them the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce a family that is visiting the Legislature today as part of their vacation, a family from my constituency of Cardston-Chief Mountain, the family of Lynn McClung, who works for the Raymond irrigation district, his wife, Sandra McClung, their daughter Olivia and sons Sterling and Bradshaw. They're seated in the gallery, and I would ask them to please rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

1:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you. I'm honoured today to make one introduction, sir. I'm pleased to introduce Mr. Walter Szwender, who is a former Edmonton MLA, who is seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Szwender is accompanied today by Amanda Fortier. Amanda is a gold medal winner, three gold medals, at the Canada Winter Games in Grande Prairie. Mr. Szwender is also accompanied by his class from Austin O'Brien school in the constituency of Edmonton-Gold Bar, 47 students. They're sitting in the public gallery. Part of the group of students are 10 students who are on an exchange program from Yamato city in Japan. I'd ask the members of the Legislature to welcome Mr. Szwender and Miss Fortier and the class from Austin O'Brien.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly 47 bright-eyed, enthusiastic students from St. Teresa, that great school in the riding of Edmonton-Rutherford. These 47 students, who are seated in the members' gallery, are accompanied by teachers Charles Stuart, Jackie Dahlen, Danielle Sisson, and by six parents: Eleanor McLaughlin, Cathy Tunis, Connie Fisher, Susan Lefebvre, Bob Patershuk, and Adela Tarnowski. I would ask all members of the House to please give a warm, enthusiastic welcome as those adults and students stand and receive the greeting.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-St. Paul.

MR. LANGEVIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a very fine couple from Edmonton. They mean a lot to me because in fact they are the grandparents of my children. They are constituents of the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar. In fact, I think they did give the hon. member their support in the last election, and only during the last year have I realized that they're becoming very, very independent now. Today they are accompanied by their daughter, my wife, Juliette. I would like to ask my

father-in-law and mother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Amyotte from Edmonton, to stand.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce six citizens that are backing the petition I presented earlier, and maybe the minister of finance would like to meet them, because he was laughing at the time. The first one is a person representing violence against women on the social justice commission of the Catholic church, Leonie Ganske. The second is two people from the committee to control prostitution, Dorothy Tenkoppel and Tom Tomilson. The third group is Citizens for Decency, chaired by Audrey Jensen. The fourth is the chairperson of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints relief society, Phyllis Jones, and lastly Doug Pruden, representing Edmonton youth. If they'd all stand and get the greeting from the Legislature.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Leduc.

MR. KIRKLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and the rest of the members of the Assembly this afternoon two very bright and articulate students that are job shadowing their MLA today. They are also sharing their fresh knowledge and expertise with me. I would ask the Assembly to welcome Tracy Lachine, a resident of Leduc, and Candice Molson, a resident of the county of Leduc, who lives on a dairy farm with her family. I'd ask all members to give them a warm welcome this afternoon.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

DR. PERCY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to members of the Legislature Dr. Ron and Mrs. Jean Dickson, who are visiting the Legislature from Calgary. They're also the proud parents of my hon. colleague from Calgary-Buffalo. I would ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of the House. They're seated in the public gallery.

head:

Oral Question Period

Health Care System

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, over the past several months thousands of doctors and other health care professionals have spoken out against the chaos in health care. The head of the Alberta Medical Association has called for a moratorium on health care cuts. Just last week Bud McCaig, the head of the Calgary regional health authority, said that it's time to slow down the cutting and assess the damage to health care. To the Premier: when will the Premier listen to the people of Alberta who are saying: stop the cuts now, and assess the damage already done before you go any further?

MR. KLEIN: What I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the Minister of Health has put in place a system to monitor the restructuring now taking place in health care. Our commitment is to ensure that there will be quality health care, accessible health care in a restructured system that we can all afford.

MR. MITCHELL: Quality American health care.

With doctors telling the Premier to slow down and assess, with nurses, with other health care professionals, with patients, with

strong indication in the polls that Albertans are very concerned about the cuts, who exactly, Mr. Premier, is telling you to continue cutting and to keep slashing?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I prefer to call what we are doing restructuring and rationalizing, and indeed that is taking place. You know, I had the opportunity with a number of my colleagues to tour the Foothills hospital in Calgary on Friday, and to see the remarkable things that are going on in that hospital is indeed a sight to behold and to talk to the doctors and to talk to the health care professionals, many of whom say that what we are doing has to be done, perhaps should have been done some time ago, and that, yes, they all recognize there are some tough times.

Just yesterday I had the opportunity of also touring the Glenrose rehab centre. Again, the same comments: yes, we understand that these things have to be done; there has to be some rationalization. Well, there are some remarkable things going on at the Glenrose hospital. You know, that hospital is connected by a tunnel to the Royal Alex. I was told that there was a duplication of food services, that there was a duplication of laundry services, that there was a duplication of a number of services. Finally, these two institutions are now getting together to share the costs of these services and to rationalize these services. That is the kind of thing that is taking place.

Unfortunately, we don't read and hear about the co-operation that is now starting to occur amongst the health care professionals and the support staff. What we're hearing are the kinds of things that so unfortunately are being spread maliciously and without any thought or any consideration for the welfare of patients by the Liberals across the way.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, Bud McCaig isn't being malicious, and he's not . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, who says that the cuts are not his responsibility, that they're the regional health authority's responsibility: why won't he at least listen to his friend and trusted adviser Bud McCaig, to whom he's given the responsibility for cuts in Calgary and who is saying very clearly that the Premier has gone too far too fast?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity last week of having a nice chat on the telephone with Bud McCaig. I didn't phone him; he phoned me to clarify his remarks. I can tell you precisely what he said. Indeed the headline did not reflect the story. Relative to the Calgary regional health authority, he said that they are on target and that the restructuring is going quite well, notwithstanding the malicious kind of misinformation being spread out there by the Liberal Party. Now, those are my words, not Bud's words.

MR. N. TAYLOR: We didn't write the headline.

MR. KLEIN: No, no.

Mr. Speaker, he said that, yes, he has concerns, not about this year but about next year. As the Liberals well know and much to their chagrin, we have tabled our last deficit budget. As I've said, in ensuing years, providing these people never take over the government, we will be generating surpluses in this province. We'll be able to talk about the very challenging and the very

positive aspects of how we're going to reinvest in our communities, how we're going to reinvest in human and physical infrastructure, where we're going to put our money, but to make sure that wherever we spend our money, we do it smart.

1:50 Special Places 2000

MR. MITCHELL: Last week, Mr. Speaker, the international World Wildlife Fund gave this government an F, a failing grade, for protection of our wilderness heritage, the first F it has ever given to a Canadian province. Protecting biodiversity and the gene pool are extremely important reasons for saving our natural heritage. So is tourism, Alberta's fourth largest economic sector. To the Premier: as it says in his own Special Places 2000 document, "The reputation of this province . . . is important to its future," what is this government doing to get rid of the F that is damaging our international reputation?

MR. KLEIN: You know, Mr. Speaker, nobody likes to get an F, and as I've said, I guess we've got no place to go but up and to get better. Indeed I feel that the mark was somewhat unwarranted because we're just getting into this program. As I explained to the media last week, this is Special Places 2000; this is not Special Places 1995. I think that the minister is doing a commendable job in trying to bring all the stakeholders together to do something that is reasonable and something that is sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment relative to this province's environmental record. Believe me; it is indeed second to none in this country. We have the most comprehensive environmental laws in place. We were the first jurisdiction in this country, perhaps in the world, to introduce policies that say basically that we must use the highest achievable standards relative to effluent from pulp mills and other industries. This is a very narrow issue as it relates to ecological areas. Believe me; the minister will be working in the years to come with all the stakeholder groups and the World Wildlife Fund to make sure that what we do is the right thing to do.

MR. MITCHELL: It is second to none, Mr. Speaker. No one has . . .

THE SPEAKER: Order.

MR. MITCHELL: With an increasing number of national and international tourists searching for ecotourism experiences, why won't the Premier revise his special places policy to ensure that oil rigs and clear-cuts don't ruin our so-called protected areas?

MR. KLEIN: That's precisely what we're trying to do. We're trying to make sure that whatever is done is done in a sustainable manner. Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding that opinion – and that's what it is; it's the opinion of one organization, the World Wildlife Fund – this is a beautiful province to visit, and I would hope that the Liberals would be out talking about the beauty and the sustainability of this province. I would hope that they would be out there talking about what is right with this province rather than being out there spreading fear and false rumours and putting out misinformation as to what this beautiful province is all about.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the government's own advisory committee, headed up by none other than the Conservative MLA for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, after public consultation recommended that the priority of the Special Places 2000 program should be the

goal of environmental protection. How is economic development in special places in this province consistent with environmental protection? Answer that, would you, Mr. Premier?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, as this hon. member knows so very, very well, because he was the environment critic when I was minister of the environment, the primary objective of this province relative to environmental protection is to achieve sustainable development, and that's exactly what the minister is trying to do through Special Places 2000.

Once again, I would remind the hon. member that this is not Special Places 1995. It's not going to happen this year. Some of it has already happened. I believe some 29 ecological areas have now been named. Others will be named in the not too distant future. Yes, there are some areas that are very difficult to work with because this involves private ownership. It involves areas that perhaps can be developed and developed in an environmentally sensitive manner, and these things have to be worked out, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that the World Wildlife Fund will come to that understanding and that recognition as the minister continues to work with the fund and other stakeholders to resolve this difficult issue.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Fort McMurray.

Health Care System *(continued)*

MR. GERMAIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday Fort McMurray doctors withdrew their services from committee work at the regional health care authority. They claim that the health care authority does not listen to their health care concerns. They are also afraid that health care workers who bring concerns to the government's attention end up getting fired. My questions therefore today are directed to the Premier of this province. Mr. Premier, stand up, please, in this Assembly and tell us what your emergency standby plan is if the withdrawal of medical services in Alberta escalates.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the question is a very hypothetical one, and I have found that it's usually not appropriate under any circumstance to answer a question that begins with "if." There is no indication that there is going to be a withdrawal of medical services. As I understand it, the medical professionals in Fort McMurray have said that they do not want to participate on advisory committees relative to the activities of the regional health authority in that municipal district.

Mr. Speaker, what I would ask and urge and plead with the health care professionals is that now is not the time to abandon the process; now is really the time to work with the authority and see this thing through. There is reason for not having health care professionals on the boards at this time. These boards do deal with situations that directly affect doctors and nurses, especially in salary negotiations and so on, and it is perceived that there would be a conflict of interest, but we do very much want these people to serve the RHAs in an advisory role.

MR. GERMAIN: Why would it be a conflict of interest, Mr. Premier, for doctors to make constructive criticism but not a conflict of interest for your medical friends to tell you to privatize some health care aspects?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. WHITE: It's a tough question.

MR. KLEIN: No, it's not a tough question.

We want the doctors and other health care professionals to be very involved in the restructuring, and the RHAs will listen to these doctors if there is a problem relative to the doctors saying that they are not being listened to. I'm sure that the minister will be very, very happy to sit down with representatives of the RHA and the medical profession to see if we can iron this out. My answer still remains the same, and that is that I would urge these people, these good-thinking people, to really put their differences behind them and get together with the RHA and see if we can work this thing out.

2:00

MR. GERMAIN: Well, would the Premier, then, confirm that it is indeed a conflict for doctors to want to buy parts of the health care system?

MR. KLEIN: Well, I don't know, and that's what I'm saying: we don't know. [interjections] No. If the Liberals have the answer, please let us know. What do they feel about this issue? They have never answered the question, Mr. Speaker. Never have they answered the question. I would put the question to the hon. leader of the Liberal opposition: would he stand up outside the House or inside the House and say that the Gimbel eye clinic, for instance, as it now operates should shut down and be abandoned? Will he stand up and say that?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Special Places 2000 *(continued)*

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. Again, my question is with regard to the World Wildlife Fund's annual report. Albertans expect this government and specifically the Minister of Environmental Protection to act as responsible stewards of the environment. It appears from this report that we are falling short. Would the minister please explain to the Legislature what this F actually means?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, the World Wildlife Fund was dealing with the protected areas in the report. They were not dealing with the very high standards that we have in the control of emissions and in fact the abundance of clean water, clean air, and good land that we are protecting in this province. They were dealing with the protected areas. I guess it was somewhat of concern to us because in fact we do have more land set aside than either Saskatchewan or Manitoba. It seems as though there was no recognition given to the 29 sites that we have just announced under the special places program, the 90,000 acres, three-quarters of which are protected. They will not have any kind of development on them. So it was very discouraging to see that those were not recognized.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. LAING: Thank you. To the same minister: with respect to special places, what is the next process that we will follow?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, this program of course was a made-in-Alberta program. It's going to involve all Albertans.

We are inviting the World Wildlife Fund to participate along with all other stakeholders and interested groups. The process is outlined within the document. We will be moving ahead with that. Our objective is that we would by the end of '98 have all 20 subregions covered under the program. In fact, the World Wildlife Fund does acknowledge that Alberta is setting a very, very ambitious program and will be the first province in Canada to complete the endangered spaces program.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. LAING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: is the Alberta process for special places the only one which involves local nomination of sites?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. minister.

MR. LUND: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, this is a made-in-Alberta program. It's one that will involve all Albertans. It's extremely important that we have the buy-in from all of the stakeholders, and the local committees play an extremely important role in this process. Yes, it is the only province that has that type of an approval process, but it is so important that we get the local people buying into the nomination and the designation. That's how it will work.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

Health Care System

(continued)

MR. SAPERS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is trying to sell two-tiered health care on the basis of offering Albertans more choice, but the only choice that Mr. Robert Irvine of High River had was to pay \$1,000 out of his pocket for necessary eye surgery in a private clinic. That's because the surgery wasn't available in any public hospital. Without the surgery scar tissue would permanently restrict Mr. Irvine's eyesight. To the Premier: why will Alberta Health pay the doctor's fee but not the facility fee for this medically necessary surgery which is only available in private clinics?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to be more specific as to which clinic it was. I would like the hon. member to advise me as to the kind of special equipment that had to be acquired by the particular doctor in question. I would like the hon. member to tell me what kinds of capital costs were put into the facility to offer this very special treatment. I would ask him to answer the question – if he wants to do it here, he'd be welcome to do so – that I put to the hon. member of the Liberal opposition in a very general way: would he want to see the Gimbel eye clinic as it now operates closed down? Will they stand up and say that publicly?

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Speaker, I'll table for the Premier copies of correspondence, including copies of a letter from Alberta Health, which will answer some of those questions. Maybe after the next election he'll have a better chance to ask more questions.

In any case, maybe the Premier will explain what it is that Albertans who need this surgery but don't have a thousand dollars are supposed to do to retain their vision.

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member well knows, there are clinics now operating in this province. The Gimbel eye

clinic is well known, well known internationally by the way, for offering a certain procedure, a very successful procedure for the treatment of cataracts. It is well known that this facility charges a facility fee. That's to cover the capital cost of the very special equipment that is required for this operation plus the facility itself. This is fundamental to the question that is now being asked of the federal government. What is essential; what isn't essential? What is allowed; what isn't allowed? My answer is: we don't know.

MR. SAPERS: Mr. Irvine's case, by the way, Mr. Speaker, has nothing to do with the Gimbel Eye Centre.

Maybe the Premier can answer this way, if he understands the difference. Alberta Health paid the surgeon's fee, Mr. Premier, and that's because the surgery was considered to be medically necessary. Why won't Alberta Health pay for the total cost if it's medically necessary?

MR. KLEIN: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to answer the question without knowing the circumstances as to the extent this particular doctor or these doctors have gone to to provide and pay for out of their pockets the very special equipment and facilities that are required for the procedure. I don't know, because the hon. member won't provide me with the information.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

Kindergarten Programs

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Education. Last Wednesday in my constituency there was an ECS forum that was held by zone 6 of the Alberta School Boards Association where we were discussing the document that is entitled Draft Kindergarten Program Statement 1995. The people in attendance liked the specifics in the document, and in fact there was near unanimous support for the principles that were outlined. My question to the minister is: beyond zone 6 what is the general response to this document?

2:10

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the draft program document has, I think, been generally well received across the province, and as the hon. member has pointed out, the specificity or the definite direction in terms of outcomes is appreciated. A significant number of people have pointed out that a number of the outcomes in that paper could well be achieved in the home before students get to entering kindergarten. In fact, many people have found it very, very useful as a list of goals and outcomes that people could be working on with respect to their preparation for entry to ECS.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: regarding the document, the Draft Kindergarten Program Statement 1995, what is the next step in the process regarding this document?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, as with all of our programs of studies, documents, this has been prepared, circulated to schools across the province, to ECS operators, and I would hope that if anybody's been missed in that process, they would certainly contact us. We are open to any suggestions and adjustments as far as the wording and the specifics of the document are concerned. It is intended for application in September of 1995.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. DUNFORD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given that most professionals in the field doubt that the expectations of the document can be met in 240 hours and perhaps even in 400 hours, how does the minister plan to deal with this current conflict?

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, the program document is developed on the basis of the program statement being able to be covered within the 240 hours, which is going to be fully funded and accessible to all students in September. Certainly I think all members of the Assembly would agree that particularly in the early years the co-operation and support and teamwork of the school, the ECS programs, and the home are important, but we are quite confident that the objectives of that program statement can be achieved within the 240 hours.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Farm Income Program

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta farmers only have until April 30 to opt out of the GRIP without penalty. Producers who had a high proportion of feed wheat in 1993 feel their payout has not been adequately addressed under the GRIP termination options. This concern has been raised by a number of groups on their behalf as well. To the minister of agriculture: why is it that the minister refused to meet with Unifarm, the Alberta soft wheat producers, and the western Canadian wheat growers regarding their concerns over the conditions of elimination of the GRIP?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister of agriculture has not refused to meet with anyone at any time. Our door is always open, and it always will be. We have met with the western wheat growers. We've met with the soft white wheat growers. We have discussed the issue. I think the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East also understands very fully that the issue is now before the courts, and that sort of precludes any further meetings and any further discussions.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Speaker, the payout and the conditions are before the court. The termination of the GRIP is not before the court.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the minister of agriculture: will he agree to meet with these groups over the conditions of the termination of the GRIP program?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, the issue has been discussed. We are prepared to discuss it at any time, and that is always available providing of course that that is the issue they want to discuss. To date no one has requested a specific meeting on the issue of opting out of GRIP.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister of agriculture: would you be willing to provide a special provision to the feed wheat producers within the GRIP, as you did to the canola growers?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Well, I'm not aware that there is any special provision that was made to canola growers or to any group. To the best of my understanding this is a general policy that has been put forward, and there is no exemption made to canola growers or to any other special group.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Little Bow.

Logging on Private Land

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my constituents are responsibly harvesting some of the logs on their own private land. It's ironic to me that while some people think that a load of freshly cut and processed two by fours or two by sixes going down the highway is okay, it's an abhorrent sight to see a load of freshly cut logs going down. Because it's still an issue with some Albertans, my question is to the Minister of Environmental Protection. I would like to know if he has done anything recently to share or alleviate the concerns that they have with respect to private logging on private land.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Environmental Protection.

MR. LUND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is still a very important issue. To try to make sure that we have a clear understanding of the policies in other jurisdictions that might be affecting it, I did, along with some of my officials, visit the B.C. Minister of Forests last Friday. I thought it was very important that we emphasize that in fact the rate at which logs are being harvested and shipped to B.C. was something that was not sustainable in the long run and that we would hope there were not policies in place that were tipping the table in favour of the prices that are being paid. We felt that we wanted to impress on the minister that it was important that Alberta fibre was not being used to fulfill government policy on the other side of the line.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. McFARLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the B.C. Minister of Forests is sensitive to Alberta's situation, then has he demonstrated any willingness to work either with yourself or your officials to alleviate the problems with respect to the high demand from this province?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, we had a very good meeting with the minister, the Hon. Andrew Petter. He did agree to take a number of issues to the mills in B.C., the first being on the environmental side. We asked that they consider that where B.C. mills are buying logs from private land, they ensure that Alberta harvesting code practices be adhered to. The Alberta mills have agreed to do this, so we feel that that's an important step. The minister also elaborated on their employment protection Act, and in fact we felt we had a fair understanding that that Act was not going to be used as it determines the reduction in the annual allowable cut in B.C. They recognize that they have to reduce their annual allowable cut, but the minister assured us that they would be doing that on a regional basis and that they were not going to be implementing any kind of plan that would cause a mill to operate in a nonviable situation.

We feel that we had a very good discussion on their proposed remanufacturing plan. The minister assured us that he was not going to implement regulations, that in fact it was going to be a voluntary program, and that that should not affect our mills in

both Alberta and B.C. Mr. Speaker, we also discussed issues on transportation and how that could be impacted in leveling the playing field.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. McFARLAND: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: what will your next steps or your private logging task force's actions be with respect to the B.C. minister's commitment then?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, it's our intention that we will be continuing to have dialogue with the B.C. government, and our officials will be doing that as well as more directly between myself and the minister. We will be making a full report to the committee that our hon. Premier has set up to look at all of the issues and how we might deal with those into the future.

2:20 Young Offenders

MR. ZARIWNY: Mr. Speaker, Albertans are deeply concerned with violent youth crime, and this government is doing nothing to stop it. Also, the Conservative majority in the Senate is delaying the passage of Bill C-37, which could double the sentence for murder and allow for an easier transfer of young offenders to the adult court. Since the Conservatives started delaying the Bill, there have been two murders by accused young offenders in Alberta. My questions are to the minister. Why has the minister ignored the 37 recommendations presented to our Liberal young justice panel by Albertans on how the provincial government can reduce and eliminate youth crime?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Justice.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The majority of the recommendations that were in the Liberal task force report were already incorporated into the task force report that was done by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek and other members of government caucus. There were something in the neighbourhood of 25 or 26 of those recommendations, and we have implemented virtually all of those recommendations. I'm happy to provide the hon. member opposite with specific details on how we have implemented those recommendations.

Now, it must be understood, of course, Mr. Speaker, that the recommendations in the second report dealing with the administration of justice are the recommendations that we have authority over. Notwithstanding that, there were other recommendations made with respect to the Act itself, federal legislation, and I continue to work with my federal counterpart, the Minister of Justice, to see that those recommendations are implemented as well.

MR. ZARIWNY: Will the minister undertake to table the status report on those recommendations that he has said have been implemented, or is this another case where they listen and they do nothing?

MR. EVANS: I'm happy to table those recommendations and our response to them, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ZARIWNY: Since the minister likes getting involved in federal politics, will he talk to his Tory cousins and ask them to stop delaying the passage of Bill C-37, which toughens up the Young Offenders Act? [interjections]

MR. EVANS: Mr. Speaker, I try to speak over the great furor on the other side, but my voice is not very good today.

I would mention that anything that is happening in the Senate is separate and apart from anything that we would be doing here in the province of Alberta. I think the hon. member opposite would respect the division between the House of Commons and the Senate. [interjections] That just doesn't appear to be the case, Mr. Speaker. I have said . . . [interjections]

THE SPEAKER: Order. [interjections] Order. [interjections] Order.

MR. EVANS: I'm having a tough time speaking over this today, Mr. Speaker.

I've said publicly that although there are many other changes that should come with the Young Offenders Act, many of which were pointed out by the task force of the hon. Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, I support the recommended changes in Bill C-37 to impose greater sentences. Now, I've said that; we've made that position known. It's a start, Mr. Speaker, but it's only a start, and the Act comprehensively has to be reviewed. The federal Minister of Justice has confirmed that once C-37 is through, there will be a parliamentary committee that will go across this province and other provinces and territories seeking input from Canadians on a more comprehensive review and amendment to the Young Offenders Act.

So I've made my position clear. I agree with the hon. member opposite that C-37 in its current form should go ahead.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Pork Industry

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta's hog industry is a dynamic industry that has experienced fluctuation in price, production, and processing opportunity. I've had a number of inquiries in my constituency about all the factors and what they mean to the industry. Could the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development advise the House on the current status of Alberta's hog industry?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'm pleased to answer the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake. The hog industry is static in Alberta at the present time as far as production is concerned in that we haven't had the dramatic growth that indeed the opportunities that are out there present. However, we have good reason to believe that since prices have rebounded – in December of this past year we had a situation where indeed we had a very short time where we had a major oversupply. That's corrected itself; prices have strengthened again.

It's our feeling that with the changes that have come about as far as funding of WGTA is concerned, the opportunities are all there for a very dramatic rise as far as hog production in Alberta is concerned. The location of the province as far as strategic location to the major opportunity market, which is the Asian market, is certainly very key and very important. At this stage we're working closely with the hog producers in the province that are here today to see that we get the expansion that's out there as far as the market potential is concerned.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MS CALAHASEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what additional opportunity exists for those who want to get into the hog business or current producers that may wish to expand their existing operations?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: The opportunities that exist in the hog industry at the present time are more going to be in the area of export and export opportunities. The opportunities that have been presented through technological advancement are certainly going to assist industries such as ours in that we're now able to produce fresh pork for the Asian market on an ongoing basis. That's something that technology has just recently allowed us to achieve.

So with these changes that are coming about and with the tremendous opportunities that are happening in the export market – and I've referred before to our recent trade mission to Japan. The Japanese had pointed out to us that in 1988 they were 78 percent self-sufficient. In 1994, when we were there in August this past year, they were 67 percent self-sufficient, and by the year 2000 they anticipate that they're only going to be 54 percent self-sufficient. This is going to present major opportunities to countries such as ourselves and to the Alberta market simply because of our strategic location.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MS CALAHASEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. With that in mind, then, what is the government doing to help enhance expansion opportunities for Alberta hog producers?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: With this in mind, when we were in Taiwan back last August during our mission to Asia, we had met with two Taiwanese hog producers and invited them to come to Alberta and see firsthand the opportunities for hog production in Alberta, because Taiwan is one of the leading hog producers in the world as a matter of fact. They wanted to come to see Alberta when it was as far as the weather was concerned at its unfriendliest, when it was the coldest part of the winter. So in February we had 25 of the major hog producers in Taiwan come and visit us here. As a follow-up we sent our trade representatives back to Taiwan in the first part of April. As a result we've had commitments from 22 Taiwanese who've been willing to put a quarter of a million dollars each into an investment fund. They have decided that Alberta will be the location where this investment should take place. So that's the starting point.

Further to that, we're also negotiating with other large investment groups who are involved in hog production and inviting them to become involved in the opportunities that are here in Alberta. With the Alberta advantage, with the tax benefits that have been defined by Premier Klein's government, indeed we're allowing for these opportunities to take place.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Landfill Regulation

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the government's waste control regulation no one may construct or operate a landfill that accepts hazardous waste if the landfill is located on a wetland or within 300 metres of a watercourse. Now, currently Laidlaw Environmental Services is asking the government to let it pretreat and dispose of hazardous waste at its

landfill in Ryley, Alberta. This landfill is clearly on a wetland, and in fact a few weeks ago the site was under water. My question to the minister of environment: is the minister prepared to allow the landfilling of pretreated hazardous waste at Ryley knowing that the landfill is situated on a wetland and knowing that it would violate the government's own regulations?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, this landfill requires an environmental impact assessment. That has been done. It's been out in the public for some period of time. It currently has been given to the director. The director is looking at it and studying it. There's the opportunity for individuals and groups to make representation to the director relative to the EIA. The director will be studying it. He will be looking to see if there are deficiencies in the report, and we will be moving forward from there. There is a process, and we're following the process.

2:30

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. F is also for foolish.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question to the same minister: why would the minister even consider this application knowing that the watercourse that the landfill sits on drains into Beaverhill Lake, an internationally designated site for migratory birds and the site of this weekend's Snow Goose Festival?

MR. LUND: The hon. member would lead people to believe that this has been approved or that it has even come to my desk, Mr. Speaker, and that is not the case. There is a process, and as I indicated earlier, the director now has the report, will be looking at it for deficiencies, and if in fact the director determines that the system can move ahead, he will be moving the report to me along with recommendations. He has not completed his work. He's still working on the environmental impact assessment.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: why is the director, then, working on this application, and why don't the rules on landfilling hazardous waste apply to Laidlaw for this landfill? It's not allowed by your regulations. Why are you working on it?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, there have been some experts working on this particular situation, and if in fact the experts determine that it is not to move ahead, it will not move ahead. It's that simple.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

School Construction

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the constituency of Bow Valley we have two very different situations with regards to capital school construction. The Prairie Rose school district is proposing to construct a new high school in Dunmore without funding from the province in order to provide their students with an alternative to Medicine Hat. Brooks, on the other hand, requires a new elementary school due to the anticipated 30 percent increase in population. To the Minister of Education: how can

we as a government say no to Prairie Rose's proposal when we fund on a per student basis?

MR. JONSON: Well, if I understand the question correctly, the question is one of whether or not the Prairie Rose school division can go ahead with the building of a high school using their own accumulated capital surpluses. I would have to say, Mr. Speaker, that the School Act provides for a set of steps which must be followed in the approval of a capital project, one of which is doing an assessment of the need for that particular school facility for the numbers of students involved in that jurisdiction. So it is certainly possible, but I have to indicate that the legislation and regulations pertaining to school buildings have to be followed.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Education again: is there a process in place to fund capital construction of schools for extraordinary situations such as an anticipated growth in Brooks' population?

MR. JONSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is. When we do have very much unanticipated growth in a school jurisdiction, we are able to respond through the school buildings branch with portable units, and if there is other space available in the area, we of course recommend that school boards look at using that additional space. Yes, if there is an emergency situation, certainly we endeavour to respond.

I would like to also add, Mr. Speaker, that if the school division being referred to is anticipating that type of growth I would hope that they have put in their submission for new facilities and answered the invitation we extended some time ago for school buildings proposals for school boards over the next two years.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And they are.

Prior to provincial capital dollars being spent, is there a prerequisite for programs such as year-round schooling or flextime to be put in place?

MR. JONSON: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the introduction of year-round schooling or different types of timetabling to accommodate a shortage of space is something that's very much possible in the province right now. There are a number of jurisdictions experimenting with year-round schooling. I'm not aware of any at the moment. We don't like to see this, but at times schools have had to double shift and so on to get through a particularly severe crowding situation.

THE SPEAKER: Before proceeding to the next order of business, might there be consent in the Assembly for the introduction of guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed? Carried.

head: **Introduction of Guests**
(*reversion*)

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce 24 students from the Radway school with their teachers. I asked them in here to see the cut and thrust of debate, but they've seen more than their fair share of puffball questions from the back benches here. I know that that's a new sport. It's called "puffball." They're accompanied by their teachers Murray McGinitie and Candace Dziwenka and also by a parent, Allen Holt. I'd ask them to stand and be recognized and receive the warm welcome of this Legislature.

head: **Motions under Standing Order 40**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly has an application to make under Standing Order 40 on the matter of urgency.

Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation

MS HANSON: Yes. To the matter of urgency, the 25th anniversary of the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation occurred last week while the House was in Easter recess, and it is incumbent upon the Legislature to recognize the anniversary of this remarkable organization.

THE SPEAKER: Is there consent in the Assembly for the hon. member to present her motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

Moved by Ms Hanson:

Be it resolved that this Assembly recognize the 25th anniversary of Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The City Centre Church Corporation came together in 1966 in response to emerging problems within the city core in Edmonton. Suburban development at that time – aging populations, decaying housing and buildings, as well as infrastructure – rang alarm bells for four very forward-thinking churches. They were All Saints' Anglican Cathedral, McDougall United, First Baptist, and Augustana Lutheran churches. They were joined in 1970 by St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Basilica.

The birth of the centre began slowly. First, Rev. Harry Meadows of McDougall United and Rev. Ed Checkland from First Baptist met regularly over lunch to discuss common issues. Later on they were joined by Pastor Leon Lindquist of Augustana Lutheran Church, as well as Dean Ron Shepherd and Rev. David Crawley from the Anglican cathedral. So all of these churches spent some time finding common ground about a response to the inner city.

The City Centre Church Corporation soon emerged as a very active social ministry. As Rev. Meadows reports, City Centre Church Corporation was formed to give a voice to the voiceless and to empower the disinherited downtown. That corporation of activists has existed ever since.

The initial programs included a coffee house in the basement of All Saints' Cathedral, a seniors' centre at Augustana, a youth group at McDougall, and a day care centre at First Baptist Church. Also, All Saints' was the birthplace of the first women's shelter in Edmonton.

Today City Centre Church Corporation represents one of the largest providers of social services in Edmonton's inner city. With a budget of \$3 million the centre distributes government funding, private donations, and volunteers from the churches to more than a dozen projects.

The best-known project is the Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre. Through the centre's careful and expert guidance the Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre was able to move into a permanent and magnificent new home, the historic Gibson Block. It's a real testament to the skills of the centre's executive director, Martin Garber-Conrad, that WEAC not only found a home but that they found it in one of the last few historical buildings left in this city. Not only did Martin manage the move; he was instrumental in overseeing the complete refurbishing of the old Gibson Block.

This group is collaborative, it's able to identify emerging needs, and it's able to take action. The school hot lunch program is one of those things that they have done in the last couple of years. We must not only congratulate the centre today, but we must also give thanks. The centre has provided our province with 25 years of selfless dedication and service. At a time when there is so much uncertainty and anxiety over government services to those most vulnerable in our society, the presence of the City Centre Church Corporation reminds us what true generosity of spirit is all about. May they keep on advocating and empowering the voiceless for many years to come. Our province needs the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation now more than ever.

Thank you.

2:40

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Bow Valley.

DR. OBERG: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly a pleasure to rise today and speak to this motion. When the hon. member across the way made this motion, it essentially rang a bell to me. The reason it rang a bell is that this is one of the organizations that recently won our family service award, that was put out by the Premier's council on the family in 1994. The member who spoke previously spoke very eloquently about the programs of the E4C, as it's called, and the work that takes place, and I think she's done a very good job.

I'd just like to go into one program especially that really hits home with me, and I think it's the essence of where Alberta is going. The E4C goes into 23 Edmonton elementary schools each day to serve a free midmorning snack to students. It may sound like a small thing, as it only costs about 13 cents, but in a lot of schools there are kids there who essentially arrive without having anything to eat, and as we all know, it's very difficult to learn on an empty stomach.

The nutrition snack program put forward by the E4C is actually through the co-operation of a number of different agencies, and this is a point that I was trying to illustrate, that this is, you know, what everyone in Alberta is about. Much of the food is donated by supermarkets. Gainers supplies the food as well, and Gainers rings a bell for some reason. But food processing plants, such as Gainers, provide the food for the E4C program.

Mr. Speaker, I think the other issue we see is that the E4C has crossed the gap between social services and health care. The food that is prepared for the free lunch meals is actually prepared in the Misericordia hospital at a cost of about \$1.82, and the people that use this service are asked to pay the meagre fee of a dollar. I can only commend the E4C for doing this.

I think we've seen a lot of positive accomplishments by the E4C. Their participation in a local Head Start program to help disadvantaged children going into kindergarten has been a tremendous boon to the inner city, in communities such as Norwood in the city. I can only say so much about the executive director, Ann Machin, who was on hand the night of our family service awards to talk about her program and to be recognized on behalf of the E4C.

I think the E4C should be commended, and I would urge everyone in this Legislative Assembly to recognize this motion that the member opposite has graciously put forward. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just very briefly like to add my words of support for this motion brought forward by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly. I've known the E4C, the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation, for many, many years and have been an admirer of its work in the inner city in Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, having participated in a professional work capacity alongside the E4C, one of the things that I think is important for us to recognize is that we have lots of individuals and agencies who want to do good work in the community, but it's hard to really get in there and do the work that nobody else will do. That's what E4C has done in the city of Edmonton in the 10 years that I've lived here and have gotten to know them. They've been able to take work that many other agencies and government departments have shunned and have been unwilling to take on because of the nature of the work, because of the challenge that it presented to the agency or individuals. E4C has repeatedly, over and over again, been a leader.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to thank the Member for Bow Valley, also the chairperson of the Premier's advisory council on the family, for the family service award that was given to E4C on that awards night. I took great pride and great honour in nominating E4C for that award and was very pleased that the council saw fit to accept the nomination and actually give the award to a very deserving group in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out as well that E4C is not the kind of organization that sits on its laurels or that has a long history and says, "We've done; therefore we're good." They also venture forth and are continuing to venture forth in their latest proposal, which I'd like to bring members' attention to; that is, to operate a cafeteria-style restaurant downtown in a very busy part of City Hall, in fact, and use that as an opportunity to train young people from the inner city to work in that field and to familiarize more and more people who work downtown but don't live downtown about some of the joys and challenges in the inner city.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I would urge all hon. members to support this motion. Again, my congratulations, most heartfelt, to the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation on their 25th anniversary.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I just want to add my comments and get on the record here in thanking the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly for bringing it forward. I certainly support this motion that recognizes the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation. Like the Member for Edmonton-Centre I've been privileged to work with this organization over a number of

years and have continuously been impressed with their courage, their concern for the human condition, their willingness to work in ways that other agents and agencies have been unable to or have not achieved success. Success they certainly have achieved.

I just want to pay tribute to Rev. Ed Checkland and Rev. Harry Meadows, whose brainchild this really was to begin with, joined by Augustana Lutheran Church, by All Saints' Anglican, and by the Catholic church as well, the Basilica. Mr. Speaker, unquestionably they have had a dramatic effect on the life of the inner city, not just on the life of the people there but on the planning that has gone on and the physical changes that have been made to make it a place that is safe and has good health.

Mr. Speaker, my first work with them concerned the women's emergency shelter. The Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly has indicated that now the Gibson Block has been retained and converted into a shelter for women, and I'm most grateful for that.

I do want to pay tribute to one or two other people, Mr. Speaker. One of them that I first worked with was Rev. David Crawley at All Saints' Cathedral. Rev. Crawley, with a great deal of courage, opened the cathedral not only for the women's emergency shelter, not a popular cause in those days, but also for youth who were moving around the country, again a somewhat forgotten and frightening group to many agencies. Rev. Crawley, with a great deal of compassion and caring, was able to convince his fellow parishioners that the cathedral could be put to good use in this fashion. Subsequently the doors were opened again for the women's emergency shelter.

One of the first people, Mr. Speaker, that I worked with in the City Centre Church Corporation was David King, who subsequently was a member of this House for Edmonton-Highlands. He held the portfolio of Minister of Education – I'm not sure if he held one before that or not – and served with distinction in this House, and he continues to serve the needs of Albertans, particularly children in school, and make his work really count.

Feeding hungry children has been mentioned, school snacks. The organization has also concerned itself with child prostitution. It has been a tremendous supporter of Head Start, something that I think this House would do well to put its mind to.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I just want to express my personal thanks to Martin Garber-Conrad, who is the present executive director of the City Centre Church Corporation and whose work continues to amaze us, the kinds of accomplishments he has been able to make.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

2:50

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora.

MR. SAPERS: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd be remiss if I didn't take an opportunity to congratulate the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation on the occasion of their 25th anniversary in this city and to remark on the experiences that I've had in working with the staff and volunteers and particularly the current executive director, Martin Garber-Conrad.

Martin has been a force to be reckoned with in social and human services since he came to Edmonton a number of years ago. He certainly demonstrated a tremendous amount of leadership in areas of concern ranging from juvenile prostitution to panhandling on city streets to crime prevention programs. Unfortunately, the crime prevention antishoptlifting program, which was funded by the province, lost its funding, Mr. Speaker. The Head Start program that he's brought into Edmonton city centre schools – again, unfortunately, that success is clouded by some funding issues. The hot lunch program has already been

mentioned. The Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre for chronically homeless women, a very tough population to deal with, found some success. The transformation of the flatiron building.

Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation continues to struggle, really on behalf of us all, in very uncertain economic conditions and sometimes in a political environment that makes it equally difficult for them as well. The board of directors, of whom I've had an opportunity to address on more than one occasion, is to be commended for their vision, for sticking to their guns, and for having the patience at times to put up with their executive director and also the wisdom to keep him on task.

So, again, my heartfelt thanks to the corporation and my particular tribute to the executive director. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe that this is a very important motion for this Assembly, to recognize the 25th anniversary of the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation. The major reason that I would like to speak to this motion is that there's never been a greater point in time to acknowledge the contribution of charitable associations, particularly a corporation of this nature, because of indeed the housing that they supply for the inner city. I'm specifically thinking of people who suffer from psychiatric illness, from mental illness. If it wasn't for corporations like this, many of these people would indeed be homeless. They would not in essence have a roof over their head. I sincerely hope that we're going to see a further 25 years celebrated at the 50th anniversary of the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation. I say that in all sincerity, because certainly they can do a better job in many respects than a government can do but at the same time acknowledging that there are many areas that they're attempting to meet the needs where governments are failing, particularly the psychiatrically ill.

The reason I wish to speak to this: when we look at the up-and-coming changes and restructuring in health care, particularly in the area of mental health, I have a grave concern when I hear it being suggested that Alberta Hospital Edmonton, where we have acute psychiatry and rehabilitation, indeed is looked at in a way that would suggest the closure of that component of Alberta Hospital Edmonton. So the question has to be: where will these people be housed? Who's going to support them in rehabilitation programs? Certainly the dollars are not following into the community. Mr. Speaker, it's people like the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation that I hope will be able to meet some of that need, but recognizing the difficulty for them to achieve the financial support to meet all those needs, it's going to be an even more difficult and formidable task for this body.

At this time in the history of the Legislative Assembly each and every one of us should acknowledge what this corporation does for Albertans. As I say, to some extent it's because governments are failing the very people that we should not be allowing to fall through the social net. So to the Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation, to all those wonderful volunteers and staff, we commend them for 25 years of being there for people that needed them.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Assembly ready for the question?

HON. MEMBERS: Question.

THE SPEAKER: All those in favour of the motion proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE SPEAKER: Opposed, please say no. Let the record show that the motion passes unanimously.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Royal Assent**

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor will now attend upon the Assembly.

[The Provincial Treasurer and the Sergeant-at-Arms left the Chamber to attend the Lieutenant Governor]

[The Mace was draped]

3:00

[The Sergeant-at-Arms knocked on the main doors of the Chamber three times. The Associate Sergeant-at-Arms opened the door, and the Sergeant-at-Arms entered]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise, please. Mr. Speaker, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor awaits.

THE SPEAKER: Sergeant-at-Arms, admit His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, Gordon Towers, and the Provincial Treasurer entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

HIS HONOUR: Please be seated.

THE SPEAKER: May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has, at its present sitting, passed certain Bills to which, and in the name of the Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

CLERK: Your Honour, the following are the titles of the Bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed.

- 3 Managerial Exclusion Act
- 6 Balanced Budget and Debt Retirement Act
- 10 Alberta Heritage Scholarship Amendment Act, 1995
- 11 Students Finance Amendment Act, 1995
- 29 Appropriation Act, 1995
- 30 Appropriation (Lottery Fund) Act, 1995

[The Lieutenant Governor indicated his assent]

CLERK: In Her Majesty's name His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these Bills.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise, please.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor and the Provincial Treasurer left the Chamber]

[The Mace was uncovered]

THE SPEAKER: Please be seated.

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

Bill 15
Charitable Fund-Raising Act

[Adjourned debate March 27: Mr. Day]

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to Bill 15, the Charitable Fund-Raising Act. I certainly would like to acknowledge at this time the necessity of this Bill. Having said that, I also want to state that I have some disappointment with the content of the Bill inasmuch as the consultative process that was used prior to this tabling appears not to reflect, I believe, some of the valuable input from charitable organizations. I would also acknowledge that the time line has not been extensive, and the charities themselves have acknowledged that they have not come together as a unit as quickly as they would like to have done. So that indeed may have led to some of the lack of clarity within this Bill.

We should also note that within the past number of days – in fact, I believe 10 days have passed – certain documents have been released publicly which I believe would have been most beneficial to the government in preparing Bill 15. I'm referring to the regulations of charities in Alberta by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Canada West Foundation, and also to the news release by the Canada West Foundation. I believe that those would have been beneficial.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I certainly withhold my support of this Bill at this point in time, at second reading, because I believe the one area that I felt should have been fundamentally addressed within this Bill has not been addressed in a meaningful way at all, and that's dealing with for-profit fund-raisers, which has been a concern not only in Canada and the province of Alberta but indeed across North America. When you speak to any charitable organization, one of the areas that means so much to that charity is their credibility, their integrity, the ethics behind their operation, and how much of the dollar that is raised indeed finds its way to the charitable function that was clearly identified.

This Bill, Bill 15, does not indeed, I believe, address the for-profit bodies in an in-depth way or a meaningful way. Now, I say that acknowledging that we have not seen the regulations as well, and that always leaves me with a level of discomfort, because in essence you can pass a Bill based on a communication by the government of Alberta of "Don't worry about that section in a Bill; it'll be taken care of in regulations," and then the reality is that the Bill gets proclaimed and indeed the things you were looking for in the regulations don't materialize, Mr. Speaker.

With regards to indeed what the Canada West Foundation has pointed out, the one area that I stated, the question has to be asked: where does money actually go, and what portion of the contribution dollar actually reaches the charitable target? There's nothing in this Bill that addresses that. There's nothing in the definition of for profit that would suggest what portion would be a fair administrative cost, what portion of those funds that are actually donated is reasonable to find its way to the charity, and indeed what does constitute a reasonable fund-raising cost. We don't know that. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that concerns Albertans is that you want to have a level of comfort, that when you're contributing, you know that the maximum value of your dollar is going to go to that charity. We don't see that in this Bill at all.

With regards to the lack of ethics that we have seen demonstrated in other parts of North America – and I'm thinking of south of the border, where some frightening statistics have come forward and information has clearly shown that the smallest portion of the dollar ended up with the charity and the largest portion of the dollar stayed with the for profit. So, in other words, raising moneys has become an industry, and I think the direction that we are going in the province of Alberta would clearly indicate to us now that there's more onus going to be put on charitable organizations to raise funds for essential services.

I was thinking in question period today, Mr. Speaker, when we were listening to the answer by our Premier to a question from the hon. Member for Edmonton-Glenora about an ophthalmology procedure. The point that was being made: it was being done in a private clinic and the medical portion was being paid through Alberta Health, but the facility fee had to be met by the individual. Now, if this is the direction we're going in health care – and I'd suggest that's exactly where this government of Alberta is taking us – we're going to see more need for charitable organizations, through the foundations of hospitals, to raise money for necessary equipment. I'll use an example that I tabled in the House, and that was a letter from Dr. Allard of the Royal Alexandra hospital. It clearly stated in the letter to former patients that they needed their contribution on an ongoing basis – and it was up to three years – because they needed essential equipment to do essential medical procedures. That's in a publicly funded institution in 1995.

What I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, is that there's a time in Alberta's history – and I believe we're actually going to be leaders through Bill 15. So while I'm not supportive of it at this point in time, I acknowledge that Bill 15 is actually being closely looked at. Not only in Canada, but it's also being looked at from south of the border. Charities recognize that the public's trust is not there the way they want it because there's not the confidence by the public that the portion of their dollar that they want to go to the charity of their choice is actually reaching there.

3:10

Mr. Speaker, in speaking to charities across this province and also to for-profit organizations or industry – there has been communication of their concerns with the government of Alberta through the minister – it's my understanding that we're looking at amendments being brought forward by the government. Now, it's certainly my desire as a member of the Official Opposition to also bring amendments forward to try and strengthen this piece of legislation, but I believe it needs substantial amendments. So when I say that, I get a grave concern: when you're looking at substantially amending something, it tells you that it is poor legislation.

MRS. HEWES: It hasn't been crafted.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: It's not been crafted, as one of my colleagues is saying, in a way that does the best job to ensure that our charitable fund-raising organizations are legislated in an appropriate way.

Now, I'm not as concerned about the ethical perspective of the integrity of our charitable organizations because I believe they've demonstrated that indeed they can be trusted to do the job that has to be done. But we have to acknowledge that over the past number of years we've seen a shift, a significant shift, where it's big business. Let's face it. It's no different than what we see happening in the province of Alberta when it comes to gambling. We've seen the same shift when it comes to charities, that if you

want to get a share of that dollar out there, you have got to actually go out and hire professionals to do the job. I get increasingly concerned, Mr. Speaker, when I walk into hospitals, health units, schools, and public institutions, our publicly funded institutions, that this is the direction this government has taken. It's not just churches. It's not just Girl Guides. It's not just 4-H clubs. Now we're telling publicly funded institutions that you won't be able to meet the needs of Albertans unless you get out there and raise moneys, and you actually are into a competitive marketplace.

Now, when you get into competitive marketplaces, the rules change. So when you change the rules, you'd better make sure you've got some of the best legislation going. This is where I've got grave concerns about Bill 15. On one hand, I have to acknowledge that it was through the courts that the government has had to deal with bringing forward Bill 15, because certain sections of the Public Contributions Act were found to be in violation of the Charter of Rights. I acknowledge that. But it was a golden opportunity to bring forward the best legislation going.

I would've suggested that it might have been preferable, Mr. Speaker, to go with the Public Contributions Act for a longer period of time without those sections that have been struck down by the courts and come back with a Bill in which all interested parties had meaningful input. When you speak to the charities around this province, they say that they were either ignored – because it isn't reflected in here – or there wasn't meaningful consultation. The other aspect – and the charities will agree with this – is that they didn't get their act together quickly enough.

Now, you look at what charitable organizations are all about. Saying that they didn't get their act together quick enough isn't a criticism of them because they've a job to do – and it's never been greater over this past year, Mr. Speaker – to raise those dollars to meet the needs that the government of Alberta is not presently meeting.

So when you see meaningful documents now appearing for Legislatures to look at – like this document here, like the documents that are coming out of our two major cities, our municipal governments, like the documents that are coming from the Scouting movement, and I could go on and on – that tells you, Mr. Speaker, that they're not comfortable with this legislation the way it's presently drafted.

Now, whether our hon. minister – and that raises a good question, because nobody really knows what ministry is going to be responsible for Bill 15; in other words, where's it going to fall? Who's the minister that's going to be responsible for this?

MRS. HEWES: They can't decide.

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: No, and that in itself speaks to the fact that it's not been well thought out.

The other is that they removed any jurisdiction from municipal governments. I would ask myself the question: was this a good move in saying that municipal governments should have absolutely no say in what is happening in their communities when it comes to fund-raising? Now, I know, Mr. Speaker, that when I was mayor, our community appreciated us being able to stage or stagger when people were knocking at your door and when they were phoning you when there was specific fund-raising going on in the community, and I know everyone benefited from that. Now what we've done is we've taken any authority from the municipalities and moved it provincially. Now, what budget is there going to be to administer this Bill, or is it indeed going to be administered? That's a question that has to be asked.

The other question that has to be asked is: when we're dealing with the acknowledgment of the \$10,000 that a charity falls under with this Bill, are we dealing with the provincial organization? I'll use the Scouting or the Guiding movement or the 4-H clubs, any body. Is it the local group that has to acknowledge the \$10,000 or is it the provincial association? If they register and say they raise \$10,000 and over, is that sufficient? Does that then exclude the 4-H club or the Girl Guide movement at the local level? Does it also then apply to the churches? It's suggesting there that if indeed through the 12 months of the year, the 52 weeks, a church raises through the collection \$10,000, they would then fall within this. Now, the minister has reassured me that that's not the case, but the fact that people are asking those questions tells you that this legislation isn't explicit enough.

3:20

Mr. Speaker, I just want to look at definitions and share with the Assembly and also ensure that it's in *Hansard*. I hope that the minister's had similar communication from the Calgary Regional Council of Scouts Canada. They're talking about the definition.

The Act's definitions of charitable organization and charitable purpose are incomplete. Many not-for-profit organizations, including sports teams and social clubs, could attempt to avoid registration by claiming the definition excludes their organizations and causes. The new Act could be tied up in the court system as a result.

I hope that the minister is going to take this very seriously, because we know what happened with the Public Contributions Act. We saw certain charities, with the support of the private sector, for-profit groups, going to the courts and overruling that legislation. Now here, before we've even got to second reading, we're starting to see some of the same problems.

The definition of contribution is also a concern. Periodically Scouts Canada solicits members of the community to contribute their services as volunteers. It would be difficult for most voluntary organizations to calculate the services contributed by volunteers who are recruited through public appeal campaigns. The Act does not clearly exempt this form of solicitation.

On page 5 of the Act, solicitations of goods or services for administrative or non-charitable purposes are exempted. Gifts in kind can be a significant form of fund raising. We believe the Act should . . . clearly define administrative and non-charitable purposes.

So once again while certainly the Charitable Fund-Raising Act is key to fund-raising in the province of Alberta and is going to be a leader in North America – I want to acknowledge that – it's still fundamentally flawed, Mr. Speaker.

Another area is exemption from registration.

We understand the government's concern not to burden small community organizations with the requirements to register and report. The Act needs to be more explicit as to what gross contributions are. Many Scout groups raise over \$10,000 each year through sales of various products. If gross contributions include the cost of goods sold, approximately 75% of Scout groups in Calgary and area will need to register. If gross contributions are net of cost of goods sold, only 25% of our groups would need to register. Obviously this needs a clearer definition.

Now we're not talking about regulations here; we're actually talking about definitions within the Act. So that, Mr. Speaker, is another area where I say it's fundamentally flawed.

Donor fund-raisers.

We are concerned that for-profit businesses will continue to misrepresent themselves as contributors to charities. Each year, Scouting deals with for-profit Christmas tree sales lots who claim they are operating in support of Scouting. In every case, it is

Scouting who brings their actions to the attention of the authorities. By exempting donor fund raisers from registration, this problem will continue.

We're talking about integrity in the fund-raising process here, and we're talking about taking the authority away from municipalities and putting it provincially. We don't know who the minister is going to be, and we don't know what budget there's going to be. So once again I would suggest that if the charities don't become the enforcers – in this instance it's Scouting when it comes to the Christmas trees – indeed we are going to see a further problem, if not a more significant problem than we faced under the Public Contributions Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's much more that I wish to share with this Assembly.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly.

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to say a few words on Bill 15, the Charitable Fund-Raising Act. I'm sure that the Member for Pincher Creek-Macleod has the best intentions, and I acknowledge that the present legislation does need to be strengthened, but I do have concerns about the Bill as it is written now.

It is vague and open to interpretation in many sections, and I understand that there has been very little public consultation. Certain sections are not clear. They could be interpreted as too restrictive, and other sections are confusing. You're not quite sure who it applies to. For example, the responsibility of an organization raising money as well as the protection and information provided for donors is not clear. The Bill makes the boards of charities solely responsible for fund-raising decisions and processes, but there appears to be little intention by the province to inform and make the public or charities aware of the changes in roles and responsibilities. Those changes are big. Bill 15 will make individual board members subject to prosecution and considerable fines and even incarceration, all of which does seem to be contrary to the Societies Act. We fear that this may also make people reluctant to sit on boards of charitable organizations.

Unfortunately this business of not informing the public is becoming a habit with this government. During the past few months alone the government has said that it would cost too much to advise the public about when and where public meetings were being held for child welfare reform. The public has not been advised about the new process for adoptions, which took place on April 1 of this year. Many people do not know that they should register, or they don't know that they should put in a veto on release of information if they don't wish to be contacted.

In this instance, the Bill loads huge responsibilities on boards of directors, who are real volunteers. They don't get any honorariums or expenses. These board members can be punished severely for any deviation. So I trust that the regulations will require the government to inform in detail all organizations who are governed by a board of the new ground rules.

An area that's always caused public concern is centred around professional fund-raisers. Section 22(b) calls for a fee to be charged to a professional fund-raiser in order to renew the licence, and the fee is going to be set through regulations. It's important that we know what the fee is. Although I expect this was done to discourage fraudulent professional fund-raisers, since the fee will probably be passed on to the charities themselves, I'm not sure that it will be much of a deterrent. If a professional

fund-raiser intends to be fraudulent, the fee will be irrelevant because he can recoup it.

The Bill has no requirement that donors be informed up front about what percentage of their donation will flow to the charitable purpose and how much to the fund-raiser. It's my belief that no less than 80 percent of the dollars raised in any campaign should go to the charity, and no more than 20 percent should go to the fund-raiser. That seems like a generous amount. This Bill makes the situation in fund-raising very much donor beware, because after the fact financial reporting will only be required on request from the province. The government apparently has no regular mechanism to monitor the performance.

As well, the Bill leaves the enforcement of the new Act open to complaint from the public only. That will not ensure that things are done honestly and fairly. There are substantial penalties, but the public will have a difficult time establishing the facts. Secondly, an individual will have to invest considerable time and money in order to go to court when he has a complaint. I believe that the responsibility should be on the government to make sure that this legislation is followed. A responsible government would commit to regular monitoring of the process, both the process of the fund-raising and the financial management of the moneys as the campaigns go along.

So there are two main points at this point: the responsibility for enforcement and carrying out the public information initiative so that all new board members will have the information before they decide to take on responsibilities with organizations. I do believe that the sponsor of the Bill should look at that.

In these times when the public's under great pressure to respond to fund-raising drives and to donate to nonprofit organizations, who are all scrambling trying to make up for diminishing grants, we need to make the legislation clear and user friendly. In section 6(1)(a), for example, there is a requirement that a person making a solicitation provide information as defined in the regulations before accepting any contribution. The intent of this section is to protect the consumer, but it's going to be very costly and cumbersome and sometimes confusing for charities to follow through with these requirements. It would slow down the fund-raising considerably. It would also be unfair to both the donor and the charity to not clearly outline what information would be required through regulations for this subsection.

3:30

In section 7(b) it appears to require that a charity keep records of all solicitations, and I think that was mentioned by the speaker before me. You have to keep records regardless of whether or not an actual donation was given. Now, I think that's another thing that is really asking too much of people who are raising money, considering also that quite a lot of them are volunteers, not professional fund-raisers. It's impractical. The government needs to recognize again that it would be problematic for religious groups, churches, the Salvation Army, children doing door knocking for their schools, the Girl Guides, all of those things.

Again another area which is connected to this is the \$10,000 a year limit. For anything over \$10,000 a year you will have to provide records. The \$10,000 limit needs to be looked at. We need to have a clear definition of who has to supply this, and I wonder if there has been any research as to where the \$10,000 figure came from. How much do some of these smaller organizations raise? Is it practical to ask them to give that kind of information?

There are positive features of Bill 15. I think the protection for donors who wish to be struck from the mailing lists and limiting

solicitation between 8 in the morning and 9 at night are good ideas. There are protective banking requirements when third-party fund-raisers are used. At this point these are outweighed by the key inadequate provisions and omissions.

Municipalities as well are concerned about the content, which excludes further municipal involvement. The Bill seems to be reactive rather than preventive in protecting the public or the charitable sector in seeing that maximum resources donated for a good cause reach their intended destination.

Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

MR. DECORE: Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with this legislation because the courts have really forced Alberta to deal with it, but I can't support the legislation in the form that it's written. There are some good things that are set out in the Act, but there are some things that I think are going to cause great havoc, great difficulty, and I prophesize that unless key areas, substantive areas of this legislation are cleaned up, we'll revisit this whole area in a year or two because the public is going to be very angry when it starts getting bilked here, there, and everywhere.

I want to read from two papers that the government should be very cognizant of and should be studying and should be talking to the people that prepared these two overviews. One comes from the city of Calgary, the other from the city of Edmonton. My colleagues on this side of the House have spoken to some of those concerns.

Let me just start by reading the concern from the Executive Committee of the city of Edmonton. They say that council urged the province to amend Bill 15 with provisions that allow the donating public sufficient information to make informed decisions and to be protected from misleading solicitations incorporating the recommendations outlined in enclosure 1 of their March 16 document. They go on to say in explaining this position that they're concerned that the public may and will be bilked. They say that they're concerned that there isn't a proper mechanism to have the public complain about solicitations that turn out to be improper. They talk about the fact that municipal involvement is no longer there. That's the city of Edmonton.

The city of Calgary says that there are a number of impacts from the legislation. I'd like to just read three of the five that are set out. First, they say that there will be no role for the municipal authority. I think the reason that municipalities keep saying this is because who better knows what's happening in a municipality than the people that are the elected representatives at the local level, those that deal with licences and business licences and so on. They know who the scoundrels are, and they can identify the scoundrels, and they're able to thwart the scoundrels. So that seems to be a consistent theme. A second issue identified by Calgary is that there is no longer a prescreening process involved in the registration of a charity or professional fund-raiser. The parties will be required to complete an application and sign a statutory declaration to register, and elimination of the prescreening could allow unscrupulous charitable fund-raising activity to increase. Three, the city of Calgary says that charities soliciting corporations will not be required to register their activity with the province.

Mr. Speaker, last week just at my door I got a door-to-door solicitation from two separate charities. One was from the CNIB, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. I know that charity and gave to that charity. Then a couple of days later a young man – I assumed he was a university student; I don't know – came to my door, well spoken, and solicited for his organization

money that would allow that charity to continue. I made some inquiries of the charity and concluded in the end that I never heard of this organization before. We now have entities falling over entities and perhaps duplication or triplication or whatever kind of multiplication existing. But I wasn't satisfied from the presentation that was given to me that this was part of the priorities that I could provide moneys for or to.

I know that the solicitations are going to continue in greater numbers than before. So how do I deal with this? There isn't going to be the young person that came to my door that was at least articulate; there are going to be some who are less articulate. But I want to be able to say to that person: "Show me who the directors are of the charity that you represent. Who's on this board? What do they do? Where do they come from?" I want to be able to ask how much money is going to serve the need of this charity rather than the administration of this charity. I want to know if the activity that this charity is involved in is in Edmonton or is in greater Edmonton or is in Alberta or whether these moneys are going to be squirreled away somewhere else, to Saskatchewan or Manitoba or wherever. There is no way under this present legislation that allows for that prescreening to occur or, if prescreening bothers you, for more information to be given to the public. That's why I say that we'll be revisiting this issue in another year. The public will get outraged when a number of members of the public get bilked and get bilked again and get bilked again after that. We see lots of evidence that there are people who use all kinds of trickery to take Albertans' money from them.

There's one thing we know in this House, and that is that Albertans are well-meaning people. They like to volunteer for things, they like to involve themselves in all kinds of activities, and they like to give their own money, hard-earned money, so that people in need are properly looked after. But two conflicting principles come into play. One is the court identifying the fact that there needs to be freedom of expression. We have to accept that. There's no debate on that one. The court has done an interpretation of our Constitution, that says that you've got to provide for that. Well, how do you deal with that when the other conflicting principle is that government has a duty to the public to ensure that they're protected? It's not good enough, I submit, members of the Assembly, to say that this is an area where laissez-faire applies, where caveat emptor applies, where you're on your own, because there are too many skillful hucksters out there, too many skillful tricksters out there, and there is all kinds of evidence around us that show us that and proves that point to us.

3:40

If freedom of expression has to be acknowledged and looked after, then let's do some things to beef up the requirement that people must prove their case at the door. When that young man comes to me, he's got the complete list of what it is that he's involved in. It says where they do business. It says where they're located. It says who the directors are. It says how long they've been in place, where the money is going to be used in terms of administration and actual need of pursuit of the concept. Tell us whether or not they get moneys from the United Way or not, because sometimes that's a good indicator to me as to whether or not I need to provide help. The United Way we know is cutting off a lot of agencies because they're unable to collect the money that they used to be able to collect. I'm sympathetic to those organizations that have had to go out on their own and collect money, but I need to know, and five minutes or 10 minutes at the door isn't going to do the trick unless somebody

says to me, "Here are all the facts that you need." So I urge the government, the member that's sponsoring this Bill to clean this up and to protect me and to protect the citizens of Alberta.

I remember when I was the mayor of this city, it was a constant problem when you dealt with agencies that collected money for charitable organizations. There were some organizations that charged 90 percent – 90 percent – for solicitation of the moneys from Edmontonians, and slowly, ever so slowly, that got put under control, better control, but there's no requirement in this legislation that's been brought forward by the hon. member to tell us how we deal with that problem. So I ask the member to tell us, tell Albertans how Albertans should be protected when and if there is a case of somebody getting 90 percent or 75 percent. And what is reasonable, hon. member? Is there a figure that you would suggest is reasonable in terms of what an organization should be paid that acts as the solicitation unit for this charity? I'd like to know that. I think we should help the municipalities and Albertans with that problem.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this isn't an easy issue, and I think the first step is the right step of putting forward some thoughts in a Bill that allows us to debate this matter, but I think this thing is so fully and completely flawed that I would like to suggest to the government that they pull back the Bill and allow for some consultation to take place. There are organizations, there are charities that are afraid to speak out. It isn't just Edmonton and Calgary that we should be listening to. We should be listening to as many organizations as we can that say: "Here. Here are some thoughts on how this thing should be done." I think you need a delay in this Bill, hon. members, to allow for a hearing, a commission, even if you take a commission and you put only Tories on it. That usually is the only way they'd do it. Even if you do that, even if it's just sort of part of democracy at play, I invite you to do it, because I think you're going to hear enough about what's wrong with this Bill to make the substantive changes that need to be made.

Mr. Speaker, I end by saying this again: government is there to protect citizens. Government must protect the citizens that they represent. The legislators that are here must protect their constituents. In a hurly-burly world, one where more and more pressure is brought on the taxpayer, on the homeowner to give and to do this and to do that, when times get tough, those homeowners, those taxpayers, those citizens need the extra support from us. They need knowledge. They need to know who the charlatans are, and they need to be protected from them.

Thank you, sir.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to enter this debate on Bill 15, being the Charitable Fund-Raising Act, which ostensibly replaces the old Public Contributions Act, as I recall. I can appreciate that the government is moving into this area with this Act because there are of course many grave concerns that individuals have, especially as it relates to fund-raising. I think we're seeing more and more reliance, shall we say, on the volunteer and not-for-profit benevolent sectors of society as the government carries through with its other ideologies and its other agendas. I appreciate also the fact that the need for this Act was largely brought about as a result of a court decision last year which found, I believe, that sections 3, 5, and 6 of the Public Contributions Act were actually in violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and specifically the freedom of expression portion.

I think as we review this, Mr. Speaker, we have to realize that this particular Act virtually affects hundreds of charities and other benevolent, or philanthropic, organizations throughout our province that form the very backbone of what, in many cases, our quality of life in this province is all about. We have numerous organizations that exist for charitable purposes in the educational field or in the health area, the religious, cultural, or artistic domain, as well as in the area of the larger humanities section. Surely as we bring about legislation for consideration that has the ability to impact on so many organizations and in turn literally thousands and millions of individuals in this province, we must be very careful that what we're bringing in with the left hand is better than what was already there brought in by the right hand. In this case Bill 15 has some very good sections to it – I'll give the member that – but it also has some sections that really do require a revisitation by its author and also by other supporters from the government opposite.

One of the greatest concerns in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, to me and to hundreds of other charities, I suspect, is the fact that there is the removal of the municipal level, the municipal strata of government, which traditionally had a great role to play in determining which charitable organizations would be allowed to proceed with their campaigns in a given community during a particular time of year.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that you and other members here are well aware of the fact that we have many dedicated organizations out there who have already targeted a specific time of year for their particular fund-raisers, such as February and Heart Month or the dig deep for daisies campaign, which the Canadian Liver Foundation does on an annual basis during the month of April, we have the Canadian Cancer Society, which does its fund-raisers with daffodils throughout the spring period, and many other organizations, the Easter Seal Campaign and so on.

On Saturday, Mr. Speaker, I had the great privilege to attend a new fund-raiser on behalf of the Lurana shelters society. I was shocked and amazed to learn from this particular organization that last year they were so busy, they were so flooded, with organized families who came in and said: "We really need your help. We have been torn apart," as a result of cutbacks perhaps – I'm not blaming it all on cutbacks, but I think it's fair to say that a portion of the blame can squarely be laid there – or as a result of some other form of disruptive act that caused the family to nearly destroy. The Lurana shelters people told us very clearly that they turned away 900 families as a result of overcrowding. So we're dealing with a very, very serious issue here that could see a sudden flood of competition, because I think we've opened up the gates through this Act. Perhaps the authors need revisit that alone.

As I read the Act through – and I'd love to be corrected, if that's the case – I see a sudden ability for the government, the province of Alberta to suddenly take on the added responsibility to now approve at the provincial level any application for a charitable purpose. That approval is simply constituted by the applicant submitting an application, swearing an affidavit, a statutory declaration, and then registering the event. It says nothing in here about the type of criteria that are needed to be met in order to qualify for that particular fund-raiser to be sanctioned.

So what we've done here, then, if we approve this particular Bill as it sits, is that we are allowing the provincial government to centralize yet even more power. The minister has given rather wide-ranging powers here once again, and that wouldn't be too bad if the minister in charge knew everything, but we know that that's not humanly possible.

3:50

MR. HENRY: He thinks he does.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Well, I don't say that in jest. I say that in all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, because it's impossible for any one minister on the other side to know everything. That's where we have traditionally relied on the good information coming up from all these organizations and, specifically, the municipal governments, who've had a role in screening the applications, in prescreening them and in determining which are the good ones and which perhaps are the questionable ones, at the same time ensuring that there is no competition for, let's say, the Heart Month campaign at that particular time or for the Canadian Liver Foundation or the Lurana shelters or the Youth Emergency Shelter or the Rainbow Society of Alberta or whomever. That's part of the role of the local government, to have done that. I think they did a fairly credible job, and that part of the Act ought to have stayed, I think, the same. There was no reason to withdraw something that was working. I'm a firm believer in not tinkering or tampering with things if they're working perfectly fine. I appreciate that parts of it weren't working, and they need to be visited.

However, we have here now the removal of that level of expertise. It's very curious to me that the government keeps asking for suggestions and keeps saying: why don't you tell us something more positive? Well, I'm telling you something more positive. Leave that part alone, and that would solve a lot of problems out there, Mr. Speaker. People are relying more and more on these organizations to help them out. They don't need the government taking on a rather Big Brotherish-type role here yet again and centralizing more of that power when the expertise for it exists out in the community.

I read here on page 11 for example, Mr. Speaker, where the minister will have all kinds of powers, and it uses terms like the minister may refuse this, the minister may impose that, the minister can jump in here if they have reasonable grounds to believe, and so on. Then further on page 16 we get into other things, where the minister may initiate investigations and lodge complaints of their own and so on. So I think the point is well made that the government is moving rather quickly into this area to take it over. I stopped and I said: now, why would the government be doing that? There must be something to this. Governments have a tendency to do things, of course, that sometimes favour their own political aspirations. I think we've seen one or two examples of that which have existed in the past.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No. No. Impossible.

MR. ZWOZDESKY: I appreciate the candour from members opposite joining in on that moment of humour.

I read here in certain sections of this proposed Bill where there is some preferential type of reporting that is being proposed. Almost a double standard is coming into play here, and we must check it. As you know from many of my previous addresses in this House, Mr. Speaker, I always try to help the government when it's doing something that potentially could get it into trouble, because I don't like to see the government get into too much trouble, especially not when they're spending my money doing it. So I see here a double standard possibly existing, because charities who solicit corporations or governments are not required to register their activity with the province. Now, what does that mean? It suggests, of course, that if the government wishes to make some kind of a large donation or if a corporation

wishes to make some kind of a large donation, well, that particular cause needn't worry about having to register or disclose perhaps the amount of money or the amount of contribution made.

So it raises, at least for me, a legitimate question as to why that type of double standard is potentially written into this particular Bill. I don't see that that is a very proactive thing, yet on the other side I see where there's accommodation within this Bill to look at things after the fact. In other words, organizations are required to keep on file all the records of contributions and so on for a period of three years. But that is something that comes into effect after the particular activity is in place. Why don't we take a look at stuff in a proactive sense and try and do something that is helpful in a preventative way, as a previous speaker on this side of the House had indicated? Here would be one prime example of where that could be done.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we're dealing with huge sums of money here, huge sums of money which I think the government would do well to protect for the donors as well as the recipients by revisiting that portion of the Act and perhaps changing it. The question really is: who monitors if the funds that were raised – the funds that are donated, in other words – are spent for the specific purposes originally noted? Who monitors that? And when organizations receive potentially large sums of money, as corporations and governments perhaps have been known to donate, who monitors those particular donations? Yes, it's possible three years after the fact, but why isn't there something preventative in there? Charitable organizations would surely appreciate that type of assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand full well that Bill 15 does attempt to consolidate the regulation of charities and the efforts of professional fund-raisers, and I want to make a quick comment on that, because I have known many professional and volunteer fund-raisers during my 30-plus years of activity in these benevolent areas. As I read that section through on professional fund-raisers on page 5, it brought to mind many good memories of many organizations that I've been associated with, including the Boy Scouts, which were referred to earlier. Here it says that there are certain ceilings that apply to what it is that governs Part 1 on soliciting contributions and that these particular "gross contributions of \$10,000 or more from persons in Alberta during that financial year" the charitable organizations have to report only – well, shall we say the professional fund-raiser has to report those things in a particular way. I think there should be some explanation that gives the charitable foundations a little more of an example, a leadership, if you will, as to how that's expected to be done.

As a previous colleague mentioned, we have seen in many instances some of these professional fund-raisers come along and take the larger part of the benefit, and that's not uncommon, Mr. Speaker. So again we're dealing with millions of dollars when we take the collective here, the whole, and I would hope that they would revisit that section for clarification because there are many things that need to be clarified here. That's one of them.

I think that the definitions of "charitable organization" and "charitable purpose" should also be looked at here very quickly, which I don't think are very complete at all. I also noted the use of the word "volunteer" as given throughout there, but they don't really specify the difference between the volunteers when it's an employee of the charitable organization that may choose to do some work beyond normal office hours. Specifically, they are excluded here from some of the, shall I use the word, "scrutiny" that would otherwise come upon any fund-raisers. On page 10 it

talks about: the following persons shall not be deemed professional fund-raisers. In other words, they will not fall under the same guidelines. I think there should and there could be something a little more standardized there, and I would just like that explained carefully by the author, perhaps, or by whomever, where they talk about employees of the charitable organization being used as solicitors for funds as well as clerical workers or whatever.

There's no specific definition here either that pleases me, Mr. Speaker, with regard to types of contributions made. We all understand financial ones, monetary ones. They're very clear; they're very easy to understand. But where the debate needs to take us is over here to a discussion on the definition or the lack of definition of goods and services and the fact that they are exempted from this particular Act. It says here that this Act does not apply to "a solicitation made by a charitable organization for goods or services," yet we all know full well that goods and services can constitute, in many instances, just as valuable if not a more valuable contribution than the finances that one might wish to give. For whatever reason, that seems to be excluded from the Act, and I just wondered why. In the case of truly charitable organizations, of course, they have a special ability to issue tax receipts, and tax receipts can and are issued for goods, services in kind, and so on. That perhaps should be visited by the author of the Bill as well.

4:00

I do want to make a couple of comments here as well about some of the sections of the Act that I do think are good. There are a few things that are mentioned here which the Act refers to that are fairly standard items and fairly standard practices that for the most part are already in place. I think while we are proposing suggestions, if not criticisms, on the one side, we also want to take a look at some characteristics of the Bill that appear on page 6, where we talk about providing accurate and full information to the people being solicited. I think we heard an eloquent couple of paragraphs on that point by the Member for Edmonton-Glengarry, who was recently visited by solicitors at his home.

I think there's another section here that talks about allowing time for these people that are being solicited to review the material and to respond. I think that's a credible attempt by the government.

There's something else here about maintaining financial and accounting records of all transactions and the fact that those people who are doing the fund-raising should provide receipts. Well, there's a great potential there for duplication of effort and energy if the person at the door is writing one type of receipt and then someone else is having to create another one later on which is the more official income tax receipt. Nonetheless, it's a credible attempt by the government to include something of concern in the Act, as well as the filing of audited statements which include how contributions will be spent or were spent.

There is another section of the Act that deals with the contraventions and the penalties to this Act, which include any contraventions to the criminal law or to any other forms of law. I see where it says on page 9, Mr. Speaker, that the minister must give written reasons for the decision. I welcome that, because I think that's something we don't see as often as we'd like: written responses, things that the ministers actually commit themselves to, in providing answers here during question period or out there during scrums. So I welcome that as a refreshing part of this particular Act.

I understand full well, Mr. Speaker, as do you, that some charitable organizations, in fact probably the majority of them, are

concerned that suddenly through this Act there is a possibility for a larger amount of paperwork to now be required of them, and it adds to their bureaucratic nightmares. I think that's very unfortunate, and the authors should perhaps visit the Bill back and see where they can in fact eliminate some of that paperwork for these organizations so that they would be truly a lot more streamlined. It's my view that we as legislators – and in this case critics of legislation – should always be in the practice of bringing in good laws and good Bills, good regulations that help organizations, especially charitable ones, increase the clarity or the fluidity of issues, not complicate them. I see a potential here for this particular Bill, if it goes through as it is, to really result in a lot of headaches down the line. I would ask the presenters to perhaps keep that in mind and to revisit it as they can.

So, in summary, Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude my comments by saying that as an Albertan and as an Alberta taxpayer I am concerned that a Bill like this, if it is going to go through, should be revisited and streamlined so that, first of all, there is a greater ability for people at the municipal level of government to have some input and some say in the awarding of the applications for fund-raising campaigns. I think that is where the real expertise exists and not at the provincial level.

Mr. Speaker, I hear the bell. I have many other comments I'd like to make, but I'll wait for another time and I'll pass to one of my colleagues. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a few comments on Bill 15 that I'd like to make as well. Often the public looks at members in this Legislature and looks for differences in approach or differences in philosophy between the government side and the opposition side. This Bill, in my opinion, outlines very clearly the difference in approach and in philosophy. The government would have the world operate with no government, with the minimal that you absolutely have to have to get by. On this side of the House we believe that there are times when judiciously the government must enter into the general workings of our province and provide some protection or guidelines. We're talking about protection for consumers; in this case, protection for donors and indeed protection for charities.

Mr. Speaker, as other members have outlined, we're facing this Bill because of the Court of Appeal's decision regarding charitable fund-raising. This was a beautiful, perfect opportunity for this government to enter into a much broader consultation with the charitable sector in Alberta with regard to what has developed over the last 20 years. Some of the members in the House have alluded to or spoken to the fact that charities are being asked to do more and more and more as governments are pulling out of badly needed services in our community. That point has been made, but there is another point that we had an opportunity to address in this Act. It has been raised in this Legislature, and I think the government has failed miserably in addressing the issue. Specifically, I am speaking to the definition of "charitable." There was a time in our province, in our country, when charitable, in terms of an organizational sense, meant that a group of people would come together for a common purpose. That purpose is to be doing something, providing something for others, not just for ourselves, but in a charitable nature providing some support, some services, or in some cases dollars or goods to others.

Mr. Speaker, what we've had develop in our province in the last 20 to 30 years is an incredible growth in terms of the number

of organizations that call themselves charitable. We all know that if the Salvation Army or the Red Cross comes to our door, that's a charitable organization. People in that organization very seldom use the services of the organization and in fact quite often devote their whole lives to providing service for others. But we've allowed the notion of a charitable organization to be that recreation club that I and my neighbours might choose to incorporate or to organize so that I and my neighbours can access charitable donations or services that we would rather not pay for.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when that kind of organization was limited to services to minors, such as minor sports and other minor recreation. But now we have that if a group of fellows in my neighbourhood decided to organize a rugby club purely for our own personal enjoyment and recreation, we can then call ourselves a charity and not only go and solicit under this Act charitable dollars from individuals and perhaps give tax receipts but also go to foundations, both private – and what I'd like to focus on is public and government-funded agencies and corporations and foundations – and get what are intended to be charitable dollars for our own personal recreation.

Mr. Speaker, we had a perfect opportunity to address this issue in this Bill, and the government hasn't even given it a shot. They haven't even tried to address the issue of separating what really is charitable in nature and what has been used in terms of that word charitable for personal or personal group services or gain. The point I want to make – and I'm going to leave it at this point – is that the definition of charitable has moved from really doing good works for others to a way of accessing fund-raising or being able to do fund-raising or accessing all levels of government dollars for our own personal benefit, if I can call it that, for our own personal services. We had an opportunity to address this. It needs to be addressed increasingly in this province and I daresay nationally. Charitable organizations – and I use that in the traditional sense – have had to compete increasingly for the limited amount of dollars that are out there for donations for charitable purposes.

4:10

Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity here to address that, to narrow that definition so that I as an individual couldn't just form a club of adults for a particular purpose which is essentially for the members of that club and be able to call it charitable. I regret that that major issue that is growing and growing in this province has been once more, one more time, ignored. I daresay I don't understand why it's been ignored, because members on both sides of this House have raised this issue both here and outside and have said that we've got to come to grips with it.

Mr. Speaker, I don't pretend it's going to be an easy issue, and I'm not going to pretend that if we really grapple with the issue, it's not going to cause me some discomfort and perhaps some votes for doing so, but there are times when you have to do the right thing. In this instance the government has chosen to simply walk around that whole issue and not deal with it, and I regret that. I would encourage the hon. member, who I believe brought the Bill forward in good faith, to take that back, reconsider that, and talk with some of his colleagues on his side of the House, as we have discussed on our side of the House, to look at better ways of dealing with that particular issue.

Mr. Speaker, there are problems with this Bill. I don't want to go section by section, but the Bill is basically based on the premise of buyer beware. It allows certain information and requires certain information to be available, but that seems to be arbitrary at best and doesn't really lead to a better informed

choice, on the whole, for the person being solicited. This is going to cause problems for churches and for other organizations that rely on things like the collection plate.

In section 3 it says that this doesn't apply to an organization if an organization solicits its own membership. That's fair, Mr. Speaker. One would think – and this is poor draftsmanship, in my view – that if the hon. member went to church and the collection plate came around and he gave his dollars to the collection plate, that would be soliciting from one's own member. Easter Sunday, going to church, I went to the church of my faith but not the church that I belong to. That collection plate came across me and I dutifully gave my contribution, but I was not a member of that particular organization. The organization, because it was a cash donation, has no record of who gave the donation. They have no record of who solicited because there's no sign-in requirement of the congregation. That particular kind of solicitation, which I think all members here would agree is an appropriate solicitation, would be in violation of the Act as presented. I think that is not the intent of the Act, but it is, one more time, poor drafting.

Mr. Speaker, this Act ignores the whole issue of the percentage of donations that are going to the cost of soliciting the donations and going to a professional third-party fund-raiser. This assumes a free-market model but only takes part of the free market and doesn't recognize the impact on perhaps the traditional charities. Let me give an example. This assumes that an individual will make a decision based on the information that is available that he asks for about a particular product, that being the charity. If that information is not satisfactory, the market will govern and individuals will withdraw their donations, and therefore that request from that particular organization or type of organization will dry up.

Mr. Speaker, what's really going to happen here is that you're going to have charitable organizations who are going out, following the letter of the law, trying to do a good job. Then you're going to get some less ethical organizations – and again we haven't well defined the nature of the word "charity" or "charitable purpose" here in this Act – go and solicit donations, and of those donations we'll see a very high percentage going to the third-party fund-raiser, because of course there's no limitation or even guideline in this Act. I would have preferred the government to work with the major charities and encourage them, prior to bringing in this Act and prior to getting to this point, to establish a provincewide council that would set some ethical standards so that individuals would know what is appropriate, in the eyes of people who deal with charitable organizations, in terms of overhead or fees for third-party fund-raising.

[The Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

It's not going to be long, Mr. Speaker, if this government shoves this Act through, before we're going to see an unscrupulous third-party fund-raiser – and not all are unscrupulous; I want to put that on record – go out and solicit a significant amount of money, the majority of it or perhaps all of it going to the third-party fund-raiser because there are no limitations in this Act. Then you're going to see the impact not just on that particular fund – and this is where the market model here falls down. The impact will not be just on that particular campaign or that particular organization but on all charities or on all charities of like.

Mr. Speaker, this is not like the situation a few years ago where we had the Coldbuster bars in our stores, and all of a sudden

some were reported to have been poisoned or tampered with and all of a sudden sales went down for that one bar. Sales didn't go down for other chocolate bars. What will happen here is that you will see one unscrupulous so-called charitable organization go out, there'll be stories in the media about none or very little of the money going to the people that really it was intended to go to, and all legal, all fair ball according to this particular piece of legislation, and then people are going to stop giving, not to that charity but to direct solicitation, period. That's going to hurt all charitable organizations. That's going to hurt charitable organizations that go door to door that do good work in our province and try to do good work for individuals.

Mr. Speaker, there is a clause in here that refers to the fact that an organization who has a campaign that solicits from corporations is not bound in terms of the limited registering that's required by this legislation. I don't understand that. This is quickly drawn up and assumes that this is solicitation going to the Imperial Oils of the world. But what about the solicitation that goes to the small business community, the one- or two-person operation that is incorporated, that is a corporation? There's going to be no registration or protection for those small businesspersons. I can tell you, from a constituency that has a lot of thriving small businesses in it, that that solicitation is not going to be required to be registered here, because it is going to be for corporations.

This legislation does not deal with soundlike kinds of solicitation. Mr. Speaker, I'm on record – it's clear – that part of my experience has been as director of the Canadian Mental Health Association in Edmonton and north. One of the problems we found there was that although we had a name that was incorporated under the Companies Act as a nonprofit corporation, other organizations could go out and do soundlikes, create organizations and charitable drives that sound like the Canadian Mental Health Association, which could be just "Mental Health" or could be just "Canadian Mental Association" or something. What actually happened is that we had what some believed to be a less than scrupulous solicitation of clothing do phone canvasses throughout the city of Edmonton and surrounding areas, using a name that people thought was the Canadian Mental Health Association. That wasn't a big problem except for the phone calls coming into the Mental Health Association saying, "Come pick up the clothes that we've got for you now."

4:20

What was happening was that those clothes were not going to the clients of the Mental Health Association or not even being given to Albertans who needed them but instead were being baled up and being sold out of province by the pound. Once people found that out, I started getting calls at the Mental Health Association, because there were news stories about this happening, about the nature of the drive. People still thought it was the Mental Health Association, and as director I received phone calls from donors saying, "I'm not going to give you cash next year if you're going to go and collect clothes that we thought were going to go to people in Edmonton who really needed them, who were getting out of the Alberta Hospital Edmonton or Ponoka," but indeed were being collected by another organization that used a name that was very similar. I think this legislation ignores the soundlikes, if I can say it that way, and ignores any provision that would require an organization to make it crystal clear on the telephone, when they are soliciting, who indeed they are soliciting for and who they are not.

Mr. Speaker, there's a very worrisome clause in this legislation regarding business goods and services donations, requiring

businesses to provide the disclosure, not the charities to provide disclosure of what they get but the businesses to provide disclosure about what they give. There are many service businesses that provide products and services that at one time or another have given without charge those services or businesses to a charity. One of the things that they don't want – and let me slip back. Quite often it happens because of a personal contact. One of the key staff people or proprietors of the organization has agreed to give . . .

DR. WEST: There is tax involved here.

MR. HENRY: The minister of transportation can enter into debate, I'm sure, after I sit down, Mr. Speaker, but he's trying to do that now.

The point here is that we have a business that's solicited because of a personal connection with the proprietors or the staff. They give to one charitable organization, and anybody else can come in and say, "What have you given to charitable organizations?" according to this Act, and then be able to go and solicit for the same kind of service or donation. Larger businesses have told us repeatedly that if they do slip a bit of the service or goods on the side to a charitable organization, they don't want to have that widely known usually because they don't want to be inundated by similar organizations asking for exactly the same: "Well, you gave it to them. Why can't you give it to us?" That's going to dry up, I believe, some of the donations for charitable organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I question some of the record-keeping here. I think and I believe that the requirement for keeping track of donations received is a very positive one and a very good one, but you're going to have a lot of organizations, especially small ones who don't have staff, who are going to be out soliciting. They have to keep records of who they solicit for a particular period of time. I'd be more comfortable with that if that could be more broadly defined. If the community league in my neighbourhood decides to do a door-to-door canvass for the victims of the Oklahoma bombing, for instance, then there should be some provision where, as a solicitation in terms of charitable giving, that organization does not have to write down every single household and the name of the person they solicited but instead can report that they solicited all the households within a particular geographic region. That's not included in this Bill. I think it's not well enough thought out. Again, the community that I live in, for some causes it is very quickly able to raise \$10,000, which would then fit under the jurisdiction of this particular piece of legislation. One of the things that we know about Albertans is that Albertans are a giving people. Albertans are a people who respond to tragedy or diversity.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to raise the issue of complaints. I want to raise the issue of how complaints about charities are dealt with and investigative powers. I would like to raise, as well, the issue of why the government has seen fit to centralize this particular function when, goodness knows, they haven't been able to do anything better than any municipality in this province, but I will do that the next time I have an opportunity to speak.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to speak to the Bill, the Charitable Fund-Raising Act. In looking over the

documents in front of me, I've come to the conclusion that this Bill has significant flaws within it that I'm quite surprised the government has not looked at and would be very shocked and dismayed, as I'm sure many of the charities will be as well, if by some chance we do get past second reading of this Bill and enter Committee of the Whole and there are no amendments that are approved within the Legislative Assembly. I'm particularly concerned, I guess, in terms of the letters that I've looked at from the mayor of Calgary as well as the recommendations that have been brought forward by the city of Edmonton's executive committees.

Now, I remember sitting in this Legislative Assembly a mere two weeks ago when the Minister of Labour quoted at length from documents that were put forward by the different municipalities supporting a particular Bill, Bill 3, that the Minister of Labour was putting forward. He seemed to take much glee in terms of reading out the mayor's position from the city of Edmonton as well as the mayor's position from the city of Calgary as well as the recommendations that were put forward by AUMA. Here we have a very similar situation in terms of a Bill that's been put forward by the government, Bill 15. We're starting to get similar types of letters from the municipalities, but these letters are saying: "No. There are some significant flaws within the Bill, so don't pass it."

Though I recognize that there was a court order, that there are certain sections of the Bill that are livable and, of necessity, will require to be passed, there are other sections of the Bill that have significant problems within them. The hon. members from Edmonton-Glengarry, Edmonton-Centre, Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan and speakers who have spoken before me I think have put forward quite clearly what the problems are within the Bill. When we look at the fund-raising sector, and this is for the nonprofit groups within Alberta, there are currently 465 nonprofit groups that submitted reports in 1992 – the 1993 figures I don't have available – about their fund-raising activities. They raised a total \$112.5 million. Now, this is an incredible, quite a staggering amount of money when one thinks about it. What we're going to probably see is an increase in nonprofit organizations attempting to raise dollars in order to ensure that their services are being provided. Whether it's a university, whether it's a hospital, a lot of the former areas that had received dollars from government will now be looking to the public to supply the dollars for their particular institutions. I think that when we look at that, it becomes more and more obvious that we should not rush ahead and create more of a problem than needs to be created at this point in time.

4:30

Again, I know the government will say that they are very wise and that whatever Act they bring forward is complete and we don't need to worry about it. But all we need to do is look at the amendments that we're now seeing to the freedom of information Act that we passed in the last session. All we need to do is look at the amendments to the Municipal Government Act, which is a small book in and of itself, that was passed last session. All we have to do is look at the amendments that were brought forward with regards to the School Act; those were just about as big as the Act itself.

At this point in time the government can quite easily look at what needs to be changed within the Act, look at the concerns of the municipalities – and I'm sure there will be more concerns brought forward – and look at the concerns that are listed in a document that I have in front of me, a summary report from the Canada West Foundation, which talks about the regulation of

charities in Alberta and outlines very precisely the key elements, issues, and alternatives. If the government members don't have this document and would like to receive a copy of it, I'm sure the hon. Member for Clover Bar-Fort Saskatchewan will be more than willing to provide them with that document. It talks about the key elements, the purposes of the Act, the issues, and what some of the alternative approaches could be that are put forward. It talks in terms of the purposes of the Act. Though the purpose of the Act as outlined in the legislation is laudable, one of the alternative approaches that has been outlined by the Canada West Foundation is to preserve the essential trust relationship between charities and their donors by promoting ethical practices and to do that by providing the public with both financial statements and information about fund-raising practices.

With regards to disclosure of financial information, there are definitely some problems in that area within the legislation. The alternative approach that's recommended is to encourage charities to develop common standards regarding the identification of administrative and fund-raising costs and requires the disclosure of fund-raising practices.

Registration is one of the more contentious areas, where the Act talks about a charity that is raising more than \$10,000 per year needs to be registered. The suggestion in terms of the alternative approach is that there needs to be a range of criteria for registration based upon fund-raising practices and that the registration threshold amount be raised to \$25,000. There is, I'm sure, no one in this Legislative Assembly that has not been approached by someone at their doorstep asking for dollars. I think that when that occurs, a lot of times the people that are at the doorstep are children. In reality, they probably do not have a lot of the information that we would be asking them to have, but the organization itself should be able to provide that information, should be required to let myself or anyone else in the Assembly and especially the public know what the percentages are with regards to the amount of dollars that go to the fund-raiser as opposed to the charity.

Another one of the concerns is the lack of municipal involvement with regards to the approval of charities as well as with regards to ensuring that the different campaigns do not occur at the same point in time. I think this is especially important, again, as we see more and more charities appearing on the horizon, and that is a problem.

One of the other recommendations is that the Bill should be more of a preventative Bill, protecting the public, as opposed to a reactive Bill and that both the city of Edmonton as well as the city of Calgary should be involved and consulted with regards to the enactment of this particular legislation.

There are a number of other points that I'm sure will arise throughout the discussions that we will be having on this particular Bill. As I indicated at the outset, the willingness of the government to listen to other bodies as long as those bodies are in concurrence with what the government wishes to pass I think should be extended to the willingness of the government to listen when there is constructive advice given as to the changes required in a particular piece of legislation.

With that, I close my comments. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for St. Albert.

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we look at this Bill, we know that some changes have been forced on us from the court system, that changes have to be made, but we also have to

reflect on the tremendous changes taking place in fund-raising right across our province. In the different communities I visit there are probably twice as many groups trying to raise funds at this time as in the past. The old, established groups are having tremendous problems, taking a lot more energy and time to meet their fund-raising needs. Many organizations are not meeting their fund-raising needs. So as we look at this Bill, we know that certain things have to be addressed.

One concern is that there should be rules set for the organizations, as mentioned before, on the amount that goes to professional fund-raisers. I know that once, years ago, I was asked to donate, and I asked what the administration cost was, expecting it to be 8 or 10 percent. They said: 82 percent. Eighty-two percent for professional fund-raisers. I said, "No, thank you." I'm one who believes your money should go to specific things and, when possible, avoid the professional fund-raisers for charitable groups. I know because of the new concerns, the new areas that we're trying to reach out through the organizations to help people throughout the province that this is not always possible, but 82 percent is much too high. Then I asked: "What is the provincial average?" They said: 59 percent – 59 percent that particular year. That again wasn't acceptable to myself. I like some groups where 100 percent of the funds raised goes to projects. That, to me, is the way to go wherever possible. So we need rules and direction on the percentage laid out so everyone knows specifically how much goes to professional fund-raisers, where the money is going. It's important that we know about certain projects so we can prioritize. Last year I had over 65 different groups approach me for funds. Then there were about 20 others that were around that I know of, and I also took part in some of the fund-raising myself.

It is extremely difficult to fund-raise. Many people volunteer, but the last thing they really want to do is go out and fund-raise. They find that very frustrating, very hard. They want to serve, help other people, as Albertans do. Albertans want to give. If they can't find time to volunteer their own self in service to others, they want to give, and they give till it hurts. Even then, they give even more. It only takes one group to rip off the residents – one – and then they say: "Forget it. We're not interested in being ripped off again." One bad group.

So it's important, as the law is being changed, that it be done right. There should have been consultation ahead of time. They knew a year ago that they had to change this law. Why didn't they meet with the groups that have done it for years? Also, I guess you'd probably need more educators in the government so they can foresee what's going to happen and prevent things from happening. That's what educators do. We need more of that type of thinking – if we bring this in, what are the consequences? – and pick them up before the Bill comes forward, or have a joint committee of both sides of the House go through it, as has happened in the past and has improved and made a much better Bill.

4:40

I guess I do have questions for the member who introduced it. Are you going to be bringing forward amendments? Will we have these amendments ahead of time so we can look at them to see what amendments we may want to bring forward? Is that a possibility? Is that what's going to happen – ahead of time – so we can make this the best Bill possible and meet the various concerns that were addressed a couple of weeks ago, when it was introduced, and also today?

As I look at the different things – I received a phone call, last week it was, Mr. Speaker, from a fund-raising group. I politely said: "No. I support two of the groups in St. Albert." I wasn't interested. The person got very rude, very obnoxious. I want to be able to phone up with my complaints and tell the group or whoever is in charge without having to spend an hour trying to figure out who it is or why it is. There have to be some means of being able to handle complaints that come. I know this doesn't happen very often, but it does happen.

It also happens that we need to look completely at the total fund-raising picture and see exactly where we want to go, not just this year but over the next five years, 10 years, 25 years, so we can also approach what needs to be done in a more positive and more beneficial way. Some people are saying that instead of having a hundred groups approaching them for fund-raising, they'd rather give \$500 at the onset of the year. That way they're not receiving phone calls every night at supper time and people are not knocking at the doors all the time. There could be a way of doing it where the fund-raisers get together with the government, where there's some leadership.

DR. WEST: The court said no.

MR. BRACKO: Well, we can change it. That's why we're the Legislative Assembly, you know. [interjections]

Speaker's Ruling Decorum

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Hon. members, through the Chair, please. [interjections] Order. Waving back and forth or pointing at this member or that member or a particular member is maybe interesting at a hockey game, but what we want is to debate the Bill and you really addressing it through the Chair. Also, the hon. minister, who has been reminded by earlier speakers, will have an opportunity to enter into the debate on this important Bill.

St. Albert. [some applause]

MR. BRACKO: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

MR. GERMAIN: We'll even give him a round of applause if he stands up.

MR. BRACKO: Yes, you bet, if he stands up. I guess he has his one pat speech and can't go beyond that. [interjections]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. member, you are invited to continue the debate on Bill 15.

Debate Continued

MR. BRACKO: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, and I'm addressing through you, what we need in the future is an overall plan for fund-raising so we don't get a hundred phone calls every other night or we don't get approached at our door when we're having family time together. We could work some process through. We have computer technology. We have so many other things that can be done and done well, but we need leadership. I know that when we become the government, we'll be giving that leadership, but we'll be lacking it until that time. That's maybe only a year and a half away, so we look forward to that and we're preparing for it, and that's good, you know.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the government has not looked into the lottery funds that have taken away from fund-raising, and that

needs to be addressed and maybe will be addressed in the lottery report. But that has greatly taken away from our fund-raisers. Volunteers are saying: "Forget it. If we have to compete with the government for fund-raising and we don't have a level playing field, we don't want to do it." They get tired of that. They want to give.

We need to address these in amendments. We'd appreciate amendments coming from the other side so we know exactly where they plan to go to correct the imbalance in the Bill to make it a Bill that all Albertans can use. Maybe a plan for five years down the road we'd like to see from the government. If not, we're going to have to do it ourselves. Mr. Speaker, I know it's appropriate that we do get a Bill in place to assist the fund-raisers.

I want to in conclusion thank all of the fund-raisers across this province for their hard work, for the hours they give, for their dedication and commitment to their fellow residents. With that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, rise to speak to Bill 15, the Charitable Fund-Raising Act. I wasn't going to rise, but the Provincial Treasurer's comments put me to my feet. He was, I think, highlighting some of the concerns with this piece of potential legislation.

At this time of year I know the Treasurer, like myself, is invited – in fact, perhaps the minister of transportation is invited as well – to a large number of community events where they are honouring their volunteers. This piece of potential legislation: what I think it does is it starts to focus some of the work of the charities on bureaucracy, on pedaling paper and not doing the charitable work, the philanthropic work, that they exist to do. So I have a bit of a concern with that. I'd like to see government do whatever it can to promote charities and their ability to carry on that nature of work. We hear in this Legislature so often debated that industry and businesses are being deregulated in various areas, in fact in the area of the environment, yet when it comes to charities, to those people who give of themselves to generate either services or funds to help their neighbours, fellow Albertans, then we see that there is the potential to increase regulation on them. I have a bit of a concern with that.

When I look at the Act, particularly section 6(1), I see "providing information during solicitation." I have a concern with that. As one of my colleagues, in fact the Member for Fort McMurray, said some time ago: when you have Boy Scouts collecting a few dollars for maybe camp or to purchase some equipment, Mr. Speaker, then what they have to do is provide information that's required by the regulations. Well, that's fine, but this Act doesn't tell us what those regulations are nor what the information is that they will be required to present, and I'd like to know that prior to okaying this Bill being passed.

Secondly, they need to provide the individual from whom they're soliciting with "an adequate opportunity to review the information." Now, I wonder if this is making it two times as difficult. Depending on the amount of information which will be defined by regulation, that Boy Scout may have to come back the next day or the next week or maybe a week later. So now that organization has to do twice as much work to generate the same or perhaps less money. In these difficult times, when I'm speaking with different community leagues and the nonprofit associations within my constituency, we're seeing that volunteers

are being overworked and it's harder to find new volunteers, Mr. Speaker, because people are facing a more difficult environment out there. I just see this as becoming somewhat cumbersome for people who give of themselves: to have to not give once but in fact twice, maybe return a second time.

The other area, Mr. Speaker, which I had a concern with was when we looked to the registration of a charitable organization. There is once again a reference that they will be required to "provide the information required [under] regulations." Once again there is no indication as to what the nature of this information is. Secondly, once again we see this: it's not a tax; it's a fee. There's going to be a fee established under the regulations. Once again a reference to regulations, saying that that's where you'll find this new fee. No member of this Assembly has any idea what that fee will be. In fact, I would suggest that that fee should be established in this legislation and not left to regulations, because we may find that it may become a cumbersome amount or an amount too large for some small organizations, those organizations which are trying to generate just \$12,000 in one year for their charitable activities. So I see that as a double whammy. I see that as a new tax, a tax on the charitable sector, and once again leaving too much to regulation. I'm not sure who will be determining those regulations once that legislation, if passed, passes through this Assembly.

4:50

The last point that I had a concern with, Mr. Speaker, is the amount of power given to the minister. It seems to me that on page 9 of this Act it states:

The Minister may also refuse to register or renew the registration of a charitable organization if the Minister has reasonable grounds to believe that the charitable organization or any of its principals, directors or managers will contravene this Act.

Well, just this afternoon we saw the Premier stand up in response to a question, and he chose not to answer it on the basis that it began with "if," saying that that's hypothetical. Well, here we see: if there are grounds to believe that someone will contravene this Act. Mr. Speaker, it's far too vague. We need some definition. If you state and you stipulate criteria, I'm sure that that will be enough to remove this onerous task from the minister. In fact, I think the minister would appreciate it if we looked at that particular point of the legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments and those few concerns – I think that if we do sometimes need to bring legislation back and revitalize it, make it current, make it better, that's fine. But I see that this has to go back to the drafting table and has to be reworked to make it the best possible legislation it can be so we don't have to revisit it again this fall. That seems to be the order of the day: we debate it now and then we revise it again in the fall. So let's do the job at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on this – certainly anyone that's gone through it will realize it's a very complicated and intricate Bill, that it would be almost impossible for any one person or researcher going through it to spot all the repercussions that could come from it or follow from it. So the suggestion by my hon. colleague that the debate for this be shelved until this autumn or this fall, when we'll all be back together as one happy bunch trying to think of ways to bedevil the

electorate with overregulation – we can then look at this. Maybe we'll have had feedback during the summer.

I don't know how much feedback we'll get because I don't think the average Albertan, unless they are more mentally ill than I think, spends their summer perusing the spring's *Hansards*, deciding just what they want to bring up for the fall. Nevertheless, there'll be a certain amount of discussion going on. I notice, Mr. Speaker, you've expressed a certain amount of almost wonderment. As I recall, having toured your constituency, I don't think there are any more of them during the summer months reading *Hansards* of what happened in the spring than there are in my constituency.

Nevertheless, I think Bill 15 has been cobbled together – that's a fine Old Saxon word, Mr. Speaker, which means nailed and patched together – in answer to the Alberta Court of Appeal, who last June declared that sections of the Constitution Act were unconstitutional. Now, it's not unusual for Albertans to try to do things that are unconstitutional, all the way from \$20-a-month dividends back in the '30s to trying to change or control the energy prices of Alberta in the '80s and at various other times where we have come into conflict with the national government on the Constitution. Yet it's rather intriguing that when we find something unconstitutional, it still doesn't stop the province from stopping any constitutional change. We're an interesting group of people. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that when there was an attempt after Meech Lake to change the Constitution, Albertans all voted against changing it. However, they are a group that quite often challenge it. So when faced with the facts, Albertans have a tendency not to want to change, if you face them with that. But if the Supreme Court orders us to change . . .

I think there are a number of things that haven't been addressed, and it looks as if they've moved too fast on this; for instance, organizations that set up a chair and a display in our malls, which have become sort of the meeting places where most of our public moves. It would appear to me as if they wouldn't be allowed to get donations from people walking by because of the receipt system.

This is similar to the collection plate idea. The reason I steered clear of the collection plate is that I wondered how many Albertans really put money in a collection plate anyhow and, secondly, how many might leap at the chance to be able to tell their local minister that it's illegal for them to donate. So that I didn't want to get into. I remember years ago when I was a student, I had to go part-time to a religious institution. One of the fellows in the row, when the collection plate came by, always used to hit it very thickly with his index finger, making all the coins jump in the air and come down again. It sounded like he'd dropped in what was about the equivalent of four loonies, but this was before loonies came along.

Anyhow, the whole idea of collections from people as they pass by in a mall seems to be left out. I think it's quite important, because that is an area where many people move back and forth all the time. With people like the Provincial Treasurer or the minister of agriculture, that's probably the only place they can be apprehended to give a donation to charity. I think that's one thing that hasn't been covered.

The other one is that it gives the impression, reading this, that any charitable organization that uses minors, or people that are under age . . . [interjection] I'll just wait until they get their yelling over with.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. ministers, we're hearing more of your conversation than we are of the speech from the Member

for Redwater, and that probably is not being fully recorded in *Hansard*.

I would invite the hon. Member for Redwater to continue.

MR. N. TAYLOR: One of them is getting to the age where he can't hear, and the other doesn't want to hear, so they have to yell back and forth in a very loud voice to make each other heard. I could read their lips, and it was rather intriguing to hear what they were both saying. Neither one could understand the other.

Nevertheless, any charity that would be using minors to collect – and I think a lot of us have answered the doorbell at different times for people who were selling cookies or chocolate bars or one that I have never been able to resist, Mr. Speaker, those chocolate-covered nuts that come in a box.

MRS. HEWES: You suck the chocolate off them.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Yeah, that's right. Chocolate-covered almonds. Actually, there maybe should be for people like me a law that forbids chocolate-covered almonds being sold at the door, because I'm a sucker for those and always buy them regardless of the charity that's offering them.

The fact of the matter is that it would appear that if young people come to the door, people that are underage, under 18, they wouldn't be able to collect. That's one of the areas in this Bill that it seems hasn't been looked at in the drafting of the rules, and that concerns me, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to see whoever is piloting this try to answer that question. I think it was a he, wasn't it?

5:00

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: It was a he.

MR. N. TAYLOR: It's a he, yeah. It must have been a he; no woman would leave a housekeeping mess like this.

Mr. Speaker, there is the overall worry, of course, that the new Act makes it more cumbersome and expensive for charitable organizations, a lot of them already squeezed by government cutbacks and the transfer by the government of so much of their responsibility to the private sector, that this is just one more hassle that they have to look at.

Mr. Speaker, one of the areas – and I don't know if it's been touched on that much by the previous speakers – is that it seems there will no longer be a prescreening process involved in the registration of a charity or professional fund-raiser. Now, I don't see how they were able to read the Alberta Court of Appeal's decision of June of last year declaring certain sections unconstitutional. I don't see where that had any connection at all with our prescreening process. I think the prescreening process is a very important one, because although the government is notorious for maybe not being up to speed on some things, they certainly should be better informed and have at their fingertips more facilities to check out a charity than any individual does. In other words, to allow an organization to get by without prescreening seems to be a rather foolish way of operating. It's very similar to the way the minister of environment does private logging. He waits until a 75-year-old tree is cut down and the thing's eroding, and then maybe we will go out and fine them.

Well, if there's no prescreening process, we apparently seem to be setting up a process whereby unscrupulous people or groups calling themselves charitable funds can go out and start collecting, and of course if we find out about it later, we could challenge them or take them to court. Now, Mr. Speaker, like the hon. minister of environment with this business of after the trees are

cut down deciding whether there's environmental damage or not, it's too late. In other words, the damage is done. I don't think the contributor matters that much – I suppose that the average contributor might be out what they've given to an organization – but it's what kind of a reputation or what kind of a climate it creates for the legitimate collectors and legitimate charitable organizations that have to then go out into the community and try to raise money.

If there's even one bad egg, one bad apple – and there's likely to be more under this system. Being in Alberta, I guess, now that the bull trout is our provincial symbol, even one bad fish in the whole group can create an aura or a climate that's going to make it very difficult for the other charitable organizations to proceed. Now, Mr. Speaker, there are some of the larger municipalities that I think can cover this. The cities of Calgary and Edmonton . . .

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, Redwater. I was trying to direct the minister to either take his seat or take his leave.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Should I wait till he leaves? He has a nasty habit of turning around and talking to the last person in the row there.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the Bill, Redwater.

MR. N. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really sympathize with your job of trying to keep the whole cage there happy. You should try bringing in bananas. That might keep them occupied for a while, and they wouldn't talk as much. Preferably green bananas. It would hold them the whole day.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, going on from there, the large municipalities have the ability to check out and prescreen a great many of these applicants, whereas smaller municipalities do not have the prescreening abilities to go about checking out whether some of the fund-raisers are indeed as legitimate as they claim they are. This doesn't seem to be covered.

I think one of the processes of government, Mr. Speaker, surely must be to speak for the voiceless and defend the defenceless. This government has a tendency, I think, all too often to speak for those with power and those with the loudest voices. In other words, we've got things reversed. You really don't need government if you're going to let the ones with the loudest voices and the deepest pockets control society. Government becomes fairly useless. So government's sole purpose is to speak for the voiceless and to defend the defenceless. Somehow this type of legislation seems to add to the idea that power is what it ultimately costs, and the size of the organization and the ability to go on is all that's needed. Well, I would like to argue that some of our smaller municipalities should have the chance to be able to refer to the Alberta government to set some sort of a prescreening process.

Now, one of the other areas I noticed was private companies. I'm not a lawyer, and that's usually something that I thank God for every day. Sitting next to one, Mr. Speaker, is usually all that is necessary for it to rub off. I don't know if it was touched on here. Bill 15 would not prevent private companies who make profits through fund-raising from taking up to 90 percent of the money they raise for charities. In other words, private companies who are hired to go out and raise money do not seem to be covered or at least covered to the extent of how much they can charge. At least that's the impression I get from this, and this was written, to me, by one of the greatest Tories in Alberta. I won't mention his name on this side of the House because he

would be mortified, but he is a lobbyist, and he has worked for many years in the arts. So he knows whereof he speaks. I just say he; that means only half of society.

MR. DECORE: It's not you, Stan.

MR. N. TAYLOR: The lawyer grabbed it out of my hand, but luckily he couldn't read much more than the X marks, so the secret is still safe.

So a large percentage of the money could be collected by private fund-raisers. It at least appears from that Bill that it could be done. I think something that sets the commission or the amount of profit that could be made by a private organization when they went out to collect money should be somewhere in the Bill.

No, Mr. Speaker, the more you look at it, indeed it is a Bill that looks like it was put together in haste, because it doesn't even mention possibly a simple police check or the Better Business Bureau or something to check out the organizations before they get licensed. In other words, the government wouldn't have to spend big money. They could go to a private organization like the Better Business Bureau . . . [interjections]

Does the sponsor of the Bill want the floor back to say that he's going to take it back till fall? Of course, if he wants the floor back, he doesn't have to apologize. He just has to take it back. I mean, after all, a lot of us have done a lot of foolish things in our lives. I would never even think of rubbing his nose into it if he takes it back.

Even something in the legislation that said that they would have to check the local constabulary or the police to see whether the person should be allowed to proceed would be something, I think, a step in the right direction.

5:10

Now, Mr. Speaker, I guess maybe the definitions of charitable organizations and charitable purpose – in other words there are two things. You can be a charitable organization that's out there getting money, or you can be a private organization that's going out to solicit money for a charitable purpose. Those are two different items, and they're not covered at all in this setup. As a matter of fact, I don't know if the hon. member proposing it has thought that maybe it's possible that some people would be attempting to avoid registration by claiming that the definition excludes their organizations or causes. I'm thinking of sports teams and social clubs and so on. It is possible that they could say that they are not for profit and that they represent sports teams and social clubs, so therefore they should not be registered. Yet that's a big part of our money-raising in the area.

The other area that seems to be a little difficult or a little vague is donations for work or effort. In other words, voluntary organizations might have somebody that volunteers – oh, the local hockey club that cleans off the rink every Saturday morning. Say that he's a wealthy senior – and there are not many of those left in Alberta any more, but let's say he was – he'd probably appreciate a receipt at the end of the winter season giving him a donation for the amount of help. [interjection] If it was the hon. veterinarian from Vermilion, that'd only be a nickel an hour, but some other people might be worth the minimum wage, \$5 or \$6 an hour that they should get a receipt for.

So if the hon. Member for Pincher Creek-Macleod would look into the area, the whole field of donated help – and I think that's more and more important as we get older. We have more and more seniors in our retirement force that may be retired because they had no choice, that are really healthy and full of vim and

vigour, and it would keep them out of the bars or fooling around or anything like that. There's nothing better than to be doing volunteer work in the community, and maybe they should be recognized for that, Mr. Speaker, a nice little donation. I know that I would appreciate it when the income tax people come around and claw back most of my pension. Then I'd say: hell, I can hold on to some of it here because I've got a charitable donation for working in a charitable area. Of course, one of the charities I don't think would be allowed is giving advice to the government, even though they might use it. But clearly there is a problem here.

There's also the question, Mr. Speaker . . . [interjection] I've got 10 minutes yet? Holy smokes. I've never been one to monopolize the House's time, Mr. Speaker. No, no. But I do have one other important . . .

MRS. HEWES: The bell just rang. The bell went.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. If I can just add a few comments. I appreciate the circumstances that forced this Bill into being and that the member brought it forward for that reason. The difficulty for me is that I think it probably creates more problems than it solves. What we had happening was working reasonably well. I understand the challenge to the courts and that we had to fix that, but I think that in fixing it with this Bill, we have not really cured the problem. We may in fact have compounded it, and I hope the sponsor of the Bill will think through it very carefully and give it a chance to get out to the public and get more response than we've had to date.

Mr. Speaker, of course, a number of people have said that it's too vague. I believe that since we had an opportunity and a reason to develop a Bill for charitable contributions, we should have really put the time into doing it and doing it right at this point in time. This kind of Bill, in my opinion, has to be developed to offer protection to the consumer and the public who are being invited to participate. It has to offer protection for legitimate fund-raisers and has to offer some protection to municipal jurisdictions who heretofore had some responsibility in doing some of the screening and, I think, did an admirable job. They are the people who are on the front lines, the gatekeepers. They know who needs money, and they know how much money is needed in what year.

Mr. Speaker, I have deplored the proliferation of foundations in our province that have been allowed to develop without much in the way of regulation, in many cases have been forced into raising money, taking on what has heretofore been considered a public responsibility. We see foundations now in every health care institution around the province, every major one certainly. We see foundations in every educational institution. You know, in your cynical moments – the benefactors are the families of people who have perhaps been treated in that hospital or in fact were deceased in that institution – it sort of gets to be a competition as to who you've got, what important people you've been able to treat in your institution. Then that changes substantively how our foundations function and how the government creates its budgets.

Mr. Speaker, we've also seen the proliferation of professional fund-raisers so that every institution that needs to have a foundation must hire a fund-raiser, and there's a tremendous amount of competition there. Other members have commented on the

abundance of door-to-door and telephone solicitations that are in fact a nuisance, some of them entirely legitimate and some where it's very difficult to find out what in fact they're attempting to do. Of course the government has gone into competition with many of the fund-raising charitable organizations through the development of VLTs.

Mr. Speaker, having written an Act, I would have expected it to specify some control, some percentage that would be allowed to go to the cost of raising the money as opposed to that being open ended. I think the public has a right to expect that.

Mr. Speaker, I have noted a few specifics that I think cause me some concern. The \$10,000 threshold. What about those suborganizations of major provincial organizations? It's not defined as to how they would raise money and what it would mean to them, the local groups of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, 4-H clubs. One member has already commented on the problems of church organizations and whether or not they would have to give specific receipts for everything that came in at a church on a Sunday morning or at another time. The removal of any responsibility from municipal organizations I think is unfortunate, because I do believe they know the best, and I think a shared power would probably serve our communities better than taking everything in and centralizing it.

Mr. Speaker, just finally, I hope this Act will not go on to being a piece of legislation until it has had some wider consultation. I think it has had insufficient. I think, in other words, that we've had a golden opportunity here to do something that was correct, forced upon us by the courts. I'm glad that something has come forward, but I think it still requires a great deal more work in order to satisfy those protections that I mentioned earlier.

Mr. Speaker, with respect I would move to adjourn the debate on Bill 15.

5:20

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has moved that we adjourn debate. All those in favour of this motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is defeated.

The hon. Member for Pincher Creek-MacLeod to conclude debate.

MR. COUTTS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I acknowledge all of the members opposite and all of their fine comments, suggestions, and fears as they've gone through the Bill. I just want to make mention that we have had consultation developing this Bill, in fact extensive consultation, and we're prepared to take this and look at the regulations and deal with them on a consultation basis with the stakeholders and those people involved. It has evolved to this point, and we're prepared to do that in Committee of the Whole.

Therefore I move second reading of Bill 15.

[Motion carried; Bill 15 read a second time]

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:25 p.m.]

