

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Title: Monday, April 1, 1996

1:30 p.m.

Date: 96/04/01

[The Speaker in the Chair]

head: **Prayers**

THE SPEAKER: Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks for the bounty of our province: our land, our resources, and our people.

We pledge ourselves to act as good stewards on behalf of all Albertans.

Amen.

Please be seated.

head: **Presenting Petitions**

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition signed by 29 residents of Calgary who are urging the government to maintain the Bow-Crow forest headquarters office within the city of Calgary.

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

MS CARLSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to present two petitions today, one on behalf of Dan Knott junior high school and one on behalf of J.H. Picard French immersion school. They are both urging the government to establish "a provincial child abuse registry paralleling that of Manitoba, and provincial support for a national child abuse registry."

head: **Tabling Returns and Reports**

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to table with the Legislative Assembly six copies of the report entitled *The Economics of Single Desk Selling of Western Canadian Grain*. Additional copies of this report can be obtained through my office.

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

MR. ADY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table six copies of a news release from the Department of Post-secondary Education and Skills Training in Saskatchewan which announces a risk-sharing agreement for student loans in that province which follows the pattern that was set by Alberta last year. It's one more government that has moved in that direction, along with the federal government.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table four copies of the Alberta Labour Relations Board annual report 1994-95.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Minister of Community Development.

MR. MAR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table six copies of a letter to the NAIT Ooks on winning an unprecedented seventh national hockey title at the Canadian Colleges Athletic Association championships in Ontario this weekend. The letter also refers to the fact that coach Don Depoe earned coach of the year award from the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference, and we wish him every success in his move to Germany as a first-division coach.

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

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to table this afternoon copies of my correspondence dated March 28 to the Government House Leader asking for supporting backup information with respect to certain claims he's made about cost savings as a result of the new budget scrutiny process.

Thank you.

head: **Introduction of Guests**

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 class from the F.G. Miller school from Elk Point, and they're accompanied today by their two teachers Mme Lily Pentek and Mr. Michael O'Neill. It's a grade 9 class, and amongst other subjects they're taking local history and also French education in grade 9. I'd like them to rise and receive the traditional applause from our Assembly.

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

MR. BRACKO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to present to you and Members of the Legislative Assembly a former student at St. Albert high, a graduate in political science from the U of A. She's seated in the public gallery: Laura Woodward. I'd ask that she rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly.

head: **Oral Question Period**

Human Rights Commission

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the government claims in a press release by the minister responsible for human rights in December that "human rights protection is a vital part of the Alberta Advantage," but by systematically undermining the Human Rights Commission, as it has done, this government is sending the wrong message to entrepreneurial immigrants who are concerned about the government's perspective on human rights. With its new Bill 24 the government will even further weaken the Human Rights Commission. To the Premier: since the commission is supposed to be independent, why is the Premier giving control of the so-called human rights education fund to the Minister of Community Development instead of to the commission?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, generally what we're trying to do is maintain the integrity of the Human Rights Commission, maintain the integrity of multiculturalism in this province, and at the same time achieve some efficiencies within the programs.

Relative to the details, I'll have the hon. minister supplement.

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Commission is independent of the province of Alberta. In provinces across Canada human rights commissions report to a minister. They do not report in general to Legislatures as a whole with the exception of the province of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, nobody in government has interfered with the investigative and work process carried out by the Human Rights Commission. We've added additional resources where necessary in order to allow human rights complaints to be dealt with in a much more expeditious manner. Last week the Liberals put out a press release that frankly is erroneous on many different points.

Clearly the hon. members have not read the legislation which has been tabled before this House.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to education, education is clearly the most important element of protecting human rights in the province of Alberta. As a result, we had a relatively modest amount of money in the education fund, we have hired an education officer to deal with the area, and we have put resources towards it. So human rights in this province according to almost 90 percent of Albertans are very well looked after.

MR. MITCHELL: To the Premier: since the commission is supposed to be independent, why is the Premier changing the law so that the commission will no longer report annually to this Legislative Assembly but instead will report only to the minister?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, the minister is compelled to report to the Legislature.

MR. MITCHELL: He should read the Bill and see that he's just changed that, Mr. Speaker.

Since the commission is supposed to be independent, why has the Premier not taken this opportunity to change the law so that the Legislature can appoint the members of the commission, fix their salaries, and approve their bylaws?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, traditionally and historically the commission has been appointed by the government, and the commission ultimately is responsible to the government. Through the government and to the Legislature the minister will appropriately report.

Child Welfare

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday over 200 people attended a forum on child welfare to share their concerns, their expertise, and their personal experiences with the child welfare system. The exchange was informative; it was powerful. Many in the audience expressed real shock over the plan to regionalize child welfare, and many learned about the enabling legislation for the first time. To the Premier: will the Premier commit to holding the Child and Family Services Authorities Act over until the fall so that Albertans will have a chance to read it and provide input before it becomes law?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, no, I can't give such a commitment. As far as I know, there has been a tremendous amount of discussion prior to the introduction of this Bill, a tremendous amount of consultation, and I see no reason at this time why that particular Bill should be held over. I will take the question on notice and advise the hon. minister on his return from Victoria, where he is meeting with his colleagues from across the country to discuss in a reasonable fashion the problems of child welfare not only in this province but throughout the country.

1:40

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: why does the new legislation have an exclusion of liability clause allowing local authorities and the minister to duck responsibility should a child get hurt in this province under the minister's responsibility?

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, if the leader of the Liberal opposition finds this as a deficiency in the legislation, then he has all the right and the authority indeed to debate it at the appropriate time.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, as the Bill no longer focuses primarily on children, how will the Premier ensure that the protection of children will remain the primary concern and the primary focus?

MR. KLEIN: The Bill reflects the department's responsibility to look after the welfare of the people of this province. With respect to child welfare certainly every family that needs the services of Family and Social Services indeed has a crisis, or else they wouldn't be seeking those services. To deal with these situations, the minister is reforming the system. Many of those reforms are reflected in the Bill. The government is intervening earlier to help families before children are damaged, and this has contributed, as I understand it, to an increase in caseloads. But this is by design. This is by design, Mr. Speaker, because over 50 percent of the over 9,000 children are in the care of their families or relatives, and government funded in-home support has been plugged in to help these stressed families. I would like to point out that to deal with this early intervention, about 75 highly qualified, dedicated caseworkers will be added to the staff to deal with these reforms.

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

MS HANSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have repeatedly warned – and the department's own analysis, as we just have shown – that the growing incidence of poverty has resulted in an alarming increase in the number of children seeking protection from the child welfare system. In the past year alone the caseloads have jumped by 13 percent. This government can't even admit that there is a problem, let alone seriously do anything about it. My questions are to the Premier. Mr. Premier, can you tell us where the government saves money by kicking a family off assistance and ignoring the needs of the working poor when the result is more children coming into care because the parents can no longer afford them?

MR. KLEIN: Well, that is the opinion of the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Beverly. It certainly is not the opinion of the minister, who has expressed a deep concern and a tremendous amount of compassion for those who truly need help in society, Mr. Speaker. The reason the caseloads have increased is because we are intervening at a much earlier stage. This is all part of the reforms that the minister has been talking about. As I indicated earlier, 75 additional staff will be added by May 1 of this year to assist with that early intervention, and that's where it counts the most.

MS HANSON: Mr. Premier, why are you determined to punish the children for supposed mistakes and poor decisions made by their parents? Why do the children have to suffer over this?

MR. KLEIN: Let's be sensible about this. Let's be reasonable about it. We are not out to punish the children. That is an absolutely outrageous statement. We're out there to protect the children, Mr. Speaker. I have to reiterate: 75 additional highly qualified people will be added to the staff by May 1 of this year to assist in early intervention, where it counts the most.

MS HANSON: Mr. Premier, that question was asked repeatedly last Saturday afternoon at a public forum.

How is it that you can fix problems for football, for hockey clubs, for golf courses, but you can't do anything about the 120,000 children living in poverty?

MR. KLEIN: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's the policy of this government to first of all help people who want to help themselves, and many opportunities are available to the parents of these children: work experience programs and job retraining and skills upgrading. Those who have been identified as truly needing our help in society will get that help, and we are generous in providing that help because Albertans generally are a caring society. We will always look after the children because they're deemed to be the people who cannot look after themselves. But the parents who are able to work, who won't take advantage of work experience programs, who won't take a job when it's offered to them, who simply say that welfare is their God-given right – then we say no; it is not your God-given right. But if the children are going to suffer, we will make sure that we look after the children. We will always look after the children.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Taber-Warner.

Grain Marketing

MR. HIERATH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. Last Thursday the minister released a study, *The Economics of Single Desk Selling of Western Canadian Grain*. Could the minister briefly inform the House of the findings of this significant study?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: This is the first time that an independent, thorough economic assessment has been done of the marketing of western Canadian grain. I think this is an important document and one that I would urge that all my legislative colleagues as well as the agricultural industry review very closely and assess . . . [interjections] It's too bad the hon. Member for Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert is not interested in this. It's very unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because this is probably one of the most important documents that we've had. It's very unfortunate that we have Chirpy here.

This is the first time we have had an independent assessment done of marketing of western Canadian grain. This was done by an independent agency, and basically, reviewing it, it brings forward some very interesting information, some information that I think is going to be invaluable in the thorough discussion of the restructuring of the Wheat Board. I think it's generally understood and generally agreed, too, that the Wheat Board should be restructured to better meet the needs of the day. The Wheat Board had done an independent assessment with three academics which indicated that with marketing through monopoly there was a \$13 savings to the pool. Ultimately what this study does is indicate that there is an additional \$20 per tonne cost to achieve that marketing, and that's an important ingredient: what is the additional cost involved here?

MR. HIERATH: Mr. Speaker, to the same minister. On Saturday the economists met with the federal government's Western Grain Marketing Panel in Edmonton. Could the minister indicate the results of this meeting to the Legislature?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: This was the first opportunity that the panel had to query the authors of this report, so it was a very important opportunity in that it's really the first opportunity whereby an

assessment has been made as to the cost of single-desk selling. The meeting was attended by a group of at least 50 to 60 interested people as well as the panel. There was an opportunity to query the authors of this report, and overall, good information was dispensed.

MR. HIERATH: What is the next step in the process to reform the Canadian Wheat Board Act to reflect the decision made by Alberta farmers in the Alberta wheat and barley plebiscite held last December?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: To the hon. Member for Taber-Warner, the next step that I would like to see happen would be for the federal government to get a full appreciation of the need for change. I think that's the important first step that has to happen here, because there seems to be a policy all along of dragging this thing out and doing more studies.

1:50

MRS. ABDURAHMAN: This is federal legislation.

MR. PASZKOWSKI: This is federal legislation, and this is exactly the point: the federal government is not listening. The federal government isn't listening to the producers of western Canada. Alberta did a plebiscite; 66 percent of the barley producers in Alberta and 62 percent of the wheat producers in Alberta said that they want change. In a poll in Saskatchewan 56 percent indicated that they want change. This is federal legislation, and it's time the federal government listened to what the needs of the producers of western Canada are.

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

Special Education

MR. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to some provincial issues now. In our schools when the teacher and parent suspect that a child has a learning disability, they arrange for the child to be tested and for an appropriate program to be put in place on the advice of a specialist for that child. Unfortunately, the time between the identification of a potential problem and the assessment seems to be growing and growing. Now, the Department of Education is responsible for setting standards, and they do so, from facility standards to exceptional achievement standards for our students.

AN HON. MEMBER: Get to the point.

MR. HENRY: Members on the right want to know what the point is. Perhaps if they'd listen, they'd find out what the point is.

The question to the Minister of Education is: what is the provincial standard for an acceptable time frame between the initial identification of a potential learning disability and the assessment by a specialist? What is the provincial standard?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, we do provide extensive guidance through our handbooks and our other policy documents with respect to the identification of special-needs students. In terms of a specific number of days I don't think that's really the point. If a student is referred for this particular type of assessment, I'm quite confident that – let us say that this student was identified prior to the beginning of a school year, let's say two or three months prior to that, either coming out of ECS or out of grade 1

into grade 2 – a school board through its administrative staff would take measures to make sure that that student is assessed and is recommended for placement in the following school year.

THE SPEAKER: Supplementary question.

MR. HENRY: Okay. My question, then, to the minister: if a potential learning disability is identified later on, after the child enters school, what's the appropriate time frame, the standard the department has from the time the assessment is completed to the time the school board is required to offer an appropriate program for that child? What is the standard, or is it again that you have no standard?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I think that if it is something that occurs during the course of the school year – the hon. member is asking for a specific number of days. My understanding and our expectation in the department across the province is that school authorities will move as quickly as possible to develop an individual program plan, which is the case for those with severe learning difficulties. I think we have to look at this in practical terms. Certainly in most cases if it was something identified in the first semester, they would try and have something in place for the following semester or, if it is towards the end of a school year, in place for the following year.

I think there's a great sensitivity to these issues out in the school systems of the province, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that school jurisdictions endeavour to act upon this as quickly as possible, with the proper consideration, however, being given to being able to put in place the resources to offer that special program.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. HENRY: Okay. Perhaps, then, I can ask the minister: if there are no provincial standards in place, why doesn't the department monitor the average time between initial identification and assessment of learning disabled students so that the department can then track what kind of impact its changes have over time? Why don't you track that?

MR. JONSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, the tenor of the questions from the hon. member opposite might unfortunately be interpreted to indicate that school jurisdictions and their administrative staff and their teaching staff are not making every effort to assess and to place students. I think they are. In terms of those cases where there is an issue that is brought forward to Alberta Education, we do investigate. There is an appeals mechanism that has served this province I think quite well over the last number of years. We do follow through in correcting any problems in terms of procedures or dealing fairly with individual cases.

Federal Transfer Payments

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Speaker, today being April 1, even though it is April Fools' Day, the federal government saw fit in its 1995 budget to consolidate transfers for health and postsecondary education, known as the EPF, and for social services, known as the CAP. They would be cut and consolidated into one single block fund now known as the Canadian health and social transfer. This new block goes into effect today. We have a fine roster of cabinet ministers, but I'd like to ask the Provincial Treasurer today: what impact does this change to a single block fund, now

called the Canada health and social transfer, have on Alberta and on Albertans?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that it means that Ottawa, in spending dollars that it collects from Canadians, is going to spend less money on important programs such as health, social services, and postsecondary education. I'm looking at numbers which show that last year, in '95-96, Ottawa spent \$1.49 billion, almost \$1.5 billion, on health and education and social services in the province. This year it will spend \$250 million less than that, and by next year it'll be down by \$450 million.

Premier Klein and this government have made it clear, Mr. Speaker, that we agreed that Ottawa had to reduce its spending in order to reduce and ultimately eliminate its deficits, but what's interesting is what they chose to spend less of their money on. While it's clear that since '94-95 total federal spending is down by about 3 percent, the amount they're going to spend in Alberta on priority programs like health and education and social services is down seven times as much, by 21 percent. So what that does really is underscore the priorities that a Liberal government places on these programs that are so important to Albertans.

MR. DOERKSEN: I'd like to ask the Treasurer what he has done to protect those areas of health, postsecondary education, and social services as a result of the federal government's reduced transfers to those areas.

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, as we've advised Albertans, as Albertans have reminded us on regular occasions, because of the actions that we have taken to reduce our spending and get our spending in line with our revenues, we are now in a position where we're no longer running deficits. We in this province are now running surpluses because of the hard work done by Albertans. But while the federal government is reducing its expenditure on health and education and social services by 21 percent, we went only as far as 14 percent in our provincial spending reductions in these important priority areas.

What we did, Mr. Speaker, is we found more of our savings by starting at the top, by reducing payments to MLAs, by eliminating our pensions. We then went and said that lower priority programs such as the Treasury Department, such as the Municipal Affairs department, or even such as the public works department – those were not high priority programs for Albertans. That is exactly where Albertans said: "Cut the fat out. Start at the top, cut the fat out, but keep your eye on the priorities of health, education, and social services." That's what this government has done.

2:00

MR. DOERKSEN: Mr. Treasurer, how will Alberta and Albertans be affected by the federal government reducing transfers in the years ahead, and what will be done to ensure that our priority programs, which the minister just talked about, aren't severely affected?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the intent of our program. We are able to put a protective barrier around Albertans to protect them from the Liberal government in Ottawa and the tough decisions that they have had to take in order to reduce their spending in health, postsecondary education, and social services by 21 percent. Because of the action that we've taken, we can put up that protective barrier; we can protect Albertans from an Ottawa Liberal government. We want to be

able to provide Albertans with that assurance that their priority programs in the future will not fall victim to the kind of decisions that Ottawa has had to take in order to reduce its spending in a rather arbitrary and less priority-minded fashion.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Calgary-North West.

Property Taxes

MR. BRUSEKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government's move to market value assessment on property through the Municipal Government Act has owners of small businesses, especially those in shopping malls, extremely concerned. In the words of the Calgary retail property tax council, the change, quote, represents a windfall for the anchors and an unmanageable tax increase for smaller stores, close quote. For those owners of those smaller stores the Alberta advantage means property tax increases of 50 to a hundred percent, which will result in closed stores, lost jobs, and a weakened economy. My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Will the government rescind this move to market value assessment so that these small family-run businesses can continue to operate?

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, no. We have to stay with the market value assessment because that was agreed on by all of the stakeholders when we first went into it. The problem with the market value assessment in a shopping mall is that it's based on the rental adjustments. Of course your anchor establishments within those shopping malls get a rather large degree of favouritism when it comes to the rental agreements.

We set up a committee here several months ago now to deal with that, and we're working through it with the stakeholders. We don't do it at this table. We work with the stakeholders to try and resolve these issues.

MR. BRUSEKER: Well, my supplemental question to the same minister: will the minister exempt shopping centres, just shopping centres, from the market value assessment, as has occurred in other provinces that have moved to market value assessment?

MR. THURBER: Well, I don't know where he gets his information from, Mr. Speaker, but as I said before, we're working through this with the shopping mall people. We'll come up with a resolution which will deal with the situation; there's no doubt.

MR. BRUSEKER: My final supplemental to the same minister: will he have that resolution in place prior to the implementation of this new move to market value assessment before January 1 of 1997?

MR. THURBER: Mr. Speaker, a lot of this is the fault of the malls themselves. You know, we get . . . [interjections] Just wait. If you want to hear the answer, just wait for it.

The malls themselves, Mr. Speaker – and a lot of them are owned by people in eastern Canada – have given preferential treatment to their anchor stores. The only way that you can get into the market-based, market value assessment on these is to deal with the rent on them. We're trying to come up with a different formula in consultation with the stakeholders. They don't want the small stores to move out of there, and they're going to force them into moving out of there if they in fact retain this type of policy with their anchor stores.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Medicine Hat.

Sales Tax

MR. RENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Provincial Treasurer. Given that the federal Finance minister now appears to be bribing provinces to participate in his harmonized sales tax scheme with taxpayers' money and given that Albertans have no interest in participating in such a scheme, would the Provincial Treasurer confirm that he is not now nor is he contemplating in the future entering discussions with Ottawa that would introduce a provincial sales tax in Alberta?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, nothing will come out of the discussions that Ottawa is having with other provinces that in any way brings about a provincial sales tax in the province of Alberta. That is a commitment that has been made by the Premier of this province. It is a commitment that we have enshrined in legislation; in fact, by an Act that the Premier introduced in 1995, that this Legislature passed, saying that no such sales tax could ever be imposed without a referendum and the will of the people saying yea or nay to such a proposal.

The bottom line is that Ottawa is now doing its best to work with the likes of Quebec or Atlantic Canada to encourage them to come to a harmonized national sales tax. What I foresee, Mr. Speaker, is that there may be one rate that applies to Atlantic Canada and perhaps another set of variable rates that applies in another part of the country. In Alberta the feds may take what they take, but it probably will be no more than 7 percent, and the province will not take a nickel of provincial sales tax revenue from its citizens.

MR. RENNER: Can the Provincial Treasurer advise what initiatives his department is taking to ensure that a harmonized national sales tax implemented at the wholesale level would not have the effect of forcing Albertans into his national tax scheme?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, what Ottawa is proposing in Atlantic Canada right now is a national sales tax that would be applied at the till, at the retail level, not at the wholesale level. The hon. member asks what the Treasurer or what the Treasury Department, what the government is in fact doing. Well, we are watching very cautiously and very carefully the discussions that are going on. Quite frankly, we are standing on guard for Albertans to ensure that there will not be a provincial sales tax in the province of Alberta.

MR. RENNER: Can the Provincial Treasurer advise Albertans that whatever the outcome of these discussions regarding a national sales tax, Alberta will continue to have the same proportionate price advantage in the marketplace that it currently enjoys?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, Alberta companies have worked hard to enjoy the advantage that they now have in the Canadian marketplace. We will continue to work, as the Premier has been trying to do, as the Minister of Economic Development and Tourism and all of our colleagues on this side of the House – I can't very well say that for the Liberal members of the Assembly. We are doing our best to build, to maintain and protect the Alberta advantage in this province, and we will not do anything that will impair that Alberta advantage by allowing Ottawa to impose on the citizens of this province an extra sales tax that would see those revenues coming to provincial coffers. It is simply not in the plan.

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

Education to Promote Tolerance

MR. DICKSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has recently announced that it will set up an education fund in excess of \$1 million for human rights. Now, curiously, Bill 24, introduced by the government last week, says something very different. Under Bill 24 every nickel of that fund could be spent on something other than education to promote tolerance. So my question would be to the minister responsible for human rights. Since Bill 24 allows him to spend the fund on any service related to the purposes of the Act and those purposes are nowhere defined, how will we avoid this becoming another lottery fund, another slush fund?

MR. MAR: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier in question period today, education is clearly one of the most important and critical features of human rights protection in the province of Alberta. At this time we do spend money on education programs within the Multiculturalism Commission and also within the Human Rights Commission. It is our intention to focus our resources to deal with those educational programs that are the most important. Clearly Albertans have benefited from these education programs, and we expect that they will continue to do so.

MR. DICKSON: Why does the minister need the power to make grants from the education fund for a purpose other than education to promote tolerance?

MR. MAR: Mr. Speaker, clearly the hon. member has not listened to my answer with respect to the importance of education. As I've said before, we do have education programs that are contained within other departments, and we do deal with the issues of racism and discrimination. Those issues should be looked at from a much broader perspective, not just from the perspective of being a multicultural issue, not just from the perspective of being simply an issue that is affecting only a small number of Albertans. These societal issues are broad ones that affect all Albertans, and accordingly we've placed the appropriate resources for education programs to go into this fund.

2:10

MR. DICKSON: Still looking for a direct response, so I'd finally ask the minister responsible for human rights: how does this minister plan to assure Albertans that there won't be abuse of what amounts to solely discretionary spending of over \$1 million?

MR. MAR: You know, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is calling into question the intentions of the government with respect to the protection of human rights in the province of Alberta, and frankly that is clearly an erroneous assumption on his part. Very clearly, when we accepted 54 out of the 75 recommendations that were made by the review panel that looked at human rights in the province of Alberta, that in fact will strengthen and improve the Human Rights Commission. We've made a commitment to education. We're carrying through on that commitment.

I would have expected the hon. member to have raised questions on this piece of legislation, Bill 24, at the appropriate time in debate, but I'm happy to deal with these questions now. Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation, Bill 24, again, will introduce into legislation 54 of 75 recommendations that were made to improve the Human Rights Commission, and we clearly want to

focus our resources. We've done that in this legislation. We are committed to the education programs.

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

School Violence

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Often in the Legislature it's been brought to the attention of the Minister of Education that our youth are at risk because of violence in schools, and I'm pleased to see that the minister has announced recently that \$450,000 is being allocated to programs to address school violence. That shows that the minister, I believe, is taking this issue seriously. My question is to the Minister of Education. Would the minister tell this House what new projects are being undertaken and what effect they're expected to have on reducing school violence?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member does identify an important initiative with respect to this topic of school violence. While I would like to emphasize that this is not an issue of a general nature across the province, it is certainly very, very important for certain centres within the province.

There are essentially three phases or three components to the project. First of all, we have entered into agreements with the universities, the University of Alberta in particular, to do a study to tell us what is the case, what factors are involved in violence surrounding schools and to provide us with a database that we can use to address future actions. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, a number of student-based or student-oriented conferences are being planned with the assistance of other stakeholders in the education sector whereby we can have a discussion with the students who do understand the situation and the difficulties that they're dealing with and living with in their school environments. Thirdly, it is our intention, also in working with certain stakeholders, to develop off those first two initiatives recommendations as to policies and practices that will be, we think, successful in addressing some of these issues of school violence.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: will the projects being developed be culturally sensitive and supportive and include the involvement of members of the ethnic minority communities?

MR. JONSON: Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the conferences that I referred to and the other initiatives that we are taking will be done in the context of making sure that whatever communities are identified, whatever communities need assistance in this regard, all the people, all the students will be looked at as an overall community in dealing with this matter.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MRS. FRITZ: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the minister: will the first-time young offenders who are involved in violent behaviour undergo a thorough assessment and have intensive services supplied to them, or will that come about through the recommendations?

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that that is a focus of attention right now in communities where there are

serious incidents of this type, but certainly in the processes that I've just outlined, it would be quite possible, in fact, as I think the hon. member is indicating, quite likely that this will be one of the recommendations that may be coming forward. Certainly we'll take all recommendations seriously and attempt to see that those are followed up more effectively.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

Kananaskis River Diversion

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Water diversion work being done by TransAlta Utilities resulted in several kilometres of the Kananaskis River bed drying up. The area affected is known to be an important spawning area. Now, TransAlta Utilities says that they informed the Department of Environmental Protection about its plan to cut off the flow of the river, and the department did not object even though these important spawning grounds would be affected. So my question this afternoon to the minister responsible for protecting the environment: did the minister actually agree to allow TransAlta to shut off the flow of water in the Kananaskis River?

MR. LUND: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, there are not several kilometres; there are about two kilometres of the river that are being affected by the problem at the plant. In fact, what is happening is that there is the need to rewind one of the generators, so they had to shut off the flow of water through the structure, and this is what's causing the problem with not enough water going through the structure to continue having a flow for about two kilometres.

THE SPEAKER: Supplemental question.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question to the minister responsible for protecting the environment: what exactly is fish and wildlife investigating with respect to this issue, since the department was fully involved and fully informed about shutting off the flow of water in the Kananaskis River?

MR. LUND: Mr. Speaker, back on March 22 some departmental staff along with folks from Trout Unlimited did visit the site. They went along the stretch of river that does not have a flow in it. They did find two fish in a small pool of water. They did not find any dead fish along that area that the hon. member is talking about. So we are looking at the operating plan and the licence of the plant and having a review of that licence.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary question to the same minister: what is the minister going to do to reform how his department allows water diversion projects to go ahead when there is serious potential for environmental damage?

MR. LUND: As I said in answer to the first supplementary, we are looking at the licence and seeing if there is something that should be done differently. Mr. Speaker, this is not a big catastrophe, and certainly we're looking to see what could be done to make sure that there is some flow left in the river.

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

Pork Industry

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall the minister of agriculture traveled to the United States to try and encourage a large hog processor to come and establish in Alberta. This outfit from the United States works under the idea of contract farming, and it squeezes out small farmers in the province. At the same time, the Alberta Pork Producers' Development Corporation was in Mexico promoting Alberta's pork industry. One of the strong points that they promoted in terms of Alberta's pork industry was the fact that it was run by family farms and that they produce a high-quality product. I'd like to ask the minister of agriculture: did the minister consult with the Alberta Pork Producers' Development Corporation before he went down to the United States to try and encourage this megacorporation to come to Alberta?

2:20

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's rather interesting to hear the Liberal perspective on economic development in this province.

We've suggested that we can multiply our pork production fourfold in this province, and that's our objective within the next decade. We are working with the pork development board to achieve that. A multiplier of four when we're already the third largest pork producer in Canada is a substantive number and would require growth in every area possible as far as pork production is concerned.

We were part of the Mexico group as well. The pork producers were with us when we were in Mexico, by the way, selling the opportunities of marketing pork into Mexico. So indeed, yes, we've worked with the pork development board on an ongoing basis, and we will continue to do so.

To suggest that contract farming has any relationship to doing away with the farm unit is totally – totally – out of the picture, because indeed what these people do is work with the farm units and allow the farm units to become part of the production process. This is the way you can expand the whole opportunities that are out there. By working together, we can multiply our pork growth in this province fourfold. We're not going to do it by just waiting for one simple segment of the industry to develop it. We have to do it in conjunction with all the opportunities that are out there.

DR. NICOL: Mr. Speaker, it turns all the farmers into contract labourers.

For the minister of agriculture: has the minister done any kind of rural impact study to see what kind of change in the structure of rural Alberta and change in the income-earning capacity of Alberta farmers may occur if they enter into these kinds of contracts?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, what a contract does is allow two parties to come together and negotiate an agreement whereby the one will meet the needs of the other and the other will meet the needs of the other. There is no compulsion for anyone to get into a contract; there is no compulsion for anyone to sign a blank contract. What a contract really is is an agreement between two parties that they will come together and do a certain agreement.

Now, we are in a changing global marketplace. Indeed, there are parts of the world that want a very specific type of product, and I see nothing wrong with any group wanting to develop a contract to develop a certain product that's going to meet a certain

commitment in a certain marketplace. If that's a problem, well, that's rather different, because indeed that's the way we're going to fulfill the market opportunities that are out there in this world today.

THE SPEAKER: Final supplemental.

DR. NICOL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think any farmer in Alberta has a problem with a contract for product. It's a contract for labour services that's at issue.

Mr. Speaker, my final question: will the minister commit to work with Alberta's independent farm operators and try and encourage the development of the pork industry in Alberta that's complementary with Alberta's family farm structure?

MR. PASZKOWSKI: Mr. Speaker, I don't think there's ever been a time in the government of Alberta where there has been more time spent in consulting with the agriculture industry. We've had roundtables on virtually every aspect of the agriculture industry in this province. Certainly part of our consultative process two years ago and the year before that involved the pork industry. We're going to be going back to the pork industry. Through the department we've structured a pork development group that is indeed going to focus on the opportunities that pork can grow with in this province. It's our objective to go back to the pork producers, work very closely with the pork producers in developing this industry.

As I've mentioned, we have an opportunity to multiply four times over the pork production in this province, and any time that we are growing pork in this province, we're value adding. We're putting additional value to the feed grains that we're growing out there, and obviously we will continue to do that. It has long been our objective to see that the economic growth of this province is going to be through agriculture, because agriculture is the future of this province and not its past.

THE SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired, but the hon. Minister of Education has given notice to the Chair that he wishes to correct the answer given to a question dealing with the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation dividend as well as to answer questions taken on notice last Thursday.

Municipal Financing Corporation Rebates

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a correction to the answer I gave on March 25 to a question posed by the Member for Lac la Biche-St. Paul. The member asked why school boards would not receive 100 percent of the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation rebate. I answered that about 65 percent of the debentures were paid by the province and 35 percent were paid by local school boards. The actual breakdown is 80.62 percent paid by the province and 19.38 percent paid by school boards.* I apologize for any confusion that this may have caused the hon. member.

Christ the Redeemer Separate School Division

MR. JONSON: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that on Thursday last the hon. minister of advanced education took on notice a question regarding the issue of capital expenditures regarding Christ the Redeemer Catholic school board in the area south of Calgary. I would like to indicate that I acknowledge the question. There are a number of steps and a significant amount of background to this particular issue, and I undertake to provide in writing the answer to the hon. member posing the question.

head: **Orders of the Day**

head: **Royal Assent**

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

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

[The Mace was draped]

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

THE 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 of Alberta, Gordon Towers, and the Premier entered the Chamber. His Honour took his place upon the throne]

2:30

HIS HONOUR: Please be seated.

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

THE CLERK: Your Honour, the following is the title of the Bill to which Your Honour's assent is prayed: Bill 22, Appropriation Act, 1996.

[The Lieutenant Governor indicated his assent]

THE CLERK: In Her Majesty's name His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to this Bill.

HIS HONOUR: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Premier, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, I seize this opportunity to just say a few words of congratulations to you on the manner in which you are conducting yourself in the business of this Legislature. It has been my pleasure and privilege for the last five years to work with you and for you for all the people that live in our province. This is important, ladies and gentlemen.

Sometimes when I'm speaking to the younger people, I impress upon them the importance of our system of government and what the election of each representative of the people means to that system because of the fact that I think perhaps we as Canadians have a tendency to take things for granted. We think: well, this is the way it has always been, and it's the way it always will be. Members of this Legislature, there's nothing further from the truth. If we do not protect the system, then the system will degenerate into something that is not in the best interests of the people. So it is that I congratulate each and every one of you for the part that you have taken in making this system work, because as you look at history for the time that we've known, ancient and modern history, there never has been a system of government that

*see page 768, left col., para. 7

has stood the people in good stead such as has ours for the last 400 years. Never has there been a history of government that has withstood the pressures of time.

With the bases that you now lay in this Legislature, within the position that each and every one of you hold, within our nation, and within this world scheme of things, you have now established a way and a means for people to live to the best advantage for themselves and those about them, and the world is a better place because of that. All you have to do, as many of you have done, is go to some of these Commonwealth conferences or meet with some of the peoples of the Third World. They're striving, striving to bring their people to the status that you now hold and keep in place, and this is of fundamental importance, ladies and gentlemen, that this happen.

Also, I do believe there is one area where we've all had a responsibility and will continue to have a responsibility to try to achieve, and that is the ceremonial activity that's associated with our functions, because it instills pride in the hearts and in the minds of our people, especially our younger people, our students.

If we put these two things together, the system and the ceremonial activity associated with that system, then certainly each of you will have served your purpose in being here. There's a reason you are here, and you have served your people well, and I could wish nothing else than for you to continue to do this, as I have been associated with you in these last five years.

You've done a tremendous job. It's been a privilege for my wife and I to be associated with you during the events we have met at and also whenever we met in the Legislature. I just appreciate your accomplishments, your achievements, what you have done for your people. I wish you God's blessing in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. [applause]

MR. KLEIN: Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to pay a very special tribute this afternoon. You know, the granting of Royal Assent to these Bills marks a notable turning point for this House. It is the last official act in this House by His Honour Gordon Towers in his capacity as Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

This month His Honour will close the book on five years of exemplary service to our province and the people of Alberta. His Honour has spent a lifetime working for the betterment of this country, this province, and particularly his home community of Red Deer. On the way in I asked him if he was going to take it easy. He said: "Well, there are a few community projects I would like to take on. There's the hospital foundation program. There's this and there's that." So he is going to be a busy individual indeed. But why shouldn't he be? Because he's going back to his home of Red Deer, which the hon. House leader calls the heart of Alberta.

His Honour has been a farmer. He has been actively involved in a variety of community organizations. He served Albertans for almost 20 years as a Member of Parliament, earning a reputation for his energy, his devotion to public service, and his kind manner.

No less an authority than *The Canadian Encyclopedia* says this about His Honour: well respected for his work ethic and honest dealings, he typified the best of the Alberta farmer and was a hugely popular choice as Lieutenant Governor. He typified the best of the Alberta farmer: that's high praise indeed, Mr. Speaker, given that farm values like thrift and diligence and optimism are the bedrock on which our province was built and that legacy that Albertans always aim to pass on to their children and their grandchildren.

2:40

Mr. Towers brought these qualities and more to the office of the Queen's representative in our province. He discharged his obligations with tremendous strength, courage, and dignity. I am advised that he completed more than 200 speaking engagements in the last year alone. That's a schedule that would challenge even the most hardy members of the Legislature, both government and opposition, and he did so with little regard for his own health or personal convenience.

Time and time again he has been a tireless booster of our province and our people. People responded to him with tremendous enthusiasm. You know, you don't win five consecutive federal elections without the solid support of your constituents. Many will remember the public outpouring and concern and affection when illness compelled His Honour to be absent from the reading of the throne speech in February. His Honour has given of himself steadfastly over the course of his long and illustrious career. Albertans are the beneficiary of his efforts.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of His Honour's fine record of service. He said that he is proud of us. We, sir, are indeed proud of you. We are privileged to thank you and to congratulate you as you complete your tenure as Lieutenant Governor of Alberta. We are pleased to wish you good health, happiness, and success in all your future endeavours.

Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: Your Honour and Mr. Speaker, I second everything that the Premier has said. I think he captured very well the essential qualities of your career and outlined the contribution that you have made over literally years and years to the people of this province. If I might take a moment, I'd like to talk just a little bit about how your tenure in this office has impressed me at a personal level, and I think I speak for each member of this Legislature when I relate some of these impressions to you.

Three ideas have captured for me your tenure as Lieutenant Governor. One is the great humour that you bring to this office. A second one is the ease with which you put people at ease. The third one is the dignity that you have demonstrated every moment that I have seen you active in your office.

Humour is something that you simply seem to exude, and it's so appropriate the way in which you utilize that to bring people to you and to express a warmth and humility which I think captures your personality so well. All of us will have been at many functions with you where you have lit up people's faces. I can recount many of them, but the one that struck me perhaps most powerfully was the dinner that you had with MLAs and our spouses last year at a nearby establishment, where not only did you light up our faces but you kept us laughing in a way that perhaps many of us don't get a chance to laugh for what seemed like a half an hour or 45 minutes. So impressive was it that the Premier and I were actually laughing at the same time about the same thing throughout that entire dinner. I think there's not a member here that doesn't remember some of your humorous stories which captured the essential quality of Albertans and Alberta. I'm sure that many of us have used one or two of those stories, if you don't mind – and I'm sure you don't – in many of our speeches.

I can hardly drive across an Alberta farm or visit an Alberta farm without remembering the story you tell of the Texas farmer who was bragging about the size of his farm and said, "I can get in my truck in the morning and drive all day and still not reach

the other side of my farm.” The Alberta farmer humbly said, “Yeah, I have a truck just like that.”

The ease with which you deal with people. I've seen you amongst children, amongst people from all walks of life, and the one thing that captures the way that they are with you is easy. That says a great deal about the manner in which you have handled your office.

Dignity. I've seen you in so many different places: this place, which is perhaps one of the most formal places that most of us will ever find ourselves in, and in many less formal places. In fact, last year I had the pleasure of being at the Musical Ride at Fort Saskatchewan, and I'm sure you will remember that. People were there with their children; I was there with my children. We were all dressed in casual clothes. It was a beautiful day, as one would imagine, but it also had been very, very wet. There you were, dignified, as you would be, in formal attire, as you had to be, standing in that field of mud amongst people who were relaxed and there in a festival atmosphere. Yet you just captured for me a sense of dignity that's so important to that office.

I want to say that everything I've said about you on behalf of the members of this Legislature I think applies very well to your wife, Mrs. Towers. We all know that you cannot do the job that you have done the way that you have done it without the support of your spouse, and our congratulations and recognition go out to her as they do to you.

I simply want to close by saying that in everything you have done and the way you have carried yourself, you have brought great honour and credit to your office, to yourself – and I know that wouldn't be important to you – but most importantly, you have brought great honour to the institutions of government which you have represented so well, and for that I know we are all very, very grateful.

Thank you.

HIS HONOUR: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Premier, for those kind words. They're very rewarding and I really appreciate them.

I leave you with just one thought. I had the privilege of speaking to the girls that were here on the parliamentary procedure for three or four days last week, and we were discussing the division of power between our office and your office, your position here in the Legislature. I said to them: “Well, I am not allowed to go into the Legislature unless I'm invited, and then I can come in. That is solely the members of the Legislature's.” One of them said, “Well, what would happen if you walked in?” I immediately had to go back and think quickly that any one of you, if I were to walk in through the door, has the right to stand up and say to Mr. Speaker, “I spy a stranger.” I hope it never happens to you. I trust it never will, but then that is your right, and I leave that right with you.

Thank you.

THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All rise, please.

[Preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Lieutenant Governor and the Premier left the Chamber]

[The Mace was uncovered]

THE SPEAKER: Please be seated.

head: Government Bills and Orders
head: Committee of the Whole
2:50

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

THE CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call the committee to order.

Bill 5
Racing Corporation Act

THE CHAIRMAN: The committee is reminded that we have before us the consideration of Bill 5, the Racing Corporation Act, and in particular we have amendment A2 as proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford. Before we continue our debate and deliberation on this amendment, would someone on the hon. member's side indicate to the Chair as to whether or not we're going to deal with these as six or seven different amendments, or were we going to deal with them in one whole lot as A2 and it'll be just one amendment for the whole group?

MS LEIBOVICI: Individual amendments.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh. Okay. Then we best recalculate those. For purposes of those who have the amendments before them, it's noted at the top that it's amendment 9 – this is the one proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford – and on the side there are subscripts (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g). Those will now have to be numbered in our parlance. So (a) will be in fact A2 and the next one, (b), will be A3 and so on. Now, is that clear as mud? So the first part of the amendment will be A2. The second one will be A3. So if you're going at them one at a time, let us begin.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark is rising to speak to amendment A2.

MS LEIBOVICI: I'm rising to speak in terms of clarification just so that we're all on the same sheets. There are a lot of amendments floating around, so if the Chair can just bear with me. Are you speaking from the document that's February 27, '96?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, hon. member. At the very top it has “Notice of Amendment,” then “Bill 5,” then “Amendment 9,” and reads, “Percy Wickman to move that section 2 be amended by the following amendments.” Then we have (a) to (g), where (a) is “in subsection (1)(a) by adding ‘the Lieutenant Governor in Council after consultation with’ after ‘appointed by.’”

The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I understand it, we have adjourned debate on subsection (b) of amendment 9. Am I correct in that?

THE CHAIRMAN: We haven't adjourned. We're under consideration. It's the one on the hon. member's sheet that has a). You've got a half bracket there, “in subsection (1)(a) by adding . . .”

MR. COLLINGWOOD: “. . . the Lieutenant Governor in Council after consultation with” after “appointed by.”

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: So the second amendment, Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, has been moved?

THE CHAIRMAN: It was presented. It wouldn't hurt for you to move it as well, in case it hasn't, and without looking up *Hansard*, I'm not aware if it has been moved.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For purposes of the record, while I'm not certain whether amendment 9 has been moved in its entirety, I will, then, on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, move amendment 9(b), which is an amendment to amend section 2(1)(b) of the proposed Bill by adding "the Lieutenant Governor in Council after consultation with" after "appointed by."

THE CHAIRMAN: The Chair is obviously not making himself clear. We are in fact on the first one. That's the one we're on. The question was, as I understood it: has this been moved? Short of looking at *Hansard*, I don't have a notation on that. So I was asking you to move that one, which will be called A2, even though it's A2 and then sub (a).

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Given the direction of the Chair, I will move amendment A2 on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford.

Mr. Chairman, the amendments are brought forward by the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford on the basis that the appointment of these individuals should be in consultation with the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It is of course our intention and our purpose to have legislation of this Legislative Assembly reflect that the Executive Council of government be part and parcel of the selection process for members who are appointed to these boards.

Mr. Chairman, I'm just referring myself to the particular section of Bill 5. The part of the Bill that these amendments relate to is the establishment and operation of the corporation, wherein the Alberta racing corporation is to consist of members of a board of directors that will include from various stakeholder organizations membership on the board of the racing corporation with no direct relationship between the Executive Council of the Legislative Assembly and the Alberta racing corporation. These are amendments that will allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the Executive Council of the province, to be involved in consultation on the appointments to these boards.

This amendment is again introduced to reflect upon and highlight the fact that the government is slowly but surely and very gradually moving away from its direct involvement in significant areas of governance in the province of Alberta. The appointment of the board for the Alberta racing corporation is one example of a circumstance where the government has for all intents and purposes washed its hands of who will become appointees to this particular board.

Now, that is not to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the organizations that are stakeholders with persons to be appointed to the board should not have that ability to identify from amongst its membership those individuals from those organizations and those associations who they designate as individuals to sit on this board. The amendment is to simply identify that there must be some mechanism in place to allow for the designates from those various organizations to put forward their names and to then have those names reviewed in consultation with the Lieutenant Governor in Council. I think that's an important step and an important check and balance so that the board of the Alberta racing corporation will not simply exist in and of itself entirely outside the realm of government in terms of the board's selection.

3:00

We know and the stakeholder organizations will know that these appointments are critical to not only the success of the Alberta racing industry but also to the governance and protection of the integrity of that industry. It does not again, I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, call into question the integrity of any of those individuals who would be put forward by those various organizations, but it continues to carry through a check and balance process where those individuals are then placed before the Executive Council of the Legislature not necessarily for approval, but the selection process would not be finalized without consultation with the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Now, this does not in terms of a procedure or in terms of a process impede the Alberta racing corporation nor does it as a process or mechanism impact upon the autonomy of the Alberta racing corporation. That's another issue, Mr. Chairman, that I would certainly debate: as to whether or not the autonomy of the Alberta racing corporation by virtue of this legislation simply goes too far in that the board, I guess one could say, is a self-perpetuating board.

The amendment, then, we are looking at is for each one of sections 2(1)(a) and 2(1)(b), that those persons who would then be designates of the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of Alberta and the designate of the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association would then be placed before Executive Council, and a consultation process would take place with the Executive Council of government. One would not tread lightly on those. They would be designates of those particular stakeholder organizations. It would certainly be up to those organizations to designate whomsoever they chose for inclusion on the Alberta racing corporation; nonetheless, the consultation process would provide the appropriate check and balance.

So, Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, we are dealing with A1. I hope that I have for hon. members set out the rationale for the amendment. We would consider it to be an appropriate inclusion in the mechanism for designating members of the board of directors from the stakeholder organizations to at least have, through the racing corporation through to Executive Council, a process in place whereby those individuals would be brought forward to the Lieutenant Governor in Council. A consultation process would take place arising from that. If there are no difficulties with the Lieutenant Governor in Council, then the appointment would flow as it flows in the structure of the Bill as it currently sits, but the Lieutenant Governor in Council would then be involved in a consultation process.

That is the purpose, Mr. Chairman, for the amendment. That is the reason for the amendment. I would support hon. members to confirm the amendment so that the Lieutenant Governor in Council is involved in the selection process from those organizations.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before the Chair recognizes Calgary-*Buffalo*, the hon. Member for *Sherwood Park* said that we are on A1, and the Chair nodded but shouldn't have. We're on 1(a). That is to say, again, the amendment is amending section 2 of the Bill in subsection 1(a), but the amendment is, for our purposes of record, being referred to as A2. It is the first one in the series as proposed by the hon. Member for *Edmonton-Rutherford* and as moved by *Sherwood Park*.

Calgary-*Buffalo*.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Speaking to amendment 1(a), and I appreciate the clarification.

DR. WEST: It's A1.

MR. DICKSON: The minister says it's an A-1 amendment. Well, it is, Mr. Chairman, and I'm glad it's recognized as such by the distinguished minister. I'm confident that we'll have his support on this.

It seems to me that what this amendment attempts to do is to get away from these two solitudes. This gets into really the underlying philosophy of the Bill. I have enormous respect for the Minister of Transportation and Utilities in the sense that he is, for my money, one of the most philosophically consistent members on either side of the Assembly, and while he and I may not share a lot of values and principles in common, I respect the fact that this is a member who is consistent. He's consistent in what he says in the House, and he's consistent in the kinds of legislation he brings forward. I want to acknowledge that, and I think this may be one of those amendments on which members may agree to disagree, because as much as I have admiration for the philosophical consistency of the sponsor of the Bill, I have a very different view of government. I have a very different concept of what government is there for. Government is there to do things that we can't do for ourselves. It's there to provide protection in cases where we as individuals say there is a bigger public interest here than just survival of the fittest in an absolutely unfettered free market context.

I'm no socialist, Mr. Chairman. I'm absolutely convinced the free enterprise system is the vehicle through which this country has grown and will continue to grow, but it's a big jump to go from there to say that government has virtually no role in managing gambling, and that's really what we're dealing with in this Bill. This isn't about a livestock pursuit. This isn't something that in pith and substance relates to an element of livestock. This is in pith and substance a Bill to regulate a form of gambling; that's what we're dealing with here. Although the hon. minister may think that it's just fine for government to get out of the business altogether and turn this over to a self-perpetuating, wholly private entity, I have a great deal of difficulty with that.

Now, I'd invite the minister to provide us with some commentary in terms of the interplay between this amendment and section 2(6), because there are some interesting areas of overlap there, but it still seems to me that what we're trying to achieve with this amendment before us is a recognition that there is a large and a compelling public interest when it comes to gambling in this province. I don't have at my fingertips the amount of money generated from gambling on racehorses, but it's very significant. We're not talking trifling amounts, Mr. Chairman; we're talking about very substantial amounts. It's because of that and the prospect that once you start deregulating, once you abandon the role government currently has in ensuring that this is an activity that is safe, that is lawful, then we may be going down a slippery slope that may take this province places where Albertans don't want to live, where members in this Assembly wouldn't want to live.

It's for that reason, when we look at this particular amendment, that I think it's important that we have this consultation with the cabinet. Why? Well, because it's the cabinet who at least nominally – and I stress “nominally” – in our system of government is responsible. It's cabinet ministers and the Premier, on behalf of the Executive Council, that comes to this Chamber and responds to questions, or at least we hope he responds to questions. At least he has to be here when the question's put to him.

3:10

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that's important, and when we appoint people to represent the interests of that association, the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, because we're subdelegating to these board members some very significant powers in an area that I think is sensitive, is of great concern in terms of the regulation of gambling, it's appropriate that government have a role in terms of that appointment process. That's what the amendment sponsored by Edmonton-Rutherford is all about. I think it's a meritorious amendment, but as I say, I'd encourage the minister to develop this notion of how, if this amendment were accepted, this would work in conjunction with section 2(6). That's the question I've got.

Now, I expect there are other members that have other observations to make on this, but certainly those would be my concerns. I think this is a reasonable amendment for eliminating the two solitudes I spoke of when I commenced speaking, that it would make sense to recognize that there's an ongoing government public responsibility. This amendment respects that, reflects it, and promotes it, and for that reason I'd encourage members to support it. I would be interested in hearing the comments from the minister who is sponsoring Bill 5 because there is an element there I'd like to see him develop. I assume that he spent considerable time with Parliamentary Counsel, legislative counsel drafting Bill 5, and I'd be interested in his comments on that.

While I'm waiting for that, I'll take my place, Mr. Chairman, so other members can join the debate. Thanks very much, sir.

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Sherwood Park, have you received this latest replication of the amendments, which has A2, 3, 4, 5 all the way down?

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Indeed I have, Mr. Chairman, with a sessional paper stamp on the right-hand side. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford I would move amendment A3, which will amend section 2 of the Bill in subsection (1)(b) by adding the words “the Lieutenant Governor in Council after consultation with” after “appointed by.”

Mr. Chairman, you will appreciate that the comments that have been made with respect to the first amendment will relate to the second amendment. It is the second of the two stakeholder organizations that will have the opportunity for appointment to the Alberta racing corporation under subsection (2). Our reasoning for putting forward this amendment is the same, as you'll appreciate, as the reasoning for putting forward amendment A2.

Once again, I think this is a reasonable amendment. We have not as yet heard from the minister with his comments relative to the amendment. Notwithstanding, Mr. Chairman, we put forward the amendment on the same grounds for each of these two organizations that will have stakeholder representation on the racing corporation, looking for the consultation process with the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

I think everything that has been stated relative to the first amendment will apply to the second amendment, Mr. Chairman. Accordingly, I will look for debate on this amendment from members opposite. Thank you.

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

MR. HENRY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to rise to support this amendment, and I wanted to maybe bring some focus to why I would want to support this particular amendment. I particularly want to be clear that I support the notion of the stakeholder groups in particular in the racing corporation but also, generally, stakeholder groups having input and having a say at the table with regard to the governing bodies that affect them. It seems to me that if we don't have some sort of check down the road in terms of appointments to the bodies that affect the stakeholder groups, then there is no check in terms of ensuring that the individuals who are appointed to this board have the check of overall public good, overall public interest with regard to their appointment.

Now, I think it's a mistake to say that when we set up something like the board of the Alberta racing corporation, the only stakeholders are those that have a direct pecuniary interest in the corporation, such as breeders, owners, jockeys, bookies, if I can put it that way, et cetera, et cetera. But every individual in this province also has a vested interest in how this particular board would operate, because if all of a sudden the Alberta racing corporation board made a decision to locate something in my community, whether that be a betting operation or whether that be advertising or a new racetrack or whatever, then I as a citizen, as an individual in that community have an interest in how the decisions of that board would affect my community.

If that board is comprised of individuals who are just the narrow stakeholders, if that's all that's on that board and there's no sort of check in terms of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make sure that the individuals represent not only the interests of the stakeholders but the broader public good, then I think we could end up in situations down the road that are not necessarily there for the good of the entire interests but just a very, very narrow interest.

One would hope the other reason for bringing forward an amendment that would require that the Lieutenant Governor in Council make the appointments after consultation with the stakeholder groups is that when the opposition party forms the government in this province, there will be a change in terms of order in council appointments. When the Liberal Party is forming the government of this province, we'll bring a whole new regime to how it is we make Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments. [interjection] I have to say that the hon. Member for Peace River is asking me: what am I smoking? I won't comment on whether he inhaled or not or whether I did.

I do believe that we will see a change in government in this province, and when that happens, we're going to see a change in how Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments are made. Very specifically, we're going to ensure that every position is duly advertised not only with the nature of the position and remuneration and term of office, but also the qualifications required of the individuals involved as well as the selection criteria will all be posted in advance, and any member of the public will be able to apply for those positions.

3:20

In addition, there will be a transparent selection process that will be an all-party selection process to make recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor in Council in terms of Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments, which currently, you will acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, is not the case. Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments come to the table purely from a particular member of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and there isn't an all-party committee that is screening those.

Also, with regard to the senior, if I can put it that way, or most influential Lieutenant Governor in Council appointments, we envision that there will be a screening process not unlike what is happening in confirmation hearings in the United States of America, that we would borrow that process. So we would see, when we had a major appointment which was made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, that an all-party committee would have the ability to publicly interview those individuals who wanted to be, essentially, that Lieutenant Governor in Council appointment and then, hopefully, make unanimous recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

So that's another reason why it is that you would not simply have a narrow albeit valid special-interest or stakeholder group make the appointment but that instead it would be made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Certainly the special-interest or stakeholder group would have a role to play in nominating individuals for consideration by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, but it would not be simply their choice.

As well, one of the things that happens to any of us over time when we're part of a group is that as long as we're happy we tend to become somewhat insular if there's not a public check on how that group forms. We don't want to have a situation where we become organizationally incestuous and we simply have friends or interests appointing their own interests to a body who then continually appoints their own interests who serve those interests, who then appoint their own interests, and it becomes, as I said, a kind of incestuous relationship. So that's, I think, a third very valid reason why you'd want to have that public check of having the Lieutenant Governor in Council make those appointments.

I want to be really, really clear that I believe the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association and, specifically in this amendment, the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association have a vested interest in the Alberta racing corporation and should be at the table and should be a part of the overall process, but I think it's dangerous when you start apportioning out authorities to special-interests groups or to what the government will call stakeholders and not have a check with regard to the public good.

That brings me to my final point, which is that we've had a move ever since Bill 57 in 1994 and I daresay before that, a growing move with regard to the provincial government taking responsibilities that have been this government's and delegating them out or moving them out of the realm of government to be essentially nonprofit self-governing bodies. There's been more and more of a move. I don't think that's an arguable point; I think the evidence is really clear. Whether you agree with that or not may be an arguable point, but that has been happening.

It seems to me that as government gets out of more and more things and shoves them off to other groups, it creates other organizations to take on those responsibilities and authorities. Then it's incumbent upon government to retain the check that the Lieutenant Governor in Council would have to the appointments to those bodies, because ultimately the people in this Assembly and the people of Alberta should retain the ultimate control. Not necessarily the day-to-day operations, but they should retain the ultimate control, because again we don't want a group sitting around that just becomes incestuous or becomes a group that dutifully represents the interests of the people who appointed them but forgets that their overall responsibility is to the people of Alberta through the government of Alberta.

So with those particular comments on this particular amendment, I'll take my seat and allow other members to participate. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you. I, too, would like to rise to speak to this particular amendment. It's much the same as the amendment that was just defeated before in terms of the principle as to why we're moving the amendment. If I can just remind the members as to what we're trying to do, it's that section 2 should be amended by the following. It now reads:

There is hereby established a corporation with the name "Alberta Racing Corporation" which shall consist of a board of directors made up of the following members.

And (1)(b) would then read:

One person appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council after consultation with the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association to represent the interests of that Association.

Now, although the words are only eight in number, in reality the implications of that are very different. Right now what it says is "one person appointed by the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association," and there seems to be no vetting process as to how that person is appointed.

One of the concerns that the Alberta Liberal caucus has had all along – there have been many concerns with this Bill, but there's one concern in particular in terms of the board being self-perpetuating and that endemic in the racing industry throughout the world are problems with regards to corruption and various other unsavoury activities. One of the things that government does do is provide a watchdog role, and by adding the Lieutenant Governor in Council as a watchdog with regards to the corporation, it would help to ensure that any activities that are not aboveboard will in fact not occur.

We've talked a lot in this Assembly over the last couple of years about the role of government and the fact that the government seems to want to divest itself of a lot of its responsibilities, which is to set up these arm's-length boards and arm's-length agencies, and this minister in particular has been one of the prime pushers of that initiative when you look at what happened with the Alberta Liquor Control Board, when you look at what's happened with the registries, when you look at what's happening right now with the Alberta racing corporation. Though the initial justification for this particular Bill is to enable the racing industry to become more profitable – at least that's my understanding of the reason for the particular Bill – in reality what we're seeing is again a divestiture of government responsibility.

Now, this government, when we look at the whole issue of gambling in particular, has less than an exemplary record, when you look at the profits the government has brought in through the implementation and the introduction of slot machines, if you look at the devastating effects that slot machines have had on individuals throughout this province, and then you look at the potential of setting up an Alberta racing corporation that may well just add to the distress of individuals who do have a gambling problem. Now, the government and the minister in particular have said over and over again that individuals are responsible for their own behaviours, and if they gamble, well, what they can do is just stop gambling. That, however, is not the reality.

The other reality is that this government has been a promoter of gambling, that this government has spent many dollars promoting gambling. When you turn on the TV and when you turn on the radio, what do you hear but, "Buy your lottery ticket now"? In fact, that is promotion of gambling. For a government that tries to pride itself on being above any moral reproach, I think that having a government on one hand say, "I wish to be

above moral reproach," and on the other hand publicly use taxpayers' dollars to promote gambling is contradictory to say the least.

3:30

When you look at the particular amendment and at the Act, I think that all of what I've said needs to be looked at. The Act needs to be looked at within the context of those particular comments and needs to be looked at within the context of the track record – and that's no pun intended – of the particular minister to see what the actual outcome perhaps might be of the establishment of the Racing Corporation Act as put forward.

Now, to just put that into a little bit of an historical perspective, in the last session of the Legislative Assembly, when this Act first came forward, the minister was so incensed at some of the amendments we had put forward that he literally tore up the Bill in the Legislative Assembly. He has now come back and, to his credit, has agreed with a number of amendments that have been put forward by the opposition and has introduced them as government amendments, and for that I do give the minister credit.

There are, however, a number of other outstanding amendments that I think the minister should pay some attention to, and this is one of those amendments, which deals with the self-perpetuating nature of the corporation. Why, again, that's important is because of the feedback that we've had from numerous stakeholder groups who are concerned as to the ability of the racing corporation to be both the watchdog organization as well as the administrative organization. I think those two functions need to be separated, and I think the minister needs to ensure that the minister does indeed remain responsible for the Act. This particular amendment aids the minister in that responsibility. This particular amendment ensures that the minister will have a hand in who is appointed to represent the interests of the association. For those reasons I would urge the Assembly to consider this particular amendment and to look seriously at its passage.

As I indicated earlier, the minister has put forward other amendments that have tried to make a bad Bill better. The reality is that this Bill is still not a good Bill. This Bill is still not a Bill that will ensure the existence of a horse race industry in this province, that will be able to ensure the best interests of all those who are involved.

The reality also is that we need to look at, again from the morals perspective, the involvement of a government in gambling per se, at the role of government in gambling, and that if gambling will exist, as the minister says over and over again, there at least needs to be some method, some mechanism whereby all those involved in the industry are assured of as fair an outcome as possible and that all those who are involved are assured of an industry that has absolutely no involvement in or no hint of anything illegal occurring within that particular industry.

Again, for those particular reasons I urge the Assembly to vote in favour of this amendment. Thank you.

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

MR. ZWOZDESKY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to join in this very exciting debate on Bill 5, that being the Racing Corporation Act brought forward by the hon. minister, and specifically on amendment A3, which refers to section 2 of the Bill, that being the area of establishing and operating the corporation.

Our amendment requires the government to consider adding in an additional provision, that being the words "the Lieutenant

Governor in Council," which would in effect then allow any suggested names for appointments to the board to be done through the power of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The reason that I'm speaking in favour of this amendment is because I think that herein exists an opportunity for the government to again carry forward an air of accountability, or of greater accountability perhaps, by allowing the person that is to be appointed to come forward through a slightly different process than simply being appointed by one association. That process would require the Standardbred Horse Association to submit some names perhaps for consideration in a filtering kind of process and then for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to actually make the appointment. That would not only give us greater accountability, Mr. Chairman, but it would also give us greater openness, and that is something that I firmly believe in.

I think that if the government were to accept this particular amendment, by doing so they would help eliminate some of that difficulty that the general public oftentimes has with regard to how some appointments are in fact made to these very important boards. Not only are they extremely important boards, Mr. Chairman, but they are also extremely powerful boards. I would submit to you that the more open that process can be, or at the very least the more open the perception of that process of openness can be, the better.

The public has some discomfort, I think, when decisions of this magnitude are made a bit arbitrarily or if they're made behind closed doors or if they don't feel there's been ample opportunity for input, and in the end there is that word "favoritism" that sometimes springs up. We should do everything we can to avoid the public thinking that there was any favoritism involved. What better way than to charge the ultimate decision through to the highest level of authority that we have in this Legislature with regard to lawmaking, and what I am referring to of course is the Lieutenant Governor's position. Nothing can become law in this province, Mr. Chairman, as you and others here very well know, without the proper process and signature of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. I submit to you that we should therefore not only embrace and endorse this particular amendment, but we should see to it that the rest of the Bill has the same kind of spirit of openness and accountability to it to avoid any potential risk to the people involved as well as to the very process.

Mr. Chairman, you know full well that in the last few weeks there has been a great deal of discussion surrounding the nature of debate in this House and the whole issue of how we raise the names of individuals in this House, specifically the names of private citizens. Anytime stories surface or issues are raised – and indeed there might be an issue pertaining to the Racing Commission, how it's established or how it operates. If that were to arise and some names had to come forward in this House, through question period or through debate or whatever, they would of course come forward in an honourable way, I'm sure.

3:40

The fact is that people would then take a look and say: "Now, how did those people get on that Racing Commission to begin with? How did they come to cherish that particular position, and who was responsible for putting them there? And not only who was responsible, but how in fact did they actually get that position?" Then we would go back through and we would be reminded of the attempts by this side of the House to in fact make sure that the process was aboveboard, to make sure that the process was as open as possible, and to make sure that in the end the taxpayer of Alberta had a level of comfort not only with the

process but ultimately with the individual that was fortunate enough to be chosen and/or appointed to the position.

So I think it's very important for us to exercise that opportunity here. When we talk about individuals being appointed to a body such as the racing corporation, specifically the Alberta racing corporation, we're talking about a board of directors of approximately – what is it? – five people. It's a very, very small and selective group with very broad-ranging powers. There is a need for the public to understand that those powers are not going to be abused in any way. There's a need for the public to understand that there is not an attempt to control that industry by a few specially placed individuals. There is a need for the public to fully understand that at the end of the day there is some accountability through the process by which those people were appointed.

It's far too important an issue, Mr. Chairman, to me and to people that I represent, because we're talking about the directors of a corporation that handle extremely important issues. Those issues are related to millions of dollars. So I want to do what I can by trying to convince members opposite to vote in favour of this amendment so that the government doesn't later on find itself in the position of having to answer questions from the public saying: well, why didn't you go through that proper process of allowing the Lieutenant Governor in Council an opportunity to review the names and have some greater input into the whole process? That's one thing.

The second part has to do with what the position of the Lieutenant Governor in this province really is all about, what it signifies, and specifically what this amendment requires us to use, that being the Lieutenant Governor and the Lieutenant Governor in Council specifically. We heard earlier from the Hon. Gordon Towers. As part of his retirement speech today we heard him speak very eloquently, Mr. Chairman, about the importance of the job that the Lieutenant Governor has in relation to the House and in relation to serving the needs of Albertans and how he serves as a final checkpoint by giving or not giving his Royal Assent to certain Bills that come before him, in fact to all Bills that come before him.

We heard eloquent presentations given by the Leader of the Official Opposition with regard to how highly regarded the office of the Lieutenant Governor is. We also heard the same sentiment echoed by the hon. Premier of our province. Everybody understands and agrees full well with everything that was said about the powers of that office. All we're asking for in this amendment is very simply to add the Lieutenant Governor in Council into the whole issue of appointments to this all-powerful board.

[Mr. Herard in the Chair]

I would think that the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association would be receptive to that idea and that the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of Alberta would also be receptive to that idea. If they're not, then perhaps when his time comes, the minister responsible for this Act could tell us what objections, if any, those particular entities might have. If they have no objections at all, then surely the government wouldn't have any either. On the other hand, if it is only the government that objects to this particular amendment, then I'd like that clarified as well. Who is actually objecting? Is it the government? Is it just the front bench? Is it the cabinet ministers only, Mr. Chairman, or is it the entire government in power on behalf of the entities I mentioned?

I think the Racing Commission has in and of itself done a fairly

good job with most of the issues that it's charged with, and I'd like to see them continue in that regard. I think this builds in a certain protection for them to not only continue that fine job but also to have the perception of much more accountability, as I have said earlier.

I note, Mr. Chairman, if I could just jump ahead, that there is a clause on page 6 that refers to this particular section 2, and that is section (6), wherein it states, "notwithstanding subsections (1) and (2)," which immediately precede section (6), "after the coming into force of this Act." I won't read the whole thing, but what it does say is that if there are occasions that require a sudden appointment to be made because of somebody stepping down or something else happening, the minister would have the right then to appoint. I think that that is quite a bit different than what this particular amendment deals with, which requires us to involve the Lieutenant Governor in Council. So I would urge the members, then, to please take a look at it from that standpoint and do what they can to help us bring in something that has the spirit and the effect of cleanliness, openness, and honest accountability on the part of the way the board for the Alberta racing corporation is going to be made up.

With those brief comments, Mr. Chairman, I'm going to pass. I'm sure there are other individuals who might wish to comment on this particular amendment regarding the racing corporation appointments.

Thank you, sir.

[Motion on amendment A3 lost]

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford I would move amendment A4, which on the sheet before you, amendment 9, is identified as (c). In keeping with the series of amendments that we have dealt with in what has been labeled and identified as amendment 9, these all relate to the involvement and inclusion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council with respect to appointments to the Alberta racing corporation board.

As the section currently stands in the Bill, Mr. Chairman, the selection committee has the final say in identifying three persons from the general populace who will, according to the selection committee, represent the interests of the public on the Alberta racing corporation board. Amendment A4 would change that appointment procedure. It would not be the selection committee's appointment; it would an appointment of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. That would require a consultation by the Lieutenant Governor in Council with the selection committee. Presumably the selection committee would bring forward its recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for the three persons who would be appointed to the corporation board. The Lieutenant Governor in Council would make that appointment as opposed to the selection committee, and that is how this amendment A4 would amend the selection process for those individuals who would be appointed as the public representatives on the Alberta racing corporation.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it strikes me that of each of these amendments, this is the most appropriate in that we are dealing with the general population, people of Alberta who will be sitting on the Alberta racing corporation board and forming part of the decision-making process. The indication with this amendment is

that government is not and will not be completely and totally removed from the existence of the Alberta racing corporation. If the membership on the corporation board of the three persons representing the interests of the public are appointments that come from the Lieutenant Governor in Council as opposed to the selection committee, those persons who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council will have some greater comfort, as will the general population, that there is still a component of the responsibility and obligation of the government of the province of Alberta, as tangential as that may be, in its involvement in regulating gambling and horse racing in the province of Alberta.

3:50

The reasoning continues, Mr. Chairman, as to why these appointments should be made in a fashion that is slightly different than appears in section 2 of the Bill as presented. It establishes the involvement of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. This particular amendment relates to those persons appointed to "represent the interest of the public." This would be a much more appropriate process than simply leaving it to the selection committee.

Mr. Chairman, while section 2 of the Bill does leave some room for flexibility, the essence of the section is that the selection committee, which is the current members of the board, are in and of themselves the final decision-maker on who will become members of the board. There is some flexibility, as I say, in that if a vacancy does arise, the minister can step in, the minister can create the appointment, but that's only with respect to the two stakeholder organizations, The Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association and the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association. If either of those organizations find they have a vacancy on the board, the minister does have some abilities under section 2 to step in and make the appointment to fill that vacancy.

The section conceptually leaves the entire decision-making process to the selection committee. Mr. Chairman, by virtue of this amendment, we obviously think that's inappropriate. We think it should be the Lieutenant Governor in Council that has the final say in terms of those appointment processes. Accordingly, we suggest that an appropriate wording to subsection (c) of section 2 would be to have the appointments by the Lieutenant Governor in Council not in a vacuum but in consultation with the selection committee, that committee coming forward and giving the recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Mr. Chairman, I think that the amendment is straightforward. It gives some greater level of protection and nexus between the Alberta racing corporation board of directors, the public of Alberta - you've got to love that nexus - and the government of Alberta, which is charged with the obligation of governing and regulating the racing industry in the province of Alberta and ensuring that it is of the highest level of integrity in discharging that obligation.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I think the amendment is straightforward. I would ask all members to give it consideration. Let's allow the Lieutenant Governor to make those appointments as opposed to the selection committee of the Alberta racing corporation.

Those are my comments. Thank you.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Before recognizing the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, might we have unanimous consent to revert to Introduction of Guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Opposed?

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

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Dunvegan.

MR. CLEGG: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. It gives me a great deal of pleasure and privilege to introduce to you and through you five members of the municipal district of Clear Hills No. 21. They are Reeve Ernie Bass, Marlene Maxwell, Ron Lundgard, Mike Radzick, and Dennis McLarty. I see them rise. I'd ask them to receive the warm welcome of the House.

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

Bill 5
Racing Corporation Act
(*continued*)

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm going to rise and make perhaps the shortest speech I've made here for a long time. I simply want to repeat and incorporate by reference the arguments, the submissions I had made with respect to amendment 1A. It's the same principle, and I think nothing more need be said. I encourage members to accept this amendment as a positive one, as one that demonstrates in a clear way that there's an important and compelling public interest and that that's protected, hopefully, through the Lieutenant Governor in Council, not by an autonomous industry.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark.

MS LEIBOVICI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to address this particular amendment because of the importance that's placed on individuals who are seen to be representing the interests of the public. The reality is that the way the board has been established up to this point in time, to the defeat of the two previous amendments, indicates that the board is self-perpetuating and that the board can appoint individuals who perhaps don't have the best interests of the public at heart.

Now, some of the concerns with regards to the corporation. I outlined earlier that what is happening is that there's a private corporation that's being set up. It's an arm's-length corporation. It's a DRO in probably the worst sense of the word. It's Bill 57 revisited one more time. What it does is it combines both the promotional and regulatory functions of the corporation, and there are huge amounts of power that are being vested in this group that has little accountability to the Legislative Assembly.

The concern especially is with regards to the fact that this corporation can involve itself in forms of racing that are not necessarily related to the horse racing industry, and of course there's the spectre of the corner bookie shops that we all have in our minds or that I would hope we all keep in our minds. At least the members on the opposition side have that image deeply ingrained, that this is not something that we want to see throughout Alberta.

When you look at the way the corporation is being set up, the board of directors has "one person appointed by the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association . . . to represent the interests of that Association," "one person appointed by the

Alberta Standardbred Horse Association to represent the interests of that Association," three people who "represent the interests of the public" – and that's in the opinion of the selection committee – and two other individuals who "represent the interests of the race horse breeding industry." Again, there's no overview. There's no accountability directly to the Legislative Assembly and therefore to the people of Alberta with respect to the individuals who are being appointed. These individuals are being appointed through the corporation. Again, there's that lack of accountability back to the Legislative Assembly.

We see that further, in fact, when you look at the fact that the Regulations Act does not apply to this particular industry. In effect, the board that's being established has licence to engage in a whole range of activities that do not have to come back to the Legislative Assembly for any kind of an overview.

When you actually look at the report from the Alberta racing corporation and look at what they foresee they would like to get involved in – and that's the industry renewal plan – it says in here that

the Corporation will work towards expanding the off-track betting segment of the industry, possibly including the development of a pay-per-view "Alberta Equine Channel" or other technology-mediated ways, including private and public computer networks, such as the Internet.

We know we have a problem with VLTs. We know we have a problem with the pervasiveness of individuals getting hooked through the VLT system. Here we're setting up another system where individuals at home can engage in offtrack betting or in something through their private computer or through their television in terms of the "Alberta Equine Channel." Now, that sounds pretty harmless but in effect, I think, has the potential of being very harmful.

The reality is that in the establishment and operation of the corporation as under part 1, if you were to look at having individuals who actually do represent the interests of the public, as is indicated in the intent of 2(1)(c), I'm not sure that the individuals who do represent the interests of the public would actually support those goals of the racing corporation or at least would be advocates for some other way for the racing corporation to be profitable. That's the end goal of the industry: they wish to be profitable. If they wish to be profitable, then that likely means there is going to be an impact on individuals in their pocketbook. The only way the industry is profitable is through people betting.

4:00

Again, that is an individual's choice, if that's what they wish to do. However, there is also, I believe, the requirement for government to ensure that the odds, as it were, are in favour of the consumer and that the consumer is represented adequately in the Alberta racing corporation board that's being set up via this Act. Why this is such a large area of concern is, again, that when you look at the industry's proposal as to what they'd like to see in the future, what they are saying is that although there's no industrywide consensus about the possible synergies between racing and other forms of gaming, the tracks prefer combining horse racing with VLTs and casinos, while the horsemen have resisted this. Now, I think that is something that we need to really look very carefully at, because we're, to say the least, combining a few vices in one place, but again it gives you an indication that the outlook of the Alberta racing corporation as it's being set up through this Act is much larger than just looking at horse racing in Alberta. They are looking for a much larger segment of the market, which may not necessarily benefit

Albertans and the values that Albertans hold.

Now, I can't reiterate how important these amendments are. The following one, again, has much the same point of view, that the individuals are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, so there is that watchdog there, that overseer. This is in consultation with the selection committee; it's not as if the appointments would be made without any consultation but that in fact there is the ability to look at it. The reason I stress that these amendments are important is that the government doesn't always have all the answers. In fact, in the last Bill that was brought forward – and the minister has corrected that subsequently in the amendments that he brought forward, which were the amendments that the Liberal opposition had put forward, that those who have an indictable offence, those who have been convicted of a criminal offence should in fact not be able to be on the corporation board. Now, the original Bill did not have this in place. The original intent of the Bill did not contemplate that. However, when the opposition brought that up as a valid concern, the minister did bring forward those amendments.

Even though the amendments to subsection (1)(a) and subsection (1)(b) that were moved by the hon. Member for Sherwood Park were defeated, the reality is that the amendments that are being proposed in subsection (1)(c) are not contrary to the amendments that were defeated. In fact, I think it would show good intent on behalf of this government to ensure that the individuals who represent the interests of the public, the individuals who represent the interests of the consumers, the individuals who represent the interests of Albertans are in fact individuals who are not biased towards the industry, who are able to look at the suggestions that are put forward by the board, who are able to put any interest aside that they may well have and consider those interests in a light that reflects the needs of Albertans. This is extremely important in this industry: there should be no self-serving interests by those individuals who are supposed to represent the interests of the public.

The way to ensure that, once again, or at least to attempt to ensure that is by having those appointments made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council so that it is an open process, so that it is a process that is subject to review by the Legislative Assembly, so that the appointments are free of any indication, any thought that perhaps those individuals do not have the best interests of the public at heart.

With those words I would like to once again urge the members to consider what is being said and to give full thought to those considerations as these amendments are very important.

Thank you very much.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Manning.

MR. SEKULIC: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You keep looking that way, but I don't know; it's just not paying off.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak to amendment A4 for a number of reasons. My primary reason is that I do have some problems with the ever increasing concerns that gambling has as a by-product. Gambling is a unique industry insofar as it has unique externalities. Unlike most industries where you have stacks and perhaps pollutants, gambling has an externality which affects Albertans in a very different way. The way is through an addiction, which in the long run we have to pay for through other costs, through government intervention in organizations such as AADAC.

When we're going to appoint Albertans, members of the public to a board such as this one, I think we have to take every precaution to ensure that in fact the public interest will be acted upon. Now, to appoint people to a board – it's very difficult to define one process which would be the correct process which we could then utilize as some sort of patent across all of the different corporations or boards under government, but we do have to, when it comes to gambling, I think, show a little bit of extra concern because of the nature of its externality.

When I think about the types of initiatives that I would expect government to play a leading role in, I think of the promotion of the knowledge-based industry as a diversification of the Alberta economy, which would appeal to all Albertans because it speaks well into the future. It's about wealth generation by work and not wealth generation by chance. I think that's why I stood this afternoon to speak. This government in particular has taken Alberta in a dramatically new direction. I'm not speaking now fiscally, because there was more than just one party that ran on that platform. I'm looking at what so often the minister of transportation responsible for this area speaks of: social engineering. We are, in effect, with pieces of legislation like this, looking at a re-engineering or social engineering. We're taking control away, if we're not cautious, from the public in an area which inevitably will impact the public and, potentially, in a negative way. Now, when we combine both the promotional and the regulatory functions into a private corporation such as this one, part of it is in the interests of that particular industry, but there is a significant component which may not be in the interests of Albertans.

4:10

One of the questions that I have that continually bothers me is that I'm not sure what role the government will retain when it comes to the area of gaming or gambling. Without some method, some vehicle by which this Legislative Assembly through the Lieutenant Governor in Council can place independent third-party Albertans to represent the true public interest, I'm thinking that government is removing itself far too far from having any ability to direct or bring upon an effect on gambling. My concern on that is that the government – and it is public dollars – will have to deal with and resolve and address those problems that come out of this industry, and every time an industry has as a by-product or an externality a problem which must be dealt with in the public forum or through the expenditure of public dollars, then I want to see in those instances the public having some degree of control.

This amendment would provide that, I think, not the control that's required, but certainly it's a small step in the right direction. I think it's a friendly amendment. I can't see reason for opposition to this amendment, because gambling should be of interest to every member in this Assembly because it does impact many of our constituents. Albertans are losing their homes. It's true that one can stand up and say: "Well, buyer beware. It's a matter of choice." But we know, too, that not everybody is in the same position to make those choices. Now, I'm not trying to abdicate individual responsibility. That's far from true. But there are people that are in desperate situations that may think they can double or triple their money. I'm not somehow sanctioning that as an appropriate behaviour. Quite the opposite. But it does happen, and these individuals may end up on social programs that the government offers.

I'm wondering: is there a front-door way in which we can deal with some of these problems without becoming overly interventionist in the industry? I think there is potential in this area to

work in partnership with industry, but in order to work in partnership, you must retain some degree of control. I feel that the Bill as drafted doesn't provide the public with that level of control or that level of comfort which I need to ensure that in fact the matters that come before this board or this corporation are all resolved in a way which is truly in the public interest. I do believe that a partnership is possible, but how we structure that partnership is critical. We know in this Assembly that many of the partnerships that government has entered into in the past 10 or 20 years in Alberta have been a disservice, a disadvantage to Albertans. I'm not going to get into the monetary figure, but certainly it's probably around 3 and a half billion public dollars that truly have been washed away. So before we enter partnerships again, I think we have to scrutinize the relationship and make sure that it is to the benefit of Albertans.

Mr. Chairman, with those few comments on my concerns regarding gambling, I will, I guess, look forward to a vote or another speaker.

[Motion on amendment A4 lost]

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford I would move the amendment designated as A5 which constitutes 9(d) under the opposition's amendments.

In keeping with the amendments that we are proposing for the selection process for the Alberta racing corporation, this particular amendment deals with section 2(1)(d). The board of directors of the Alberta racing corporation is intended under this Bill to constitute a total of seven members. One person comes from the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association of Alberta, one to be appointed by the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association, three to be appointed or identified by the selection committee as those representing the public interest, and finally, two individuals who will represent the interests of the racehorse breeding industry.

As it currently stands, subsection (d) requires that those two persons who are selected to represent the interests of the racehorse breeding industry are not to be those that represent the interests of the associations referred to in clauses (a) and (b), which I just referred to. So the entire complexion, the entire makeup of the Alberta racing corporation will be seven individuals. Our particular amendment, amendment A5, continues on the theme that we are presenting this afternoon on the selection process.

The wording of the amendment to subsection (d) is relatively constant with the subclause (d) that is currently in the Bill, other than we are asking that the "2 persons [be] appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council." As I say, Mr. Chairman, it is in keeping with the amendments that contain a theme that we are putting forward as amendments to this Bill, and that is to involve the Lieutenant Governor in Council as the final decision-maker on the selection process for the membership of the Alberta racing corporation. The arguments, as I say – and I know other members will want to speak to this particular amendment as well – are that we need to have the link between the Alberta racing corporation and the membership that serves on that corporation coming from the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The irony, I guess, Mr. Chairman, of this particular Bill and this particular selection process is that we have had other organi-

zations that are regulated by government who will have had members appointed to their boards or commissions, and in virtually every circumstance the membership is appointed by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council through order in council. Whether we have a Crown corporation, whether we have a commission, whatever structure we have had in place, we have had in the legislation, very recent legislation in fact, the structure and the vehicle in place that the appointments are by order in council through an appointment process by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Why we have a sudden shift in that selection process under this particular Bill perhaps only the minister responsible will be able to tell us. Is it now the will of the government that the Lieutenant Governor in Council is no longer involved, whether we're talking about a Crown corporation, whether we're talking about a commission, whether we're talking about the Alberta racing corporation?

4:20

My recollection is that we recently dealt with significant amendments to the Alberta Securities Commission legislation. Those members are still appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. We have membership on various Crown corporations. Not that long ago we had renewals of appointments to the Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation chaired by the Member for Calgary-Shaw. Those appointments came through, Mr. Chairman, by way of order in council. To the Minister of Transportation and Utilities responsible for gaming and lotteries: what is it about this particular Bill that now suddenly shifts the policy of government so that the selection committee, which is the current board, now has the final say? Their authority and their power, their positions on that particular board of directors themselves came through order in council. Now they're stepping into the shoes of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, of the Executive Council of the government of Alberta, to go through a selection process. Why are they being elevated to the position of having that final say?

To accept any of these amendments in amendment 9 will be consistent with the procedures that are currently in place, I would submit, for every corporation, commission, agency of the government in establishing and determining who will be part of the governance structure, the board of directors, of those particular organizations. As I've indicated, Mr. Chairman, the amendment simply adds that those persons who will form part of the corporation's board of directors will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, that the qualifications for those individuals will be screened by the selection committee, that there will be a consultation process with the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It will continue to ensure, in terms of the intent of subsection (d), that those individuals are there to represent the racehorse breeding industry, who are not representing the interests of the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association or the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association. So the intent of the section remains. The qualifications of those individuals remain. The involvement of the selection committee remains, but they do not have, Mr. Chairman, the final determination. The final determination is with the Lieutenant Governor in Council, who will make the appointments.

Those are the compelling reasons, Mr. Chairman, for agreeing with amendment A5. It is, as I say, consistent with government policy at this point in time, save and except for this Bill with no explanation from the minister as to why all of a sudden the sudden shift. For those reasons, I think all hon. members should support this amendment as well.

I know there may be other speakers to speak to amendment A5,

following along the same theme. Mr. Chairman, I will now gladly stand by and let other members make some comments with respect to this particular amendment.

Thank you.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member for Stony Plain want to speak on this amendment?

MR. WOLOSZYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we've heard the same repetitious debate for five amendments in a row. At about this point I'd like to ask the hon. members to combine the remaining amendments so that we can vote on them all at once, because the arguments are all the same for every one of them.

On that note, I'd like to ask my hon. colleagues to turn down this amendment.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Avonmore.

MR. ZWOZDESZKY: Thank you. I appreciate the hon. Member for Stony Plain's comments, interjections. The essence of the underlying arguments may be the same, but each of these amendments deals with a different aspect of the appointment process or different individuals or different associations, be it the horsemen's benevolent association or the Alberta Standardbred Horse Association or what we just talked about, that being the interests of the public. Now we're going to speak specifically about the racehorse breeding industry component of that process. So each one of these is just a little bit different, Mr. Chairman. I think that members opposite must respect the process of the House wherein we as guardians of Her Majesty's trust have it upon us to flesh out these things a little better and do our best to convince the government, when they need convincing, to take a second look at some of these things. That's what we're attempting to do.

Now, let me refer specifically here to amendment A5, as it has been titled, from our side. It specifically refers to section 1(d), which refers to the fact that

2 persons . . . other than those who represent the interests of the associations referred to in clauses (a) and (b), who [in the opinion of the selection committee] represent the interests of the race horse breeding industry.

What we're attempting to do here, Mr. Chairman, is to make sure that these two persons are, again, "appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, after consultation with the selection committee," et cetera. The reason that we are flagging this yet again is because we have some concerns that the interests of the public have to be served in a very appropriate and in a very open and clean, up-front, aboveboard fashion. That is what we're trying to get across to the government. It may take this speaker and it may take three or four or six or eight or 10 more speakers, but until we have tried to make that point, and until we have exhausted ourselves to the point where the government may or may not see the light, we have to keep going on this.

What we're talking about here are two things. First of all, we're talking in this amendment about the selection committee. If you read the Bill through, a little further on you will see that the selection committee in actual fact is the board itself. There is a potential within a circumstance like this, where the selection committee is actually the all-powerful five-person board, for some organizational favouritism to take place. As we have a chance for a sober second thought and a selection committee that would

therefore report to and through the Lieutenant Governor in Council, we have here an opportunity for the process to again be tidied up.

I ask once more for members opposite to please look at this amendment in the same way that we've tried to make them look at the previous three amendments: all in the interests of protecting the process. I don't know how else to say that already, Mr. Chairman, other than to try and make the point that there is within the wording the way it is now no opportunity for the Legislature to be directly involved in this decision. The Legislature through the Lieutenant Governor in Council could and should be involved in it. This amendment A5 allows for that process to take place, and I fail to understand why it is that members on the government side, if they are so opposed to these amendments, aren't speaking to them.

Convince me why it is, government members, that you are voting against these amendments time after time. On whose behalf are you making that vote? On behalf of yourself or on behalf of the cabinet? Have you consulted in this case with the racehorse breeding industry representatives, and is it their wish to not have this kind of openness, this kind of forthrightness be part of the selection appointment process? Who is telling the drafters of the government Bill that they don't want that involvement from any of the associations referred to? If they could just tell me that, clear that up for me, then I would perhaps stop trying to convince them how important it is.

Maybe we're missing an important link here, Mr. Chairman, and that link would clear up in my mind at least why it is that we're receiving a negative response to this suggestion, as we have to previous suggestions, from members on the other side. We are trying very hard here to represent what we believe to be the best interests of the industry, of the racehorse breeders' association to ensure that they, too, are comfortable with this particular decision, not just the opinion of the selection committee, which is what is currently worded in the Bill as it stands. It simply says that the opinion of the selection committee is all final, and I would suggest to you that it's not all final.

I think it's very important for the racehorse breeding industry to have some input into this as well, and that's what we're attempting to do here. We're attempting to say that "the Lieutenant Governor in Council, after consultation with the selection committee" has come to a decision and is prepared to appoint certain individuals, two in this case, who truly represent the best interests of the racehorse breeding industry. That would give that one step of removal from the selection committee itself. It would put that decision a little more squarely in front of the cabinet at least. They would have some input into this. I think that, as a result, we would very likely see less problems down the line.

4:30

I find that sometimes problems arise, organizationally speaking, when there is not enough due process having occurred, specifically with regard to the appointments to these boards. These boards are the decision-makers. They mold and shape and forge the direction that in this case the racing corporation goes. It's what's important to the racehorse breeding industry, and we have an opportunity here to further their interests and to further the protection of their interests. So if we are truly in belief of helping out the racehorse association and, specifically, the racehorse breeding industry, referred to in clause 2(d), then we must embrace the spirit and the deed of this particular amendment.

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I would again urge the hon. Member for Stony Plain, who spoke just before me, as well

as all members of the House to take a very serious look at this amendment being proposed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, who I know is attempting to do what is right for this particular group, that being the racing group, and at the same time is also representing the interests of the public at large and specifically the taxpayers, who want accountability and openness and cleanliness in government. They also want it in any of the agencies that report to government or any of the agencies that have any association with the government. Certainly this one has, and certainly, as a result of that, we should do everything we can to ensure that those interests are properly discussed and debated and the right decisions taken in this House.

So with that, Mr. Chairman, I would take my leave and thank you for your attention.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, if I could make a few comments on the subamendment here, item (d) under what we've classified as amendment 9 to Bill 5. I've spoken on the Bill previously on a number of occasions, so I'm going to restrict my remarks in my normal, orderly fashion to the particular amendment that we're dealing with rather than get off on a tangent here, there, and everywhere.

Now, this particular subamendment deals specifically with 2 persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, after consultation with the selection committee, other than those who represent the interests of the associations referred to in clauses (a) and (b), who represent the interests of the race horse breeding industry.

The earlier subamendment, the "3 persons appointed," was defeated, so this subamendment becomes even that much more important. It would still be a minority, mind you, but at least there would be two persons that could speak out directly in the interest of the Alberta taxpayer.

One can't assume in a board that just keeps reappointing itself that the interests of the public at large are going to take priority over the interests of that particular small group of people. So, Mr. Chairman, "2 persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, after consultation with the selection committee" makes a great deal of sense. It ensures that there is a degree of accountability. It ensures that there is a degree of protection. It ensures that there is a rightful place for a taxpayers' watchdog on how our taxpayers' dollars are going to be spent. One has to assume that there is going to be a continuation of funding as in the current practice that does assist the horse racing industry. Simply because it's being privatized, one can't assume that that's the end of any government money being fed to that particular body.

So in fairness to the public, Mr. Chairman, and as representatives of the public speaking on their behalf, not on our own behalf but on their behalf, with an obligation to do what's right for the public, there is really no alternative other than to vote yes for this subamendment if we have any concern about the best interest of the taxpayer at all. On that particular note, I'm going to urge all Members of this Legislative Assembly to vote yes, yes, yes. The Member for Red Deer-North is shaking his head in agreement.

So, Mr. Chairman, on that note I'll conclude and look forward to a very, very positive vote from all members of the House.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

MR. DICKSON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I'd speak in support of the amendment. I do so for the same reason that I supported the last three amendments, and it is this: we have inadequate repre-

sentation of the public interest in the Alberta racing corporation. It continues to be a constituency. The public interest is the most significant constituency that exists in the province, yet it goes unfairly, inadequately represented in section 2 as it currently stands.

What this amendment does is attempt to ensure that there is still a degree of public involvement through the Lieutenant Governor in Council. One might ask why the government would resist this kind of an amendment. The government, after all, still has the hammer, Mr. Chairman. They still have the hammer. If the cabinet decides that there are particular individuals who would be well suited, who could represent the interests of the racehorse breeding industry, one would expect that the cabinet would listen to those representations, examine carefully the curriculum vitae of such candidates, and do the right thing and appoint those people where they're suitably qualified to hold a position on the board of the Alberta racing corporation.

We've been working our way through a series of amendments, Mr. Chairman, and each of these amendments addresses this question of how the public interest, the public will is reflected in the activities of the Alberta racing corporation. What we've seen is that this is a pretty modest limitation of what otherwise will be virtually unfettered discretion on the part of the corporation. This would be an amendment that might be resisted if perhaps there was a sense that the government was either not listening or not responsive to the needs of the horse racing industry. I can't imagine that the government would make that kind of an assertion. I think indeed the government has presented Bill 5 and the hon. Minister of Transportation and Utilities has propounded Bill 5 on the basis that this is compliant, that this is being responsive to the wishes and the needs of a particular industry.

Recognizing that, Mr. Chairman, this is the kind of amendment that would make, I think, a positive improvement in the Bill. For the reasons I've set out before with respect to the last three amendments I also support this one and urge other members to support this amendment as well.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Mayfield.

MR. WHITE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I, too, rise to speak in support of this amendment, having been relatively close to Edmonton Northlands, which of course is one of the venues of the racing establishment in this province and is in fact quite appreciative of having this piece of legislation come forward at this time. Having also been elected and appointed to various different sundry boards, it seems to me that these kinds of things are absolutely necessary not only in the reality of the situation but in the appearance, particularly with racing. The racing industry, of course, throughout the world is one that has been fraught with bad press oftentimes. Certainly a great number of questions have been raised, particularly on the eastern seaboard in the old days, about how pari-mutuels and the like were run.

4:40

This particular amendment adds one more element of credibility to the appointment of a board. How one makes one's decisions is based on, of course, who put them there. Mr. Chairman, this piece of legislation is a modest modification of the intent of the government in this Bill, a very modest one, nothing untoward. There's no hidden agenda in this one at all. This is simply a modification to the Act and, in my view, a positive reinforcement

of the appearance to the public that the racing corporation itself would in fact be run in the best interests of all those involved in horse racing.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[Motion on amendment A5 lost]

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would move amendment A6 on behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford, continuing with amendments to subsection (2) with respect to the establishment of the Alberta racing corporation. The purpose of this amendment is to have the nominations submitted to the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Now, subsection (2) of section 2 goes through a process whereby the appointments to the board are made. This is the process. Essentially, the current members of the board of the Alberta racing corporation as it currently is created and exists are to hold the position of the selection committee. When there are nominations received,

the selection committee shall submit to the board the names of a sufficient number of candidates, from among the names of the persons whose nominations were received by the selection committee, to fill the positions on the board to which appointments are to be made.

Mr. Chairman, we have been arguing throughout these amendments on our amendment 9 that the appropriate place for the designation, for the selection of those individuals ought to be with the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It ought not to be with the selection committee.

Now, the reason why these amendments were compelling and why they made sense is because of the absurdity of subsection (c) of section 2(2); in other words, section 2(2)(c).

MR. WHITE: Say that again.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Well, for the benefit of all members, we are at section 2(2)(c), which is the process whereby names of those who have been nominated are submitted to the board of directors who will then fill the positions to the board.

Now, here's the absurdity of subsection (c). By virtue of subsection (2)(a), Mr. Chairman, the current members of the board are the selection committee; they constitute members of the selection committee. Now, until the nominated members are appointed by the board, they are not members of the board. So the only members of the board are those that currently exist, but those that currently exist are the selection committee. So what it means under subsection (c) is that

on receiving nominations, the selection committee shall submit to the board . . .

That's them. That's the selection committee. They have to submit to themselves.

. . . the names of a sufficient number of candidates, from among the names of the persons whose nominations were received by the selection committee . . .

Well, the selection committee is the board. They're all the same thing.

. . . to fill the positions on the board to which appointments are to be made.

So they get the nominations, and then they select amongst themselves as the selection committee the names to be submitted to the board, which is themselves, to select the members to fill the

positions on the board. What absolute rubbish. What nonsense. I mean, these members who make up the selection committee are not in a position to on the one hand say, "I'm the selection committee," to submit names to the board of directors and then on the other hand say, "but I am the board of directors." I mean, the whole process is absolutely absurd.

Mr. Chairman, the only way to resolve that absurdity is to have the selection committee submit the names of those that are being recommended from the nominations received to the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

DR. WEST: What better would it be? The chairs have already recommended these names from the associations.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN: Through the Chair, please.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The sponsor of the Bill says: but these names have already been submitted. Well, fair enough, but then why are they going to the selection committee to go to themselves as the board of directors? That's what subsection (c) says.

What it should be, Mr. Chairman, as we have been arguing all along, is that the selection committee takes the names to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council makes the appointments. That's the way it's done all the time. That's the way we've done it with recent legislation in this Assembly. We've had legislation come forward from the government that appoints members to various boards, commissions, agencies, et cetera. How was it done? The organization selects the individuals that they recommend, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council makes those appointments. What in the world is the difference here? Why here? Why now? What's wrong with the selection process that we have used over and over and over again? I submit and accept and acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, that that is another debate about whether or not those kinds of appointments should be made that way. Nonetheless, we have had in this Assembly legislation come forward from the government that creates that kind of selection process to members of boards, commissions, corporations, agencies, and so on, where it's the Lieutenant Governor in Council that makes the selection.

[Mr. Tannas in the Chair]

That's what amendment A6 does. It says: don't submit the names to yourselves; submit the names to the Lieutenant Governor in Council; they are your recommendations, and therefore the positions can be filled by order in council. [interjection] That's what it says, hon. member. Read subsection (2)(c) of section 2 of Bill 5, and you'll understand what I'm saying. I hear the Minister of Energy shaking her head, but I'm not sure she's read section 2, subsection (2)(c) to see that that's exactly what it says, that the selection committee, which is the board, submit to themselves the names of the nominees.

This amendment makes perfect sense, cures and corrects an absolute absurdity in the legislation, maintains a consistent procedure that is constantly used. It will maintain, Mr. Chairman, a consistent process and procedure that maintains the link between organizations created by legislation and the government of the day in the selection process. [interjection] Section 2, subsection (2), subsection (c).

What this does, Mr. Chairman, is essentially create a perpetual process that eliminates the involvement of the Lieutenant Gover-

nor in Council, the Executive Council of the government of the day. It is inappropriate to start that process here. Section 6 says that the bylaws are not subject to the Regulations Act. Section 7 says, "The Financial Administration Act does not apply to the Corporation" and the revenue and expenditures of the corporation. "The Corporation is not an agent of the Crown." The selection committee constitutes in and of itself the selection committee without any involvement of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. These are all part and parcel of a pattern to widen the gap between governing racing in the province of Alberta and the governance role that the province of Alberta through its elected government must play in the governance of horse racing and other gambling in the province of Alberta.

4:50

This Bill, Mr. Chairman, does just deal with the racing aspect, horse racing. In this particular part we're dealing with the establishment and operation of the corporation. The pattern that is being identified in these various sections – through section 2, through section 6, through section 7, through section 8, through section 9 – all indicate and identify the pattern that widens the gap between the Alberta racing corporation, which will exist unto itself, unto its own, and the Alberta government, the government of the day, that is charged with the obligation and the responsibility to ensure that the board of directors in discharging its obligation is adequately and properly constituted by virtue of the inclusion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

I've heard nothing from the government as to why the process, that is a continuous process that often recurs in this Assembly whenever there are new positions, new appointments to the various boards and agencies in the province of Alberta that are done through order in council, is different this time around. The minister should stand in his place and explain why we are going to this concept, moving the Alberta racing corporation away from the government of Alberta at least in the selection process, and if the minister is going to vote against this amendment, why it's inappropriate for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to be the body, the entity, that authorizes the appointments of these individuals to the Alberta racing corporation.

I will wait in earnest for the Minister of Transportation and Utilities responsible for lotteries and gaming to provide me with the answer as to why the Bill that he sponsors contains this absurd relationship between this fictitious selection committee and this fictitious board, which are all the same individuals going through this facade of a selection process, as if they, wearing one hat, will weed out the selection process and then put on their other hat and tell the selection committee what a great job they did when in fact the selection committee is themselves. So they might break their arms patting themselves on the back as to what an excellent job the selection committee did in making its selections. I've said it enough times: it's absurd. The minister needs to explain why that is.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I know that there are other members of my caucus who will be wanting to speak to amendment A6. They will also want to speak to the absurdity of the section as it currently stands and will want to make some of their own comments about why the amendment is a prudent, appropriate, legitimate, and worthwhile amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. WICKMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the

opportunity to speak to amendment (e) under the amendment classified as 9 to Bill 5. This particular amendment loses a bit of its punch in view of the defeat of the two previous amendments, which were very, very worthy amendments.

The whole process behind here, the whole thrust of it is to ensure that there is some accountability, to ensure that there is a means of ensuring that the board that is appointed to this corporation is there to protect the interests of the Alberta taxpayer, and to ideally have five persons, three from the racing industry, two representing the public at large, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor, which is certainly preferable to a method where one board continues to appoint itself. At least by passing this particular amendment, it would still ensure that that board that is in place would no longer be able to just randomly fill their own positions with their own named replacements. It would have to be approved, of course, by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, because this amendment strikes out "to the board," the accountability of the selection committee to the board, and replaces it with "to the Lieutenant Governor in Council." I ask the minister in particular to really pay heed to these amendments.

I must say that the minister was very co-operative in agreeing to the six previous amendments that this caucus initially brought forward. It was good of the minister to approve those, to go along with them to strengthen the Bill. Mr. Chairman, I remain convinced that the racing industry is in big, big trouble, and that's one thing that the minister and myself agree on. We both see the racing industry having some difficulties, and if changes don't occur, it could virtually be wiped out. It could be the end of a very, very valuable industry to the province of Alberta, sort of one of the heritages that the province has had, one of the things that many people look forward to with a great deal of excitement.

Privatizing the racing industry, the concept of privatizing I think is good. I think there are some real advantages to that. However, there have to be cautions. Yes, at times government should not be afraid to let go, but there have to be some cautions in there to ensure that we're not so anxious to privatize that we forget about accountability, that we forget about control, that we forget about our responsibility to the taxpayer. Mr. Chairman, that's why I really, really ask the minister not to take these amendments too lightly, even though he did agree to the other six, and look at these.

If there is something there that you see could strengthen the Bill, give the horse racing industry more of a shot in the arm, don't hesitate to go for it, Mr. Minister. Even if you take that amendment back and you bring it forward as a government amendment, that's fine, because the end-all purpose is to get a Bill that is worthy of support by all Members of this Legislative Assembly so that we can send a signal to the racing industry that we're behind you all the way and that we're willing to co-operate, provided the government side is willing to co-operate and provided the racing industry is willing to co-operate.

We've seen the defeat of (a), of (b), of (c), of (d). Let's not just go through the motions now of defeating (e), (f), and (g). If there is any merit there at all, Mr. Minister, I really ask you to take into consideration that merit that may be there, that you may deem to be there, and incorporate it somehow in the Bill. Or approve the amendment. The six other amendments that were approved, of course, came forward as part of the Bill.

As I wrap up my discussion on amendment (e), I want to stress again to all members of the House to take a good, careful look at this amendment, because it is very, very worthy of support. On that note, Mr. Chairman, I'll conclude.

MR. DICKSON: I just want to formally add my support to this particular amendment for all the reasons that have been mentioned with each of the previous four amendments. The theme here of these amendments is an important one. It is an acknowledgment that there's a greater public interest here and that it's not good enough to turn this segment of the gambling industry over to a self-regulated, self-governed group and then see the government in effect wash their hands, brush their hands and thereby disclaim responsibility. For the reasons I'd mentioned on the first and second amendment, there is a public role here. There is a public responsibility. This amendment and the previous amendments acknowledge that and attempt to put that forward, and I think for the compelling reasons that I submit have been advanced by previous speakers, I would urge members to support this.

There are many other suggestions that could have been made that would have been more cumbersome, more awkward, more onerous. This is, if you will, the minimalist intervention principle at work, Mr. Chairman. The Lieutenant Governor in Council has the power under this amendment to be able to at least nominally represent the public interest.

5:00

As we see amendment after amendment in this set of amendments being defeated, we have to ask: why is it that the government persists in refusing, rejecting these amendments? I can come up with no higher or better reason, no more satisfactory explanatory, than that the government's position on this is ideologically driven. If that's the case, I just respectfully suggest to the government that ideology makes for bad government. I think that wherever we've seen a government that tries to govern on the basis of a strict and narrow ideology, we see problems. We see inflexibility, and we see the lack of a moderate, even-tempered sort of ground that I think Albertans insist on and want by way of government.

With those observations, Mr. Chairman, I'll take my seat, just again encouraging members to vote in support of this particular amendment.

Thanks very much.

[Motion on amendment A6 lost]

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Sherwood Park.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On behalf of the Member for Edmonton-Rutherford I would move amendment A7, which will be subsection (f) of amendment 9, as presented by the Member for Edmonton-Whitemud.

Continuing on with making an attempt to cure the Bill and make it a better Bill, the proposal in amendment A7 is to delete subsection (2)(d) of section 2, again continuing on in dealing with the establishment and operation of the corporation, which constitutes part 1 of Bill 5. Mr. Chairman, subsection (2)(d) of the current Bill identifies the process to be undertaken in the selection of the members of the board. Now, as it is currently stands, a candidate's name is submitted to the current members of the board, which, as I've just previously indicated, are the same as the selection committee, and "the current members of the board" conduct the vote "to determine whether the candidate is to be appointed," and on a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the board, the candidate is then appointed. The current members of the board appoint that candidate as long as they get a two-thirds majority vote: that's the way the section currently reads. Our position, of course, as hon. members will know, is to

delete that whole section for the selection process. The names are submitted to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council has the final say in the appointment process.

Subsection (d) continues on with the absurdity of subsection (c) in that the names of the candidates are submitted to the current members of the board, which of course is the selection committee. Then the board gets together and takes off their selection committee hat, puts on their board of directors hat, and votes two-thirds on the persons that they selected, wondering whether or not they'll only get a two-thirds majority vote, since they're the same people who put forward the names in the first place, which would make it very interesting to see any members of the board vote against somebody that they put forward as members of the selection committee. Incredibly absurd, but that's what we've got before us. So now we're hoping that members of the board, who also constitute the selection committee, won't vote against the person that they just put forward as the nominated candidate. So on a two-thirds majority vote, then, the board - no longer the selection committee but now the board, because they used to be the selection committee, but now they're the board - appoints that person to be the member of the board.

What an incredibly insane mechanism. The amendment at A7 says to just scrap the whole mess, give it to the Lieutenant Governor in Council to appoint the members of the Alberta racing corporation, have the selection committee put forward the names, the selection committee still being the current members of the board. Nothing changes in 2(a). They still constitute the selection committee, go through the selection process, put forward the names, not to yourself but to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for final approval and order in council to select the members of the board.

That, Mr. Chairman, seems to me and my colleagues to make some sense. It used to make sense to the government, because that's what they used to do over and over and over again, but for some reason, it doesn't make sense to the Minister of Transportation and Utilities responsible for lotteries and gaming. He would rather have an absurd, convoluted, ridiculous process where persons carry these fictitious roles, being one and the same person, to go through this outrageous process to select those individuals. [interjection] Well, I just heard the minister mention the word "patronage." I'm not quite sure of the context in which he mentioned that word. [interjections] Just to help clarify for the Minister of Transportation and Utilities . . .

THE CHAIRMAN: Hon. Member for Sherwood Park, we seem to have a debate going on between one of your colleagues and the minister. I wonder if we could wait our turn, and I'll be happy to recognize you when Sherwood Park concludes.

MR. COLLINGWOOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It was just so nice of you to hear that there's a debate going on. You don't know how good that makes me feel. Now, unfortunately the Minister of Transportation and Utilities decides to debate from his chair. I've asked him a number of times to come to his feet and speak to this Bill, but he chooses only to debate from his chair. While debate is always healthy, the debate is even healthier if the minister rises to his feet to explain the absurdity of sections 2(c) and (d).

As I said, Mr. Chairman, it used to make sense to the provincial government in terms of the process. It would make sense under this section if the current members of the board continued

to constitute the selection committee, and nothing in these amendments changes the role of the current members of the board of directors to act as a selection committee. That is done in subsection 2(a), and there has not been a suggestion made that that process change. The process changes down the track, where it is not the selection committee members, who change their hats to become now the board of directors, who vote for those that they've just selected. It actually goes as a recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor in Council, who must consult with the selection committee, who will then have the final say in appointing those persons by order in council.

It's a pretty straightforward amendment. All of these amendments have been straightforward. They streamline this process. They provide a process that is well known, well understood, and continues to have the link between the government through Executive Council and the Alberta racing corporation as a stand-alone entity.

I see no reason, Mr. Chairman, for members of the government side to vote against this. What I would certainly like to hear from government members are their reasons for voting against it, other than that potentially they're told they have to and are not to give any thought to it. But these are reasons that I think make some sense, not just to those of us who are debating and choose to debate, as opposed to those who choose not to debate, but to the people of Alberta, who are looking for that kind of comfort, that kind of certainty, and that kind of legitimacy in the process of creating this new and all-powerful Alberta racing corporation.

Mr. Chairman, again I know that there are going to be other members who would like to speak to this particular amendment, another amendment that is clear, concise, and makes perfect sense. I'm going to let those hon. members have their say as well, and we'll look forward to a debate.

Thank you.

5:10

MR. DICKSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to rise and speak in support of this particular amendment to repeal section 2(2)(d). The analysis that's been made by my colleague from Sherwood Park is helpful, but I come at it from a somewhat different perspective. It's this: if you don't want the Lieutenant Governor in Council to have a role in terms of identifying people who are going to make up this small board of directors, then why would you opt for a regime and an arrangement that ensures that you're going to have the most closely held board of directors I can imagine? If you're not going to have the Lieutenant Governor in Council having some responsibility for installing people on the board, then how can we be sure that you don't have a group of men or women who are on the board of the corporation who get stale, who lack any perspective on what the public interest is? Then they have a hammerlock, if you will, on their successors.

In most organizations, Mr. Chairman, that I expect most members have seen, you have some turnover. You have annual general meetings, and you have new blood. You have fresh energy. You have new ideas. If ever you wanted to create a model that would foreclose the possibility of fresh blood, new energy, new ideas, this surely would be the model you'd craft. It makes so little sense.

Now, I could understand if the other amendments had been accepted by the House and we had at least nominally the Lieutenant Governor and, through the Lieutenant Governor, the cabinet ensuring that there was some turnover and some fresh ideas, but by the government's rejection of those amendments, we're now down to a much narrower kind of ambit. What we have is just an

exercise which is as transparent as can be, but it just makes no sense. It doesn't advance the public interest. If somebody believes that the best kind of government you can have in an organization is to install a small number of men and women, leave them there for as long as possible without any change, without any new energy, then this is the model for you, but I can't imagine that thoughtful members in this Assembly would embrace this kind of circular nominating process that at the end of the day means there is virtually no change on the board of this corporation.

If this were a corporation dealing with some obscure enterprise, if this were dealing with a matter and a subject that was of interest and impact only to a small number of Albertans, maybe perhaps in such a case this would be of little consequence, but that isn't the case here. What we're dealing with is the Alberta racing corporation, which is in effect going to govern, manage, control horse racing activities throughout this province from Milk River to Slave Lake and beyond. When I look at page 5 of this Bill and section 2, it seems to me like this may have been an element of an earlier Bill that has been simply carried forward without any assessment of whether it fits, whether this is still an appropriate context. It just doesn't make any sense.

I expect that there may be others who may have a different perspective, but I wanted to add that view that while I adopt what's been said by my colleague from Sherwood Park, my concern additionally is that we're going to create a corporation run by a board which is too narrow in focus, which is going to be hidebound, tradition bound. If they make a mistake, if their perception should differ from what Albertans generally may demand of the racing corporation or governance of the horse racing industry, this kind of board is not going to be equipped, not going to be able to deal with it because you've got this little internal election going on. It's like a university fraternity without the turnover of new freshmen every year. I can't think of another organization.

Mr. Chairman, my closest experience would be on a figure skating club where you couldn't get on the board of directors of the figure skating club unless you'd served eight or nine years in some capacity as a fund-raiser. I often thought that the problem with that kind of an organization is that you miss out on a lot of energy. You tend to simply keep on repeating past mistakes. You don't have that perspective of somebody coming along and saying: hold it; there may be a better way of doing this.

Mr. Chairman, I think that because of the importance of the horse racing industry, because of the enormous potential for injury to this province by unscrupulous operators and problems in the horse racing industry, we can't afford to pass up this amendment. I'm trusting those members who may have voted with little thought on the previous amendments are going to spend some considered time and make a very careful assessment before the vote on this particular amendment.

Thank you for your time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. WICKMAN: Mr. Chairman, just a few comments on section (f) of course and section (g). Now, I guess from our point of view it's a matter of getting on record, saying our piece and ensuring that it is recorded. Let me talk about (f). Section (f) starts to lose a measure of appeal with the earlier defeat of (d) and (e).

Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, when we look at section 2(d) on its own, where we talk in terms of a corporation with five representatives with two-thirds being allowed to approve, I'm not

sure if that's two-thirds of all five, two-thirds of those that are present. I'm not sure if that's a situation where you could have a scenario where three board members are there. Maybe there's two vacancies on the board at that particular time. Those three board members that are there, that are active – if two out of three agree on a certain person, then that person of course is going to get on the board.

So amendment (f), you know, falls in line with the earlier thoughts that we saw with (c), (d), and (e). In other words, this whole amendment was meant to result in an overall revamping of that method of appointing the board of directors of the corporation. As we go through each of these and government defeats each one, of course it lessens the impact that the remaining ones will have. So I get to the point where I have to kind of accept that the government is doing what they're doing even though I feel it's wrong. The numbers speak for themselves. If government is determined to incorporate features in the Bill that make it a bad Bill, I don't understand their rationale behind it, but I guess that's their right. We, like government, are accountable to the public, and I guess we're accountable in various different ways.

Mr. Chairman, at this particular point I'm going to adjourn debate on this Bill until 8 o'clock this evening.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Rutherford has moved that we adjourn debate on the amendment and therefore on the Bill. All those in favour of that motion, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed, please say no.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Chairman, I move that the Assembly stand adjourned until 8 o'clock tonight in Committee of the Whole. [interjections] Mr. Chairman, if you really are intent on rising and reporting, then let's move that we rise and report.

[Motion carried]

[Mr. Clegg in the Chair]

5:20

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Highwood.

MR. TANNAS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain Bills. The committee reports progress on Bill 5. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: All those in favour of the report, please say aye.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Carried.

MR. DAY: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Assembly stand adjourned until 8 o'clock tonight in Committee of the Whole.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: The Government House Leader has moved that we stand adjourned until 8 p.m. in Committee of the Whole. All those in favour, please say aye.

HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

THE ACTING SPEAKER: Opposed, if any? Carried.

[The Assembly adjourned at 5:22 p.m.]