

[Chairman: Mr. Stiles]

[8:30 a.m.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could we call the Private Bills Committee to order? We have two Bills to deal with this morning. Before we start, I should explain that the procedure in the Private Bills Committee is not a formal one. We don't expect you to stand when you're speaking, but it will be necessary for witnesses to be sworn as they are giving evidence. That will be carried out.

Essentially, the procedure is that the petitioners present their arguments, an explanation of their position, and an outline of the Bill and its purpose. We then open the meeting to questions from members of the committee, to be answered by either the solicitor or petitioner.

We'll deal with Bill Pr. 9, Le Diocese de St. Paul Amendment Act, 1985. Mr. Clegg, would you swear the witness, please?

[Bishop Roy was sworn in]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ouellette, would you like to go ahead and give us the background on the Bill, please.

MR. OUELLETTE: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Clerk, members of the Private Bills Committee, my name is Vital Ouellette. I am counsel for the diocese of St. Paul. Basically, I will deal only with the legal aspects and will leave any questions and factual matters to be dealt with by Bishop Roy.

Firstly, I'll deal with the organization. The diocese of St. Paul basically comprises an area spanning to Fort McMurray, west to the B.C. boundary, east to the Saskatchewan boundary, and south to Brosseau, which is basically the North Saskatchewan River. The diocese was incorporated in 1949 pursuant to an Act of this Legislature. That Act of incorporation stated that the diocese would be a nonprofit organization having as its general uses ecclesiastical, religious, charitable, educational, and recreational purposes.

The matter in question is that we are seeking a tax exemption and assessment with respect to property which is located in the county of St. Paul. The property in question was originally a church in St. Edouard, which is approximately 10 kilometres east of St. Paul. The church is no

longer used on a regular basis. Some lodging was added to the church, and approximately 69 people can stay for evenings and weekends. However, the church is still used by groups who wish to use it as a church for their meetings or programs. The groups attending the renewal centre are not only Christians but also non-Christians. It is not restricted to Catholics. The centre has been used by Pentacostals, Presbyterians, and any group which has a renewal purpose. That doesn't necessarily mean that the meetings have to deal with religion. They can be recreational and social, and the diocese emphasizes educational. The centre is used on a regular basis by the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. The renewal centre also serves for all the marriage preparation and baptism courses for the northeastern area. It should be noted that there is no charge to the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides for use of the facility, because they simply cannot afford it.

Funding for the centre is from donations. Some funding comes from rental of the facility. However, that rental is very minimal, basically one dollar a day for payment of coffee, which definitely does not pay for the ongoing expenses necessary for a building of this size. I will leave Bishop Roy to deal with the deficit. However, to this point the deficit, which has been there for every year of existence since 1982, has been absorbed by the diocese of St. Paul. In 1983 that deficit was over \$14,000, and in 1984 it was over \$5,000.

The diocese made an application before the Local Authorities Board in 1983, and a decision was given by the Local Authorities Board advising that the application to exempt the property from assessment and taxation had been declined by the county of St. Paul. We received that instruction on December 31, 1984. As a result of being declined the exemption in front of the Local Authorities Board, we find ourselves before you with the same application.

The county of St. Paul has taken a position on this matter. I believe the Clerk has the letter on file stating that they have no objection to our application for tax exemption. In fact, the county of St. Paul has been refunding the municipal portion of the taxes for the years of existence. The total tax notice for 1984 was \$5,609.10. They have exempted the municipal portion, being \$2,792. They have not exempted the school supplementary and

foundation program portions of the taxes. We therefore find ourselves before you asking that this property, which is operated on a nonprofit basis, be exempt from assessment and taxation by the municipality. This operation has as its objectives educational, religious, recreational, charitable, social, and cultural purposes. It is to the general benefit of the whole community and, as I said, is not restricted to one specific group.

I should add that in 1984 the Legislature passed a very similar Bill, the Jewish Community Centre of Edmonton Act. That Act had almost identical purposes and objectives as the renewal centre has; that is: they shall be for the provision of recreational, social, and cultural facilities to the Jewish community and other residents of Edmonton, on a nonprofit basis. The Legislature rightfully passed a private members' Bill exempting their property from taxation.

I thank you, and I will leave any questions or factual matters to be dealt with by Bishop Roy.

MR. ALGER: Mr. Chairman, my concern, if you can call it that, is the exact location of the centre. Is it in the town of St. Paul? It says: in the county of St. Paul. Is it in the town itself?

MR. OUELLETTE: No, it is outside the town of St. Paul. It is within the county limits, though.

MR. ALGER: So the jurisdiction of the council of St. Paul would actually have nothing to say about this? Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Begging the pardon of committee members, I omitted Mr. Clegg's report on this Bill. If you wouldn't mind, Mr. Clegg.

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, this is my report on Bill Pr. 9, pursuant to Standing Order 99. The Bill asks for an exemption from municipal taxation in respect to property defined in the Bill. We have been provided with a letter from the county of St. Paul No. 19, which confirms that the county has no objection to the tax exemption. There is no model Bill on this subject, and the Bill contains no provision which I consider to be unusual.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Clegg.

MR. PAPROSKI: Mr. Chairman, my question to Mr. Clegg deals with the letter. What is the date of that letter from the county of St. Paul please?

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, the letter is dated April 19, 1985. It's very brief and reads:
Tax Exemption Application
Lot 1, Plan 812 1999 in SE 9-58-8-w4th
Diocese of St. Paul

This letter is to re-affirm Council's position, as indicated in our letter to the Local Authorities Board, dated February 20th, 1984, that we have no objection to an application by the Diocese for an exemption, under the provisions of Sec. 5 of the Municipal Tax Exemption Act.

The letter is apparently written under the assumption that there is a further application being made under the Municipal Tax Exemption Act or that these proceedings relate to that Act. It definitely affirms that there is no objection.

MR. BATTUK: Just one question, Mr. Chairman. Since the county of St. Paul is the collecting and requisitioning authority, I wonder how come they will exempt you from the municipal section and not the school requisition. I think this is something quite unusual.

MR. OUELLETTE: The explanation provided to us by the municipal council when we appeared before them was that they had to collect the school supplementary and foundation program taxes and had to provide those funds to the provincial government. They indicated to me that the reason they were exempting the municipal portion is that they did not have to turn that money over to anybody else. That is the reason they were exempting that portion and not the rest. I have difficulty with that, and I questioned them several times.

I can read you the letter dealing with the municipal tax exemption portion that they have given. It's a letter from the county of St. Paul dated January 17, 1985. It states:

I am pleased to confirm that the council has by resolution at the meeting held January 15, 1985, approved of a refund in the amount of \$2,652.49, as requested in yours of December 19, 1984. The amount is made up as follows: municipal taxes,

\$2,792.09, less 5 percent tax discount,
\$139.60, leaving \$2,652.49.

That is signed by the secretary-treasurer of the county of St. Paul.

Their explanation all along has been that they could exempt the municipal portion because they didn't have to turn that money over to anybody else, but they felt they couldn't exempt the other portions because they had to turn the money over to the provincial government. Of course, I never proceeded any further, because every time we tried to get more information from them, that was their patent answer.

MR. BATIUK: I guess I'll have to accept it, Mr. Chairman, even though I don't think that was the right procedure. I presume that this Bill will allow you total exemption?

MR. OUELLETTE: That's what we are seeking.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Chairman, to the petitioners. You purchased or acquired for exemption 4.05 hectares, at this time. Is there an expectation that you will have to expand your facilities and appear before us or is the amount of property being exempted sufficient for your foreseeable uses?

BISHOP ROY: Not as far as we can see. This is a very recent service we have been giving to the diocese, and we've been going through a lot of not soul-searching but assessment. As far as we're concerned, we won't have to expand for many years to come. We've got 10 acres, or four point some hectares of land. That's the land and the property itself. The expansion of the dorms and rooms is sufficient for the needs of the people of St. Paul and the diocese.

MR. ZIP: Mr. Chairman, a question arises in my mind, and I'd like to address it to the petitioners. What's your situation with the town of St. Paul? Are the diocese properties currently exempt from taxes by the town?

BISHOP ROY: Yes, we are. The bishop's residence in the town of St. Paul is exempt. We pay only 10 percent of the total bill. That has been going on for many, many years.

MR. ZIP: Are you also exempt from the education tax portion on the property in the

town of St. Paul?

BISHOP ROY: All I know is that we just pay 10 percent of the total bill.

MR. ZIP: Thank you, sir.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, a short supplementary, following the hon. Member for Edmonton Belmont, to either Bishop Roy or Mr. Ouellette. You indicated, sir, that you are not contemplating any expansion with regard to properties, but in view of what the Act will empower you to do — it creates for you an envious position for future taxation — I wonder if you are looking at any major building expansions. On one hand you say that you have a financial hardship to incur, and that's why you're looking at this. Are you looking at any major facility improvements or changes other than to the dorms?

BISHOP ROY: No. As I said, we've assessed the needs of the diocese for many years to come. That will respond to our needs, so we don't contemplate any expansion. We might do some paint jobs, but that doesn't change the size of the building. That's sufficient for us now and for many years to come.

MR. WEISS: Fine. Thank you.

MR. ALGER: I'm going to dwell on the location a little bit longer, Mr. Chairman. Exactly where is this in relation to the town of St. Paul? It sounds like an acreage within the proximity of it, but I can't tell.

MR. OUELLETTE: No. In fact, it is seven miles east of the town limits of St. Paul. It is what was commonly known as the village of St. Edouard. The village doesn't exist any more. There are probably four houses in the village plus the church, which has the extension built on to it. It is located approximately half a mile south of Highway 28, 7 miles east of St. Paul.

MR. ALGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Bishop Roy and Mr. Ouellette. Do you have any closing comments you wish to make, anything further to add?

BISHOP ROY: Not I.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, then, for your attendance this morning. The committee will be considering your petition for a Bill and will be getting in touch with you.

The second Bill we have this morning is Bill Pr. 14, the Youth Emergency Services Foundation Act. Mr. Clegg, would you like to swear the witnesses now, please?

[Messrs. Farris and Ogilvie and Dr. DeWaal were sworn in]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Knaak, would you like to explain the purpose of this Bill, please?

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Chairman, it's a pleasure to be in the House, even as a guest, to see my former colleagues again.

As you heard by the introduction, I have with me today Dr. Sidney DeWaal, who is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of the Youth Emergency Shelter Society; Mr. Richard Ogilvie, who is chairman-elect of the board and chairman-elect of the executive committee and was formerly the vice-chairman; and Mr. Michael Farris, executive director of the society. They will be answering any questions with respect to the business and affairs and objectives of the society itself and later of the foundation.

The purpose of coming before you with the request for a private Act for a foundation is that, one, we expect bequests will be made to the foundation. The other is, even if bequests are made in what's referred to as inter vivos, from living people, we want to assure that the funds will be used only for the purposes specified at the time the bequest is made. In other words, if I want to make a bequest to the Youth Emergency Shelter Society Foundation now and want it to be used for youth emergency — troubled youth, in other words — two or three years from now I don't want some board of directors to change the objects of that foundation. I'm giving the money for that purpose and I would like it to be for that purpose.

If we use the ordinary procedure, either under the Societies Act or the present corporations Act, it is possible for the shareholders — and the shareholders will only be the society — to change their minds, in fact, to

amend the purposes of the foundation. It is our view it would not be appropriate to change the purpose for which the funds were given, especially if they were given by someone at death in a will. That person cannot complain or object because he's no longer here. That's why we've come before you to ask you to create an Act that will be a solid commitment to the community; in other words, a contract with the community that if they grant funds to the foundation, it will be used only for the purposes approved by you and not changed unless we come before you again. That's the reason we're here. The reason it's a foundation is to receive capital bequests that will be held and invested for purposes of earning income and any income will be used for the charitable purpose identified.

I now call on Mr. Michael Farris to give a further explanation of the purposes of both the Youth Emergency Shelter Society, which will be the main shareholder, and the foundation itself.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman and hon. members of the committee, it is our pleasure to be before you this morning in order to present information with regard to this Bill.

The founding principles of the Youth Emergency Shelter Society are two in nature. We believe very strongly in community accountability, which includes responsiveness to the community and its needs. Number two, we also believe very strongly in the principle of volunteerism. Our service is possible only through the involvement and commitment of members of the community working to make their own community a better place.

Our philosophy of service is consistent with the Child Welfare Act that will be implemented in this province, in that we believe the least intrusive measures are those which operate best. We believe that wherever possible our option of choice in terms of intervention is to work with the family toward a family reconciliation. We also operate on the basis that we want to help people help themselves rather than create dependency upon our service. That includes both the young people and the troubled families from which they come.

Our client group comes from two general circumstances. One is runaways. These are young people who flee their homes because they feel the uncertainty and the potential

degradation of being on the streets is more acceptable than what they are subject to within their own homes. We do not encourage young people to run away. We will not accept young people for residential care without first contacting the person who has been acting as their parent to notify them of where they are and to verify the circumstance, nor will we provide service without first contacting the police, so that any missing persons or any warrant may be investigated or exercised. The runaways who seek our service are certainly in jeopardy. Fully 80 percent of the females who come to the Youth Emergency Shelter as runaways are runaways from incest and sexual abuse.

The other group of people with whom we work are called throwaways, and they certainly don't have any choice. They come from homes that have disintegrated, where the marriage has dissolved and neither partner is willing or able, emotionally or financially, to care for that young person. They come to us from a situation where a single parent makes a conscious choice between their own child and a new partner.

Many of our young people come to us after having been in foster care and group homes, and having been discharged from that, are unable to support themselves or to return to a natural family. Our clients are certainly vulnerable. They are young people that have difficulty re-entering school, for whom employment is a serious problem. Many of them have a great deal of difficulty finding any type of employment, much less stable employment that would allow them to establish some sort of independence.

The need is obvious in Edmonton and the problem extends throughout North America. It has been documented by regional social services in a review of need and in various studies throughout the United States. It is also documented in other municipalities within Canada.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Mr. Farris. Mr. Clegg would you give us your report on the Bill please?

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, this is my report on Bill Pr. 14, pursuant to Standing Order 99. The Bill provides for the incorporation of the Youth Emergency Services Foundation and for

its operation. Although there is no model Bill on this subject, it follows closely the format of previous Bills that have dealt with this type of subject.

I would mention that a minor amendment is to be proposed to section 7 of the Bill, which will merely deal with the possible future need to promote successors to the initial directors of the board, which hadn't been addressed. It's a very minor drafting matter.

I have no further comments, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Clegg.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Chairman, I certainly commend the petitioners for coming forward this morning. Regrettably the need is there, and unfortunately you have to do what you're doing.

I would like to have a little clarification with regard to your existing facilities. I am wondering if you're actually duplicating any existing services within those facilities that may or may not be offered through the communities by Social Services or other areas.

You mentioned expansion to other communities in your over-review. Do you have a set program that you're looking at to say that you would endeavour to have one, two, or three in the next years or whatever? Are those facilities contemplated or the areas picked at this time?

Do the board members work on a volunteer basis? How many are paid? Are you as the director perhaps one of the only hired individuals? I'd like a little clarification of where the moneys are going.

While I might appear to be asking the questions in a negative way, I don't want you to think that at all. I certainly support what you're doing and would encourage members that way as well. But I would like those areas clarified, please.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the first comment as to duplication of service, we have recently passed through a review that was conducted in co-operation with Alberta Social Services, Edmonton region, and involved members of a review team from the Alberta Association of Child Care Centres as part of the on-site group. That review indicated that shelters do provide a very important service. The Youth Emergency Shelter is in fact one of

the primary givers of service to young people under the age of 18 who are in a homeless circumstance within this region. It also found that there is, in essence, no essential duplication of service and that the services of the society and of the shelter correspond with the child welfare mandate. The review indicated that the social services department within the Edmonton region and the Youth Emergency Shelter should work in co-operation in order to deliver service.

In regard to the second point in terms of potential expansion, 76 percent of our clientele come from Edmonton and immediate area, a further 6 percent from municipalities and towns within central and northern Alberta, and a further 11 percent from rural areas in central and northern Alberta. These are not transient young people; these are basically young people from our own community. In the past three years about 1,000 young people have received service on a residential basis. We do see young people from certain identified areas outside of Edmonton, and we have been contacted by people from those centres who are associated with faith communities and congregations which provide some support to our society and who belong to service clubs and other interested community groups. For example, on average we see three to four young people from the Fort McMurray area within the course of a two-week period. There are other centres that are experiencing similar problems with young people that cannot be serviced through existing facilities.

In regard to the third part, in terms of the board of directors, I would like to ask Mr. Ogilvie to address that, but prior to his speaking, your question with regard to staff. On a yearly basis we average approximately 60 volunteers a week who are on our active registry. They commit themselves to a minimum of a four-hour block of time once a week. We enroll our volunteers on a sessional basis much like the school year. It extends from a high of 90 to 95 people in the winter to a low of about 60 in the summer. Without the volunteers, who certainly do all of the jobs that can be done in the shelter, from janitorial and maintenance work to working in reception to being part of our kitchen staff to actually helping to supervise the young people, we could certainly not deliver service. We have a small, full- and part-time paid staff that numbers 14.

I am a member of that paid staff.

MR. OGILVIE: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could ask that the question with regard to directors and directorships be repeated.

MR. WEISS: Certainly, sir. I just want to clarify this in my own mind and so other members of the Assembly might be familiar with it as well. Are members of the board for example, on a volunteer basis? Do they receive remuneration or a stipend — \$150 for a day's meeting or expenses — things like that? I just want to have it brought out.

MR. OGILVIE: Mr. Chairman, members of our board are all unpaid volunteers from various parts of the community — no remuneration, expense accounts, honoraria, or anything of that nature.

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, my question is to Mr. Farris. What is the age range of the people you service? In a general way, what is, say, the youngest to the oldest that use your services?

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, by the bylaws of the society we work with young people who are under the age of 18, because there are certainly adult services and facilities available in the community. The average age of our clients is 16 years, 4 months. The youngest people we have worked with were a brother and sister who were eight and nine years old who came to our attention. We work with young people under the age of 16 in co-ordination with child welfare and certainly operate within the child welfare mandate and the practices specified both by regulation and by law.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you. A supplementary, please, Mr. Chairman. What is the average stay? This is an emergency shelter so obviously they are emergency situations. Approximately how long is the average stay of one of your clients?

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, we operate two programs at the Youth Emergency Shelter. We began three years ago with the idea that perhaps a large group home with maybe 12 beds and a live-in house parent would be sufficient for the problem. We are now licensed for 11

and, in fact, have accommodated up to 54 young people in an evening. We currently offer two programs. One is a night-by-night program, which we refer to as our CRASH program; that stands for crisis assistance and hosteling. We allocate 21 beds to that, and a young person can receive service one evening at a time. In that program they receive shelter, food, clothing, medical attention — many of them require that because of the circumstance of their admission — and in addition to that, counselling and referral. It is in that program that we attempt to work toward family reconciliation.

Our other program is later developing because we did not recognize — in fact, being one of the innovative leaders in this type of service in North America, it had not been previously documented. But there are a substantial number of young people who have no family to which they can return and no substantial resources they can put in play in order to achieve independence. We refer to that program as our START program; that stands for stabilize, assessment, referral, and transition.

We attempt to work with young people to move toward independence. It may be a return to the community in a room-and-board placement, it may be a return to the community in a home that is supported under the terms of guardianship allowance — things of that nature — or it may be completely independent. We shoot for about a six- to eight-week time frame, and the average length of stay in that program is 37 days.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of points I'd like to raise with the petitioners. You've been in operation as a shelter for approximately three years. I wonder if you could give me an idea of the yearly budget for your organization, the source of your funding, and whether any of that funding is public money, either municipal or provincial.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, we've been in operation for three years. We've just passed the third anniversary of operating the shelter. During that time we have gone from a shelter that was licensed for 12 beds to the current configuration of 38. At this point we believe we are in a period of stabilizing the services we

offer and do not see the need for expansion within this facility beyond that number. Our budget for operating this facility is slightly in excess of \$500,000 a year. This includes donation in kind, which is a significant contribution to our service from the community. For example, we can feed a young person three full meals a day for about \$5.50. At that rate our food budget is approximately \$50,000 a year. Donation in kind in 1984 was approximately \$42,000 from wholesalers, manufacturers, retailers, producers, and so forth within the food industry. The same types of figures apply to our clothing room and expenses in regard to clothing young people.

The funding we receive at this point generally comes in the following breakdown. Our START program is funded approximately 45 percent by the United Way of Edmonton and Area. We also have just entered into a contractual arrangement with the provincial Department of Social Services and Community Health, Edmonton region, that is approximately one-third of our annual operating budget. That allocation is dedicated internally to the support of our night-by-night program. Furthermore, we are in a city facility and receive a lease subsidy plus a grant-in-aid. The remainder of our support comes from what we call our circle of friends. It can be individual givers within the community, individuals who contribute anywhere from \$2 or \$5 to amounts of \$10,000, which last year approximated \$100,000. It also includes contributors from every faith community within the community itself. In addition to that, we have a very loyal and valued circle of friends that is representative of service clubs: the Rotary, Kiwanis, Cosmopolitan, Lions, Lioness, and all sorts of groups, including the Legion. We enjoy a broad base of support, and we intend to continue that relationship.

MR. SZWENDER: Mr. Chairman, the purpose of that question was twofold. Certainly, the objectives of the shelter society are very honourable and necessary. The question about funding was with respect to the purpose of this petition. One of the reasons given was that you wanted to guarantee that any money bequeathed through wills would in fact be used the way those individuals designated. From what you've said, my rough estimation is that you depend upon about 20 percent of your

annual budget from private donations. The other 80 percent comes from the United Way, the municipality, and through lease grants. Correct me if I'm wrong. It seemed to me that you said \$100,000, and if your annual budget is \$500,000, that's about 20 percent.

Maybe I could let you respond to that, Mr. Farris, because you seem to be giving me eye contact that that was incorrect, and then I will continue.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, in terms of our current budget, the intent of the society would be to secure on an ongoing basis one-third of our funding from the province, through Alberta Social Services and Community Health, for support of the night-by-night program to ensure that there is a door off the streets for young people. Furthermore, this is our first year of membership within the United Way, and their support amounts to approximately 21 percent of our total budget. We hope to see that approach the 33 percent figure so that we have an equal distribution of funding: one-third from the United Way, one-third from the province and government sectors, and one-third from the general community.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. DeWaal, did you want to supplement that answer?

DR. DeWAAL: If I may, just for clarification. Starting out with 100 percent community support, we have moved toward stabilization of our finances, up to about 50 percent of our budget. The purpose of the foundation is to accommodate those in the community who do not wish to donate moneys to the operating budget of the shelter. For instance, we have to look toward establishing or building an appropriate facility; that's one possibility. Others wish to stabilize the kinds of services we give by way of donations to a foundation that does that not only through YESS but also through other similar organizations and does the kind of research that is necessary to identify and address the problems found in services to young people in need. The foundation looks at stabilization, especially for working funds for capital projects, and it looks at improving services to young people over a long range of time through the services of the shelter as well as other organizations of that kind.

MR. SZWENDER: A further supplementary. I'm still not exactly clear on the figure, a breakdown of how much of your yearly budget is dependent strictly on private donations compared to United Way, provincial funding, or other similar arrangements with, let's say, the municipality.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, in 1985 that figure would be approximately 45 percent of our budget. In terms of a strategic plan, we are looking toward reducing that to about 35 percent. It amounts to between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

MR. SZWENDER: A further supplementary, Mr. Chairman. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of your society is extremely valuable, and we as a government are always looking at groups such as yours to relieve the burdens of society in certain areas of need. Certainly, you have identified that need. If we follow the trend of the types of services that are provided to the citizens of our province, our society, often these groups or support systems such as yours originate on a volunteer basis, whether in the medical or the social services field. They are funded strictly by private donations and staffed almost totally by volunteers. As time progresses, what was originally a volunteer group expands, or the need for those services grows to the point where it is an expectation of society. At that point, the government is asked to play a much more vital function, usually through funding. What originally was staffed by volunteers becomes so dependent on paid staff and the services provided grow, so government is expected to provide that funding. Although you've stressed the volunteer component of your society and all the good work it does, through incorporating this as an Act, I wonder whether we as a government may not be put in a position at some future date where we will have to assume responsibility because of the very essential service you will be providing.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, it is clearly the intent of the society to maintain its standing on the two principles I alluded to earlier. In fact, the volunteer component of our service has increased from the time we opened our doors to now. We also look at other low-cost options in terms of how we provide service and do the work that is necessary. This includes being

very active participant in the community alternatives and fine options programs, where we utilize members of our community who are obligated to do community service as restitution in janitorial and custodial duties. We think volunteerism is an underutilized facet of service that not only brings potential for reducing costs but brings our client group in particular something that money just can't buy. In many cases for many of these young people, it is the first time in perhaps years that someone is doing something with them because they want to, rather than because they are a birth parent or because it's a job. It is an essential component of our service, and that concept permeates our programs, bylaws, philosophy, and everyday working life.

The intent of this Bill is certainly not to be the thin end of the wedge. This Bill is not tied to the essential funding of the Youth Emergency Shelter. It is intended to establish a foundation that would receive endowments, gifts, and bequests, the funds from which would be addressed to the needs of homeless youth and troubled families, as needed. It is certainly not the intent of this relationship to secure provincial dollars for the foundation.

MR. SZWENDER: Thank you for that answer. Again, I think part of the difficulty I'm experiencing -- and I don't know if other members of the committee are sharing it -- is that as Mr. Clegg pointed out, there is no model Bill prior to this one upon which we can base earlier decisions or need for action. I don't know if Mr. Clegg would like to comment on this. Would the successful passage of this Act then set a precedent for other groups, whether it's shelters for battered women, half-way homes or rehabilitation facilities of one kind or another for ex-convicts, or things like that. Are we going to be in a situation where the successful passage of this Act will open the door to other organizations, with similar objectives to yours, expecting this type of privilege?

MR. CLEGG: Mr. Chairman, this committee has previously recommended to the Assembly, Bills which follow this general format. If this Bill did in fact set an example for other organizations to follow, this committee and the Assembly is not bound by precedents, as the court is, and can judge every case as it comes

up. The purpose of this Bill is to provide a vehicle to receive private donations, and therefore if it does provide a precedent, it will be a precedent for private activity and charity work. The Bill doesn't contain anything which depends on or implies public funding.

MR. CLARK: Mr. Chairman, I guess my question is to Mr. Knaak. In your opening remarks, you said you preferred to go the private Bills route rather than the Societies Act because of the permanency and it would guarantee the people that bequeathed money to your organization that their money would be used as they wished.

I believe that as a former member of the Private Bills Committee, you probably remember how often we used to amend private Bills. In fact, because of the number of amendments in one Bill, this year we were asked to form a new Bill. I wonder what other advantages you see of going the route of a private Bill over the Societies Act, maybe in administration or financing of the organization, other than what you have mentioned. Are you now under the Societies Act, and is it working successfully at the present time?

MR. KNAAK: Mr. Clark, the Youth Emergency Shelter Society is acting under the Societies Act, but it's not accepting capital bequests or receiving capital bequests for the purpose of investing for some future period of time. No foundation exists now.

If I can just repeat and elaborate slightly, I'll answer your question. It was our view that in order to convince someone in the public to give a capital donation -- meaning a larger sum of money -- for the purposes of investing, not for spending, they would require some assurance that at some point in the future when there was a new board, that that board would not change the purpose for which the funds were given. I know of no way to lock in that permanency under the Societies Act or the corporations Act. We're here to ask for a private Bill because that permanency is locked in. Combined with that is, of course, the assurance to the public that that in fact will happen. We believe that a private Act will enhance the ability to obtain funds because it creates some permanence and significance to the foundation. So we believe that if members of the Private Bills Committee thought fit to

approve this, it will enhance the ability to raise capital funds for the purposes enunciated in the foundation.

I guess the only other thing that's worth pointing out is that the foundation isn't set up solely to fund the Youth Emergency Shelter Society but any other society with similar purposes as well. So the board of the foundation would make those decisions.

MR. CLARK: Thank you.

MR. ALGER: For openers, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know the location of the shelter.

MR. FARRIS: The current facility of the society is located at 9310-82nd Avenue. It's on the south side of Edmonton in a building owned by the city.

MR. ALGER: Thank you. How do children in Jasper Place or northeast Edmonton, places like that, find you? If a kid were on the street tonight, how would he know where that building is? Who directs him there?

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, we receive referrals from all possible sources, including child welfare authorities, the police department, through school guidance counsellors and things of that nature, from pastors and ministers of congregations, through self-referral, by word of mouth, and unfortunately situations where a parent will drive to the shelter and tell their child to get out, that they never want to see them again.

We undertake to communicate with the various district offices of Social Services. As well, we have a liaison officer from the local division of the police department, who is attached to our board and works with our staff, and we belong to various networking agencies within the social services. In addition to that, we speak on a regular basis with all the guidance counsellors with the board of education in order to make them aware of our service. Through recreation centres, libraries, and other locales, we provide brochures and posters with regard to our service, and we have the support of various media outlets in regard to public service announcements so that young people who are in need and families that are experiencing trouble will have the option of the YESS as a resource.

MR. ALGER: Mr. Chairman, are there any educational facilities at the shelter? In a 38-day period, let's say, you really shouldn't neglect the child's education. I wonder how you accommodate that.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, education of young people is one of the primary concerns we have at YESS and is one of the great difficulties we have, as well, in terms of being able to access educational programs for young people who have perhaps precipitously left school. Wherever possible we attempt to maintain our clients in their home school by arranging needed transportation and so forth. We also encourage young people to participate in correspondence and other programs if they cannot gain access to a regular school program. In addition, we have volunteers who provide tutorial service. We have a library room that has resource materials available, and we also have the support of two literary groups in Edmonton that are involved in working on reading skills and things of that nature. Outside of traditional education, we also provide programming in life skills education and job readiness training and make referrals to other programs in the community that provide services of a similar nature.

MR. ALGER: It sounds terrific, Mr. Chairman. I wonder about the children you mentioned who were discharged from foster homes. Is there a given age when they have to get out of a foster home and get on the street? Is it 16 or 18 in foster homes? What is the range? Or are they sometimes kicked out?

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, sometimes the difference between being kicked out and leaving of one's choice is a very difficult line to determine. Typically the age is 16 in this jurisdiction, as it is in many other jurisdictions across Canada. In my 15 years in this field, it is a common problem that once difficult young people achieve the age of 16, they are labelled as noncompliant and have services effectively terminated, which leaves them very vulnerable if they are not able to secure employment or find a stable home environment.

MR. ALGER: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I wonder about the actual foundation itself and whether or not this particular board intends to

advertise, if the Bill goes through, that they do indeed have a foundation. Will they subject the rest of us, which I think they should, to the fact that it's there? Will they subscribe to endowments, wills, and gifts from all of us, as it were? Just general advertising; no specific person. Sometimes these foundations can really get rolling, and it's a good thing if they do this.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, it is the intent of the board and the society to provide a strong impetus for the formation of the foundation by launching a campaign to obtain a group of charter givers that will provide initial funds for its work. We also hope to use this as an opportunity to educate the community to the need for this kind of work and to the fact that they can get involved and contribute and that it's just not the responsibility of government or perhaps a particular faith community to provide service.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Farris. Dr. DeWaal.

MR. DeWAAL: It's just to supplement, Mr. Chairman. Already the word of mouth that this is being proposed, and that travels fast, has led to suggestions by corporations that they might be interested in contributing to this foundation if it were established.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Dr. DeWaal.

MR. ALGER: Mr. Chairman, I wonder about the comparison of the shelter to a regular orphanage. We still have orphanages, don't we? Are they out of the question now? [Interjection] Have we? I didn't know that. I wasn't here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That's outside my knowledge. Perhaps Mr. Farris can tell us that.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, the child welfare services of this province, through Alberta Social Services and Community Health, cares for homeless young people who have lost their parents. Both that service and private adoption agencies work toward securing homes and adoptive parents for homeless children. The society is mostly concerned with those young people who fall between the cracks of existing services, primarily those people between the

ages of 16 and 18 who don't have access to existing facilities and agencies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Farris.

MR. ALGER: Mr. Chairman, I guarantee that I'll finalize on this one. As I understand it, the average stay is 38 days. What happens to the child when he is discharged after 38 days? Obviously, a lot of them aren't going to be 18 by then. How do you accommodate them after that? I think you've half touched on it already. Could you elucidate?

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, many of the young people pass from our service into other facilities. For example, young people who are in need of mental health treatment might be admitted to residential programs or be placed in residential facilities in the community and attend day-treatment programs and things of that nature. In fact, some of those young people who need that service, begin while in residence at YESS.

For those young people who cannot return to their immediate family, we often help expedite a placement within the extended family, perhaps with grandparents or an older brother and sister or an aunt and uncle, something of that nature. From our volunteer group, we also often identify homes that can operate under the guardianship allowance arrangement or as room-and-board homes.

Many of our young people are not amenable to the normal or more traditional family environment, because of the abuse and experience they have had, and graduate from our service into a more independent situation where they are working and maintaining their own residence, either shared with other young people or completely independent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Farris. I don't want to unnecessarily limit members' questions, but we are here for a limited time and have some other matters to deal with before 10 o'clock. I have four more members on the list, so please keep your questions to a reasonable length of time. The hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. PAPROSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll be reasonable.

First of all, through you, I want to extend my

congratulations to Mr. Farris and to all members of the Youth Emergency Shelter Society. I know perhaps better than some members in this House the struggle you have had to go through, the barriers you've had to break down, the funding you've had to accumulate in the last three-year period. I know you have filled a tremendous void in our society. Whether we accept it or not, I think there are a growing number of young people like this that will be occurring in the future. The void has been filled very, very well.

I know that one of your goals is family reconciliation. Because of the many clients you have coming from so many different types of horrendous backgrounds, et cetera, I know that perhaps you don't have a lot of successes. But the first question I have for you is: how successful are you in family reconciliation when you talk about, for example, the 1,000 young people you have seen in the past year?

MR. FARRIS: Family reconciliation as an option, even though it is our first goal, is not viable in many families if, for example, there has been long-standing abuse. Unfortunately, that is all too common. We also work with half of our clientele who are throwaways, young people who have been pushed out of or lost their homes because that home has dissolved or disintegrated. Of those young people who are runaways, we are able to return a minimum of about 15 percent to their homes. Again, that may not seem like a very high percentage, but given the circumstance and the very desperate situation they have been in, we are very pleased with the success we have in that regard. That is about twice the amount of success that studies from shelters in the United States have indicated.

We have also been limited in part by the fact that through our development and need to secure funding and so forth, we have not been able to attract and hold the most competent staff, because certainly those people pass on to working with organizations that can provide a more stable environment for them.

MR. PAPROSKI: Thank you. A second quick question that deals with any plans that your society may have for a new facility in Edmonton. Is there anything on the books? Do you see that there is a need in some area of the city that this should be happening? Are you

bursting at the seams now? I think you are, and I wonder if you have any definite plans in the near future. If this Bill is approved — and hopefully it will be passed — and you acquire more funds, will you be proceeding with another facility?

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, the society is involved with many other groups in terms of networking and being able to definitively detail the extent of the problem and the types of resources that are required. At this point and for the foreseeable future, I do not think another emergency shelter is indicated for this community. Hopefully, we will avoid that.

I think there is a need for different types of residential services, perhaps for young people who are less sophisticated and more vulnerable or who have greater needs for nurturing and parenting. There might be a need, for the best treatment of those young people, for an auxiliary that would basically be a small group home and would be staffed along a parent model. There might also be a need for a drop-in arrangement in terms of contacting some of those youths who are more sophisticated and have been on the streets for a longer period of time and are the tougher types of individuals.

At this point I do not see the need for a new or a second youth emergency shelter. Certainly, the building that we are in is very old and requires a great deal of attention in terms of maintenance and general upkeep. It also does not easily lend itself to the purpose for which we employ it. At some point in the future we may consider replacing that facility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Lac La Biche-McMurray.

MR. WEISS: My question has been answered, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member for Calgary Foothills.

MRS. KOPER: Briefly, I really commend your work and your organization. I know it fulfills a need, as we've had a similar problem in Calgary, but we answered in perhaps a different way. My concern is that it seems to have gone beyond the original intent of an emergency shelter. I see your request today taking the idea into a much broader perspective than

formerly. I'm not sure to whom I should address my question. Are there not other foundations already trying to meet the purposes I see here but not specifically connected with an emergency shelter situation? The one I think of is the Burns foundation. I don't know if there are others, but it seems to me that we might be diluting the forces that are already there to help troubled children.

MR. FARRIS: Mr. Chairman, I stand to be corrected, but my understanding is that the Burns foundation limits its charitable giving to the municipality of Calgary, and there is not a specific foundation of that type available here in Edmonton.

There certainly are a number of charitable foundations in Edmonton, in Alberta, and in western Canada. Many of them have very specific objectives and provide funding limited to certain parameters. They may provide funding only for capital programs, for specific equipment, or for needs of specific types of young people. There is not a foundation that exists to address the needs of homeless young people and the troubled families from which runaways come. It is a problem that is affecting a very broad sector of the community, and it is another gap that needs to be addressed.

MRS. KOPER: A supplementary. Are there letters of support on file from child welfare, social services, or some of the existing community organizations?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There aren't any letters of that kind on file at the moment, although it will of course be our intention to contact the departments involved for their comments on the Bill. That will be dealt with when we deal further with the Bill.

Mr. Ogilvie, I believe you want to make a comment.

MR. OGILVIE: Mr. Chairman, just one further point with regard to the original question. We have established on our board — immediately, as a matter of fact — a committee that we are describing at this time as an intersociety liaison committee. We're very conscious of the attitude displayed in some quarters as to the duplication of services in the community and, therefore, the duplication of costs. As one of the leading agencies, we believe that we have

some responsibility to establish relationships with other societies and organizations serving the community and to periodically meet with these people and discuss what we are doing and what they are doing. We believe we can learn from them and they from us, and we can guard against this duplication of cost and service.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Ogilvie. There being no further questions from members, Mr. Knaak, if anything has been left out or if you'd like to make any closing comments . . .

MR. KNAAK: Just two sentences, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for permitting us to be here. That doesn't count as a sentence.

In summary I'd like to say that we're not asking anything of the government. We're not asking for any funds from you. All we're asking is that you allow the volunteers who established the Youth Emergency Shelter Society and now the foundation, to operate and permit them to solicit funds for the purposes of creating stability and ongoing funding for their services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Knaak and the gentlemen with you, for your attendance this morning. We'll be further considering the Bill, and we'll be in touch to let you know.

I'll now entertain a motion for the committee to go in camera. The hon. Member for Vegreville. Is the committee agreed?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

[The committee moved in camera at 9:45 a.m.]

