

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ALBERTA

Title: **Wednesday, June 3, 1987 2:30 p.m.**

Date: 87/06/03

[The House met at 2:30 p.m.]

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MR. SPEAKER: Let us pray.

We give thanks to God for the rich heritage of this province as found in our people.

We pray that native-born Albertans and those who have come from other places may continue to work together to preserve and enlarge the precious heritage called Alberta.

Amen.

head: **PRESENTING PETITIONS**

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition to the Assembly signed by a dozen, coincidentally New Democratic, MLAs requesting that the government refer the constitutional accord by way of a motion to the Standing Committee on Public Affairs for the purpose of conducting public hearings on the motion.

head: **PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

MR. MUSGREAVE: Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Private Bills has had the following Bill under consideration and recommends that it be proceeded with: Bill Pr. 13, Central Western Railway Corporation Amendment Act, 1987. The Committee on Private Bills has further had the following Bills under consideration and recommends that they be proceeded with, with certain amendments: Bill Pr. 3, An Act to Incorporate the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate (Polish) of Alberta; Bill Pr. 7, Calgary Beautification Foundation Amendment Act, 1987; Bill Pr. 14, Acts Leadership Training Centre Act; Bill Pr. 19, Calgary Assessment of Annexed Lands Act, 1987; Bill Pr. 21, The William Roper Hull Home Amendment Act, 1987.

Mr. Speaker, I request the concurrence of the Assembly in these recommendations.

MR. SPEAKER: Do the members of the Assembly agree to concurrence?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? So ordered.

head: **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

MR. ELZINGA: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure, sir, to introduce to you and to Members of the Legislative Assembly, two individuals who are outstanding in the agricultural community in the province of Alberta. I begin by introducing the president of Unifarm, Mr. Ralph Jespersen, and the vice-president of

Unifarm, Mr. Jack Swainson. I would ask them to rise in the members' gallery to receive the traditional warm welcome of the Legislative Assembly.

MR. OLDRING: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce to you and through you to the Members of the Legislative Assembly, a very special person. My mother Patricia Joy Oldring is out visiting Alberta from Langley, B.C. She's here to get a little bit of Alberta sunshine. I'd ask the members to join me in welcoming her to this Assembly.

MR. TRYNCHY: Mr. Speaker, it's a special day today for some 24 grade 6 students from the David Ovans school in Sanguo in my constituency. They're accompanied here by their teacher Mrs. Lena Szybunka and five parents, Mrs. Harapchuk, Mrs. Wilkinson, Mrs. Iwaschuk, Mrs. Lamoureux, and Mrs. Soucy. They're seated in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

MR. GIBEAULT: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you and to the members of the Assembly this afternoon, 24 students in the grade 6 class from St. Clement school in the constituency of Edmonton Mill Woods. They're accompanied by their teacher Mr. Leonard Tannas and one of the parents, Mrs. Maureen Letchford. They're in the gallery, and I'd ask them to please rise and accept the very warm welcome of the House.

head: **ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

Constitutional Accord

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'm assuming that following events today in Ottawa the Acting Premier will have contacted the Premier in Ottawa relative to the constitutional agreement signed this morning and related matters. I wonder if the Acting Premier will advise the Assembly if the Premier will be returning to the Assembly tomorrow to make a full statement relative to the government's position on the Constitution.

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, the Premier will be back either tomorrow or Friday, and he will make a full statement when he's in the House.

MS BARRETT: A supplementary question to the Acting Premier then. Could he indicate if the government is now prepared to agree to holding public hearings on this constitutional accord, or will we have to wait till the Premier gets back to find that out?

MR. CRAWFORD: Well, Mr. Speaker, that decision has not been made yet.

MS BARRETT: Okay, a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the government seemed ill prepared to deal with the Premier's statement about potentially pulling Alberta out of Canada. I wonder if the Acting Premier has determined whether or not the Premier, upon his return, will be issuing or making a clarifying statement in this House just on that matter.

MR. CRAWFORD: Well, I'm sure the hon. member can ask him when he's back in the House, and I adopt the remarks made yesterday in the House by my colleague.

MS BARRETT: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I guess I did confirm that we caught them off guard here. I believe that the Deputy Premier yesterday observed that separatism is always a concern, but it's not government policy. [interjections] That is what he said. He did say it wasn't government policy, but he recognized that this is a concern in Alberta.

I wonder if it is government policy that this concern over separatism is to be trotted out every time the government enters into negotiations with Canada or other provinces. Is that the new policy?

MR. CRAWFORD: Well, I think, Mr. Speaker, the real essence of the argument is the purport often used by the federal government, and it's not, from our point of view, a separatist initiative. I'm thinking that the accord today is as much of an advance in harmony in the country. The inclination of the federal government, at least in the past -- I'm speaking of prior to 1984. The inclination of the federal government in that period of the past has upset westerners noticeably, and some response is needed.

MR. R. SPEAKER: I'd like to question the Deputy Premier. Would the Deputy Premier take the request -- I guess in my question -- to the Premier to, on return, table not only the accord but some of the working documents and also look at setting aside a special time under ministerial reporting to outline some of the activities and sequence of activities that occurred in and before the signing of the accord so that we have that preliminary to the resolution which will be presented at a later time?

MR. CRAWFORD: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was asked by the Member for Edmonton Highlands if have I talked to the Premier. Since he meets in meetings until a quarter to six in the morning, I haven't talked to him; that's not my time of day. I'm sure the agreement will be not only fully provided but may be the subject of an important statement by the Premier. But I can't answer to the other documents and their working papers now.

MR. TAYLOR: A supplemental, Mr. Speaker, to the hon. Deputy Premier. I'm pleased to hear that they may be reconsidering the idea of having public hearings around the province so many citizens can put their input into the decision process. But I noticed the Prime Minister announced that he would be putting on the table, this fall or next year, a proposal for Senate reform. Could the Deputy Premier tell us whether or not this cabinet will be making a proposal to the Prime Minister to have the Triple E Senate included in that package of Senate reform that's he going to bring to the Constitution table?

MR. CRAWFORD: Mr. Speaker, I don't know that we'd take the same course that the member did in saying that consideration was being given to hold hearings. That may not happen. That is a decision which will have to be made yet, and in the meantime I think the Assembly can be assured that a full explanation and statement and the opportunity for debate will be present in this Chamber. I'm sure many members will want to speak to the resolution.

The answer to the second part is that I have no doubt that in the time frame of the discussion among the first ministers on Senate reform, the Triple E will be very much a part of our government's position.

MR. SPEAKER: Second main question, Acting Leader of the Opposition.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It occurs to me that I can offer a fax copy for photocopying for the Member for Little Bow.

Income Support Programs

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask a question of the Social Services minister, who explained to this Assembly just about three months ago that the reason she couldn't pass on the Canada pension plan disability increases to their designated recipients who are also receiving AISH, widows' pension, assured income -- that is, those people who are so low income that they also get provincial income-support programs -- was because the CPP increase is counted as income. Therefore, the increase was deducted from the other income-support programs for low-income elderly Albertans. I wonder if the minister will now indicate how this government plans to respond to federal health minister Jake Epp's objections to the province having pocketed the CPP disability increase moneys.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think it's very laudable that the federal government is finally sharing in some of the costs of the financial programs that the government of Alberta has historically provided to its citizens. I think all hon. members will know that AISH is unlike any other pension program provided to our citizens, unlike any other program in the rest of Canada, and it is still the most generous program in Canada.

MS BARRETT: I don't know if welfare is though. A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister. Is it her intention then to follow the recommendation set out in Mr. Epp's recent letter to her, whereby the increase would not be designated as income so *the* increase could actually be passed on to the low-income elderly for whom the increases were intended?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, that would be double funding. I think the hon. member should know that in other provinces in Canada there hasn't been such a pension program in place, and now that the federal government is finally sharing in more of that responsibility, they certainly are helping other provinces to bring up a program that has been suffering very much. But in the province of Alberta it has always been in place.

MS BARRETT: Well, thousands of elderly, not very high-income Albertans would disagree with that perspective, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister not prepared then to refund the CPP increases, \$152 a month as of January 1987, to those people, those elderly, low-income people who are also receiving assured income, social welfare, and widows' pension? Is that the case?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, there are many types of income that are in fact exempt from consideration under the assured income for the severely handicapped. Let it be clear for all hon. members of the House -- and they may not need as much assistance as the Acting Leader of the Opposition -- but our pension program has always been in place. Such a program has not been in place in other provinces, and now the federal government is finally sharing some of the burden for that program.

MS BARRETT: Well, a final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The minister is avoiding the issue. The federal government has made it clear that they want this minister to pass on those CPP increases. Is the minister saying absolutely not? Is she absolutely refusing to do that?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is asking for Albertans to pay twice -- once out of their own pockets through paying taxes provincially and again through paying federal taxes -- no.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Clearly, the increase was given because of a need, and now some seniors are actually going to get less. Has the minister reviewed the results of this action with seniors' organizations to determine what the fallout is in Alberta, including costs and even savings?

MRS. OSTERMAN: The question was about the assured income for the severely handicapped. And again, Mr. Speaker, we have a pension program in place. In that pension program we had no assistance in terms of the amount over and above what someone on social allowance may receive, and in fact it is an income-tested program unlike anything else in Canada. So the federal government is for the first time bearing some of the costs of that program.

Day Care Standards

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct my question today also to the hon. Minister of Social Services. Yesterday she stated that we do have adequate standards and monitoring practices in the province's day cares, yet a delegation of parents inspecting day cares -- I believe 25 day cares they visited were "abominable", was the word used. All along the minister has encouraged parents to monitor day cares, which is what they were doing. Now they have, and they've found these standards lacking. Does the minister's complete satisfaction with the existing standards also include her satisfaction with existing staff qualifications?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker. I have addressed that question many times in the House, and all hon. members will know that I have received a lot of information with respect to qualifications and suggestions as to how staff should be screened who are working in child care centres, and I am taking that into consideration.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, we cannot wait forever. There are children out there being -- almost to the point of mistreatment. Well, if the minister is not willing to go ahead with the standards, has she been encouraging the federal Minister of National Health and Welfare to implement national staff standards which this province could then adopt?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, child care is the responsibility or the jurisdiction of the provincial government, and I have time and time again answered the question that the hon. member is putting. I do object to the preface when speaking about standards, as if we have no standards in place. In fact, Alberta, with respect to programming and so on, space and staff ratios in particular, has some of the finest standards in the

country. I leave open the consideration with respect to the qualifications of staff, which I have said on a number of occasions are under consideration.

MR. TAYLOR: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm having a little trouble following the minister. If the province really has no real staff standards of substance and is not encouraging -- in other words, you think the federal government is sticking their nose in your business -- national staff standards, is the minister planning to oppose the implementation of national standards then?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, once more with feeling for the hon. leader. Day care is the jurisdiction of the provincial government, and we have the particular area in question under consideration.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, there's no question that the minister is opposing national standards and then I suppose not collect money. But this government is constantly bragging about being the pacesetter across Canada in terms of money thrown at people services yet it is at the bottom of the list in terms of staff standards and day care facilities. Why is the minister reluctant -- gives us double-talk, dances around the point -- to upgrade staff standards when other provinces have already done so?

AN HON. MEMBER: Twice more with feeling.

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, not with too much feeling. I would say for the hon. leader that this is a very important question. I would first of all make the comment that I'm sure the hon. Premier would make if he were here and answering a question related to Ottawa. That is that we do not look forward to an imposition by Ottawa of certain things with respect to provincial jurisdiction. The parents of this province -- and while there would not be 25,000 of them involved, there are some 25,000-plus children in formal child care in this province. It is my view that the parents indeed are very capable and are exercising their responsibility with respect to child care and choosing child care.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton Calder, a supplementary, followed by Calgary Foothills' supplementary.

MS MJOLSNESS: A supplementary to the minister, Mr. Speaker. With seven inspectors in the Edmonton region expected to monitor 320 centres, would the minister agree to increase the number of inspectors in order that they can in fact do proper monitoring?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the hon. member chastised the minister about encouraging parents, as I stated yesterday, "to also be vigilant in addressing the respective day care centres in terms of those standards being in place." The hon. member went on to say, "Well, Mr. Speaker, if the police used that system, we'd really be in trouble." That is getting people to effectively also participate in our society.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Rural Crime Watch. We have Block Parents. We have many, many programs in our society in which people participate. In fact, they are vigilant, and they are looking out for their children and their community.

MRS. KOPER: Mr. Speaker, in visiting day care centres over the province, I would like to inquire of the minister: what steps have been taken in this province in order to improve the quality

of day care centres?

MRS. OSTERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I think the enormous commitment in funding that the taxpayers of this province are making in order to enhance those standards, especially with respect to the child/child care worker ratio is very important, because I think that most of us who have raised families will understand that at a very early age children do need attentive treatment and individual treatment with respect to that care. The amount of funding that has gone into child care in particular has allowed us to have some of the highest standards with respect to those ratios in Canada.

Taxation Policy

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Provincial Treasurer. Forty percent of the Canadian corporate tax is paid by Alberta firms, and the federal tax paper is coming out on June 18. I was wondering if the Provincial Treasurer could indicate what steps have been taken since the last time I asked this sequence of questions to impress the federal government on their tax policy and some of the effects it may have on Alberta.

MR. JOHNSTON: First of all, Mr. Speaker, my memory is a touch faulty with respect to when the last question was asked, and so you'll have to forgive me if in fact I bring forward actions which may well be outside of that interval. What has happened is that there is continuing communication now between officials of my department and officials of the federal government to, on behalf of the federal government, provide as much information as is possible to the provinces so we can, at least in advance of June 18, have an understanding as to the broad direction that the federal proposals will take Canada tax reform along.

In that context within the last month at least there has been a meeting wherein additional information was provided and views were accepted with respect to the impact of certain taxes or tax proposals with respect to the various provincial economies. In those discussions we did present the concerns which have been made evident to us in Alberta.

I'm not sure if we'll have any additional opportunity before June 15 to have further input, Mr. Speaker, but of course we are now measuring and assessing some of those trends that are now evident to us with respect to certain sectors, certain revenue flows, or certain economic objectives which are now the objectives of the province of Alberta.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question to the Provincial Treasurer. Could he indicate whether estimates in terms of federal revenue that would be raised by the proposed business transfer tax, the value-added tax, or a federal sales tax have been calculated to this point? Are estimates available in terms of a question at this point?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, when the federal government did initiate the recommendations or the proposals which will be made available to us on June 18, they obviously had to run some computer models or computer simulations to show the impact of those revenue changes on their own budget position, the revenues that they will collect. They are now making available to us some of those numbers, both on a provincial basis and on a national basis.

As you can appreciate, Mr. Speaker, as I've said in this

House before, when you're dealing with the principles of broadening the base both of corporate and personal tax, obviously you look at certain opportunities to do just that, such as the traditional kinds of deductions which we've experienced in this province. In doing so, you have to therefore adjust each one of those to see what order of magnitude, what income impact will be, and that is now taking place.

I should say that the federal government has been very generous recently in providing that information to us. I have some order of magnitude and numbers which can be used by our Treasury and government officials to adjudicate the impact, but as we go along the process between now and, I suppose, the fall of 1987, additional information will be made available to us. We as the government of Alberta will measure the impact, as I've indicated, on our revenue sources as well.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, could the Provincial Treasurer provide an estimate of the effect on our provincial revenues at this point? Now, that was alluded to in the final part of the answer. Are there numbers available that can be made public at this time so that we in this Legislature understand the impact? Beyond just the Treasury Department understanding it, I think that as Albertans we must understand what is going to happen to us in terms of taxation and how we should react to it. We're part of the group paying.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, at some point I think it will have to provide some information, and I believe it is incumbent upon us to do that so, as the member indicates, we can adjudicate or assess the impact of this tax. What we must remember, though, is that there is some sense in Canada right now that the current tax system does discriminate against low-income and in fact benefits high-income individuals. I don't want to debate whether in fact that is the case, but that is the impression that is left. For example, we've heard comments about the size of tax loopholes, the way in which special tax write-offs are provided. Moreover, such things as deductibility of certain expenses for corporate business purposes are in fact part of the way in which the tax system now operates. In a base-broadening approach obviously these kinds of deductions will be eliminated. But at this point our information is not firm enough that we can provide any specific details to anyone right now because we are ourselves just now assessing the impact of revenues.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I guess one would have to question whether or not the relevance of, say, sales tax information, which can be collected and levied by the federal government in any event under their jurisdiction, is in fact one that we need to provide information on if you assume, specifically, as I have said, that we will not have a sales tax in this province.

MR. R. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. Could the Provincial Treasurer either confirm or clarify the matter, that as of June 18 a tax policy announcement by the federal government will be a fait accompli or that we at that point in time as Albertans have the opportunity in an open forum to discuss the acceptance or rejection of any of those proposals in that white paper or presentation?

MR. JOHNSTON: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the federal government will not put a position forward unless it has some faith in the policies that are reflected in that paper. I think the broad policy questions are, as I've indicated, a reduction in the corporate and personal tax rates so that investment decisions in Al-

berta and in Canada are comparable to those investment decisions which would be taken in the United States, which has just gone through a tax change itself, which in fact at the margin has reduced those tax rates that I referred to. So that's the first broad principle, and I don't think the federal government would change from that.

Where our concern in Alberta rests is to be sure that in the case of resource industries in particular and in terms of agriculture more specifically, any new tax initiative, particularly on the so-called value-added tax and business transfer tax, is well understood here so we can assess that impact. I think in those latter cases, where there is still debate about the impact on certain sectors, there will be adequate opportunity for input and discussion with the federal government and I intend to find ways in Alberta to have a series of reviews given to me so I can adequately understand the impact from experts in this province.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I should stress that it is now my understanding that certain initiatives on June 18, when that paper is brought down, will in fact trigger certain decisions. So there will be some decisions on June 18 which will be, in the member's words, fait accompli. I think, however, the broad issue will still be open for debate, and I understand that's the way in which the federal Minister of Finance will handle it.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we will have an opportunity on the evening of June 15 to discuss with Mr. Wilson those kinds of questions -- how does he expect to proceed both in terms of public debate and public input? -- and we will do that in advance of the release of that paper on June 18.

MR. TAYLOR: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the minister. I, too, am concerned that if it gets into the paper June 18, it can't be reversed. There are some areas, such as transportation and passenger traffic, that if taxed clearly discriminate against western Canada or the central part of the prairies. So could not the minister immediately attack with all vim and vigour to make sure that that transportation and passenger traffic is exempted from any business transfer tax?

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I have dealt with this question before, and I do appreciate the understanding that the Member for Westlock-Sturgeon has on this issue. That is one of the serious consequences of the application of the business transfer tax, and obviously the regional impact is one of the economic concerns that we share with the member.

On behalf of the government, I can assure the member and, I guess, Members of the Legislative Assembly that we have taken time to point out to the federal officials and to the Minister of Finance himself those key aspects of the proposals which we have a major concern with. And I should say that in many cases the federal government has in fact agreed and understood our position and is attempting to accommodate many of the concerns we have raised.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Treasurer tell us that if the federal government does impose a federal sales tax on the people of Alberta, the province intends to reimburse Albertans that amount? After all, they've just had a billion dollars plucked from their pockets already by the budget.

MR. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course the province

will not reimburse Albertans for any tax initiatives taken by the federal government. That isn't my view of Confederation, that's not my view of the tax-sharing arrangements, and that's not the way in which fiscal federation operates. Let's remember that in the case of the way in which fiscal Canada does operate, even though the federal government does in fact collect taxes outside of the tax-sharing arrangements, the federal government transfers back to the provinces a substantial amount of money under the so-called established program financing arrangement. That amount is very close to \$5 billion.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, in those provinces which are defined as have-not provinces, the equalization calculations do impact. And let me note moreover that as described in my budget on March 20, 1987, because of the sharp drop in revenues in Alberta this year from oil and gas, under the established program financing arrangements or under fiscal federation we have applied for some unusual assistance because our revenues did drop off considerably. I mean, that's the financial backbone of Canada. We talked this morning about the Constitution. You will note that on November 5, 1981, in fact, equalization and established program financing were part of the Constitution agreement and therefore I don't think that we can unilaterally adjust that in this Legislative Assembly.

MR. SPEAKER: Member for Red Deer North, followed by Edmonton Centre.

MR. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a rare display of insight and astuteness, the Member for Little Bow has exactly anticipated my line of questioning. And though I know the members opposite share our joy in listening to our Provincial Treasurer, I will defer to the next speaker on your list.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton Centre, followed by Edmonton Meadowlark.

Aids to Daily Living Program

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Community and Occupational Health. With the passing of June 1, all of the deductibles and copayments for disabled people and users of the Aids to Daily Living program have now come into effect. However, for hundreds of women in the province who have mastectomies, the situation now becomes even worse insofar as the minister has directed that breast prostheses be completely eliminated for standard coverage under the Aids to Daily Living program. Does the minister of community health not agree that breast prostheses for women who have had or will have mastectomies is essential to their ongoing well-being, or does he consider it an elective and frivolous necessity, as his policy now states?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, when we announced the changes on March 25, we made very clear that senior citizens, those who are on the assured income for the severely handicapped, those who are on widow's pension, and others who need that kind of protection will continue to receive all benefits under the Aids to Daily Living program free of charge.

REV. ROBERTS: Well, he's not going to get out of it that easily, Mr. Speaker. For the hundreds of women -- 40 new each month at the Tom Baker Centre, for instance, in Calgary -- who do not fall within that category the minister has just outlined,

what possible explanation does the minister have for at least not having breast prostheses included under the Aids to Daily Living program, under the same cost-sharing basis as the other essential aids and services are and not completely eliminate them?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, for those who are in need and who will be covered by the protection plan that we've put in place, those people will continue to receive all of those benefits free of charge.

MR. SPEAKER: Supplementary question [inaudible].

REV. ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the prosthesis may cost women as much as \$600 and needs to be replaced every two years, will the minister now reverse this display of gross insensitivity by placing mastectomy prostheses in the same category as supplemental aids such as hand-held showers and back rests that the minister seems to think are able to be funded? Why doesn't he include the cost of the \$600 for other women under this same category?

MR. DINNING: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll simply repeat what I said earlier. It was that for those people who are unable to afford it, for those such as senior citizens in our province, those on social allowance, those who would be protected because they lack adequate taxable income -- some 90,000 out of the 116,000 receiving benefits under the program -- will continue to receive all of those benefits free of charge.

REV. ROBERTS: Why did the minister, Mr. Speaker, proceed with this appalling elimination of breast prostheses without the agreement of the Canadian Cancer Society's Reach to Recovery program -- the women in there who are not over 65 and not under 18, those women who are working women who are going to have pay out of pocket for this expense unnecessarily? Or does he consider, like the hon. minister of hospitals, that these women are just a narrow interest group?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, we consulted at length with a number of groups in the province, including the group that the hon. member refers to, and from November through December through to January and February of this year, consulting with all of those groups, came up with the program that we did announce on March 25. And yes, we had to make some difficult decisions, and yes, there are going to be some who will not receive benefits this year in the same amount as they received last year. But in fact all of those people in this province who do need those benefits, who have the greatest need and the least ability to pay, will continue to be protected and will continue to receive the most comprehensive range of benefits under any program of any kind in this country.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, people who are disabled in this fashion already have a few strikes against them. I'd like to ask the minister a question regarding other kinds of prosthetics -- artificial legs, hands. These need to be replaced with considerable frequency in order to keep people working and, incidentally, paying taxes. Has the minister calculated or discussed with amputee organizations how these extra costs may force people to leave the work force?

MR. DINNING: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken with a number of these groups and individuals who are amputees, unfortunately as

a result of an illness or as a result of an injury that has happened. They face some difficult circumstances; there is no doubt about that. But some of those with whom I have spoken have said, "Yes, we accept that this something that has happened to us, but fortunately you have a program in place, Mr. Dinning, that says that we will continue to receive these benefits; we'll receive these benefits and have to pay part of the cost" -- but only a small portion of the cost of their benefits.

Again, for those who are unable to pay, the program protects and provides protection by continuing to provide all benefits free of charge. And if there's an individual who is concerned that they can't pay and that they don't fall under the protection that we have provided, we have put in place what I am calling a sensitive and responsive appeal process so that those individual situations can be heard and protection can be provided.

MR. SPEAKER: Edmonton Meadowlark, followed by Edmonton Kingsway.

Government Lease Agreements

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been some time since the people of Alberta became aware of the Olympia & York lease deal in downtown Edmonton. This deal contravened accepted government leasing practices and significantly benefited Tory faithful Les Mabbot. To the Minister of Public Works, Supply and Services. Since the last time we checked, has the minister made any progress in deciding whether he will release the financial details of this particular deal, which we know are available and in his hands at this time?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have not changed my position since the last time I responded to this matter in the House. It is not our practice to release the lease agreements with any of the private sector of the hundreds of properties that we lease on behalf of government.

MR. SPEAKER: For clarification -- and perhaps the hon. minister could be helpful -- was this matter not dealt with by a question which was rejected or by a motion for return and rejected?

AN HON. MEMBER: It's still on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Still on the Order Paper. Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: Is the minister saying that on the one hand his government is happy to release the details of the leasing arrangement on the Kananaskis hotel -- \$4,000 a year for that land -- and happy to release the details of the contract with Mr. Ghitter last year to find that space, but he is not prepared to release the details of this particular deal despite the fact that there is plenty of precedence for releasing private-sector deals?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is starting to compare apples and oranges. We're in the leasing market in a very significant way across the province -- undoubtedly the largest lessor in the city of Edmonton -- and historically we have not shared with the public documents that we sign with the private sector in leasing space.

MR. MITCHELL: Could the minister please confirm that given the spread in lease rates between downtown Edmonton and the government sector, which can be about \$12 per square foot, he

will be spending, without ever letting this Legislature debate it or the people of Alberta know -- that he has committed us to a \$50 million additional leasehold expense over and above what he would have had to spend over a 10-year lease period for that kind of square footage?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I definitely cannot confirm that. As I attempted to make very clear in *Hansard* on an earlier occasion, we responded to the Olympia & York proposal, and I indicated to the House there were a number of other developers coming forward with ideas, basically for two reasons: the thousands of construction jobs it would create in downtown Edmonton -- which I would think the hon. member would be supportive of -- participating in the redevelopment of the heart of our capital city, and it appeared to be a way that we could use no dollars out of our public works budget this year, next year, maybe not the years after, to achieve those objectives.

I've indicated to the House that we've negotiated a range that the lease will be paid in. There's a bottom end; there's a top end. It will be market, but within those limits.

If the hon. member or any other hon. member of the House can tell me what the lease rates are going to be in 1990, then we could determine within that range whether or not we made an excellent deal that will save the public money or whether we made a deal that would cost the public money. Only time will tell that. I'm confident we made a fair deal.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, the spread won't change between those two areas. Could the minister please confirm therefore that he is making a unilateral \$50 million job-creation decision right here, right now, that will not be debated in this Legislature, that nobody else in Alberta will have any chance to comment on and improve and make suggestions about? And will he confirm ...

MR. SPEAKER: This is the second question, hon. member.

MR. MITCHELL: ... that this is consistent with the kind of unilateral decisions made on the lottery funding in this province as well?

MR. ISLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that we have entered into an agreement with Olympia & York that will generate thousands of construction jobs in downtown Edmonton, that will participate in the redevelopment of downtown Edmonton, and the public will have the opportunity to see the figures on that lease at the same point in time they see the figures on any other lease. All our lease rates are reported in public accounts.

MR. MITCHELL: Nineteen ninety-three.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, hon. member. We're going to wait for a little dialogue to be discontinued. Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister went like this [Ms Barrett covered her eyes] and signed.

Would the minister explain? He keeps talking about these seven or eight other developers. We've talked to a few developers who aren't so happy about being excluded. Will he tell the Assembly, if he's so convinced that he talked to seven or eight other developers, just which developers he did talk to and didn't give the award to?

MR. ISLEY: Again, Mr. Speaker, I do not share the names of the private sector that come to carry out discussions. But just to make it very clear to the Assembly once more, the seven or eight developers were not on the same site. Various people have various pieces of property that they're interested in developing and come forward with ideas. That's an ongoing thing. It occurs within the city of Edmonton. It occurs within the city of Calgary. I've had proposals from the city of Red Deer. But I think, if memory serves me correctly, there are seven or eight within the city of Edmonton that were assessed.

MR. SPEAKER: The time for question period has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Might we revert briefly to the introduction of guests?

HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

MR. SPEAKER: Opposed? Member for Calgary McCall.

head: INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS (reversion)

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my hon. colleague the Member for Stony Plain, I'd like to introduce 25 grade 6 students from the Stony Plain school. I'm sure he would enjoy and appreciate the ...

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Order in the gallery please. Press people, less noise when you're egressing please. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Calgary McCall, please.

MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These students are accompanied by a teacher, Mr. Milton Mellott; six parents: Mrs. Pardo, Mrs. Hennig, Mrs. Schoepp, Mrs. Nixon, Mr. Nixon; and their transportation director, Mr. Jeff Craddock. I would ask the students and the teacher and parents to rise and receive the normal and traditional welcome of the Legislature.

head: GOVERNMENT BILLS AND ORDERS (Third Reading)

Bill 1 Department of Culture Amendment Act, 1987

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Premier, I would move third reading of Bill 1, the Department of Culture Amendment Act, 1987.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is one of the three Bills that refer to multiculturalism that I find the least contentious. I have spoken during second reading and Committee of the Whole reading of this Bill and made my comments, I think, quite clear. The minister, I believe, understands my primary concern.

I have yet to hear the commitment from the minister that when this new ministry is created, after he's sworn in as the new

Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism, he's going to make it his priority and the priority of this department to not just talk about song and dance when it comes to multiculturalism but to actually put some teeth into his programs, this government's policies, the Human Rights Commission, the education curriculum, and whatever else it takes, to make sure that this isn't just a minister of song and dance and a department of song and dance.

Subject to him saying that I've secured that commitment, I certainly speak in favour of the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would share the views of the hon. member that this is the least contentious of the three Bills. However, that isn't stating a great deal in light of the defects of Bills 11 and 33. I am supportive of the initiatives of the government in attempting to enhance the role and quality of multiculturalism in this province. The existence of ethnic groups, their traditions, their languages, their culture, certainly enriches this province in many diverse ways. And it is in fact very encouraging to see the provincial government with its general interest in this particular area, subject of course, as I noted, to the defects and deficiencies that I propose to comment on with respect to Bill 33 in particular.

However, Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned to ensure that our approach with respect to multiculturalism is not restricted, as it has been all too much to this time to that of culture, to literature, to song, and to dance, all of which are vitally important and enriching. But there is more to multiculturalism in this community, and the more relates in particular to the priority which tolerance and understanding must have in any civilized community, because history has shown us that one of the great dividers of mankind is race and religion. It is race and religion that characterize the differences between the multicultural communities. And it's in the realm of tolerance and understanding that we much refocus and rededicate our efforts.

We've seen the need for this in particular recently with the reinvigoration of racism as evidenced by the Aryan Nations with their hateful philosophy, with their nefarious telephone message. We've seen it in the comments and the philosophies of James Keegstra and Ernst Zundel and others of their ilk around this province. And we've seen a deficiency, unhappily to say, within the government insofar as their understanding and perception of the motivations of some of the groups, and in particular the methodology. In terms of insensitivity, I refer in particular to the proposed appointment of Mr. Stephen Stiles to the Land Compensation Board. This is a move which . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Take care.

MR. CHUMIR: . . . was not, I would suggest, motivated by any ill will on the part of the government but rather an insensitivity and ignorance with respect to some of the major themes which racism and hatred are taking in this community at this time.

So I don't think it's adequate merely to add the name or the designation "multiculturalism" to the Department of Culture without seeing from the government a total refocusing and a commitment to so many other areas which are essential to a truly multicultural and a truly tolerant and understanding society in Alberta. And amongst the needs that we see in that respect, and standing very high in the lexicon of needs, is that of greater multicultural -- or perhaps I might call it intercultural -- educa-

tion within our school system.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

This is a matter I've had a number of discussions with the Minister of Education with respect to. It's a matter which a number of groups who are vitally interested in the subject have written to the minister and met with the minister about. And it's a matter the Ghitter committee focused on in particular in their report of, I believe, some three years ago now. The Ghitter committee recommended that there be intercultural and multicultural education within our school system in order to focus tolerance and understanding in our schools and to ensure that each and every one of our children is educated to the maximum extent possible in those important principles. Unhappily, that is a recommendation, and it has company with many other recommendations, which has not been implemented by the government.

At the present time we find multicultural education being subject to the discretion of local school boards. If a school board wishes to educate its children in multiculturalism, it does so, and vice versa if it doesn't have the desire. Some of our school boards indeed have reasonable programs, but far too many of them don't, and the education of our students in this important area is far too haphazard in an era in which it's quite clear that the multicultural and multiracial nature of our country is moving in leaps and bounds. So this is the first area that I would urge the government and the minister in particular to pay particular attention to.

One of the problems in this area, as with other areas of governmental endeavour, is the balkanization of responsibility. One minister has responsibility for one corner of a particular problem and another minister has responsibility for another area. For example, the Minister of Education has responsibility for multicultural education and the minister of manpower for immigration and refugees. I think what we have in this instance and under this Bill, with a designation of the Minister of Culture to be the czar of multiculturalism as well, is an opportunity for some centralization of focus, and I would urge the minister to expand his horizons beyond the important but narrower ones of the cultural aspect of multiculture and move into the realm of multicultural education for all children in this province in its widest sense.

A second need of the multicultural community is with respect to language training. Nothing is more important for a newly arrived immigrant than knowledge of the English language. The immigrant's abilities to obtain work, to communicate with fellow Canadians, and to obtain adequate medical treatment are all dependent on the capability to speak the language. Insofar as medical treatment is concerned, this is a matter I have raised with the minister of hospitals and a matter I would commend to the attention of the soon to be new minister of multiculturalism. The concern I have there is that immigrant groups who are newly arrived and who have language problems have available to them medical services in their own language. You can imagine the difficulty a new immigrant has, particularly with the paucity of English as a Second Language courses, in being able to communicate with doctors, to be able to transmit to them the exact nature of the ailment which is plaguing them and the exact nature of the remedy which the medic, his doctor, would prescribe.

This is not an easily resolved problem, but we can certainly do more in that direction. One of the "mores" we can do is to

take advantage of the body of medical talent that has come here from Third World countries. Doctors who are not only qualified in their own countries of origin but have passed the relevant examinations in this province are precluded from practising, not from lack of talent or ability or knowledge but because they can't get a residency in a hospital; there is just a shortage of spaces. Now, Manitoba has a program which provides for a certain number of residency positions. We don't. I've raised it with the minister of hospitals. From his latest response, and this goes back six months, he's not interested in the issue. Well, I think he's wrong, and I think this is something the minister of multiculturalism could well look at.

Now, that's just one example, and a rather poignant example of interest to multicultural communities, of the need for more programs in English as a Second Language. At present in the city of Calgary, the funding for these programs has been reduced by 3 percent along with the other budget cuts. I understand from the school board that the funding is very inadequate; it covers approximately only one-third of the costs of the program. The school board itself is doing its best to advance the quality teaching of English as a Second Language, but it's inhibited.

There are other problem areas. I understand the federal government has been reducing its funding with respect to certain types of manpower training programs and that the allocation of this funding to date has had a significant English as a Second Language component. I understand further that it's up to the provincial government to determine where the allocation of the cuts is to fall. There is great concern amongst those who are involved in teaching English as a Second Language in vocational centres and so on that the minister of manpower's department intends to allocate those cuts to the English as a Second Language area at the very worst time -- the very worst time, of course, because we are now in an era of high unemployment and without this language training the natural difficulties which these groups have in obtaining employment is magnified.

Now, jobs is another area I would like to comment on; I have at other times in this House. Ethnic groups are often the last to be hired and the first to be fired. English of course, as I noted, is important, but there are other barriers beyond language in our community, subtle elements of discrimination, and I am concerned about the lack of action on behalf of the provincial government in attempting to address the problems of the ethnic communities in obtaining employment. Aside from the Human Rights Commission, I'm unable to see any initiatives whatsoever in this very important area.

The federal government recently implemented an Employment Equity Act, for example, which requires reporting in respect of the types of employment of different minority groups, of women, of ethnic groups, and it is going to monitor the situation. It's a tentative first start in attempting to assess whether there are or there are not problems. The start is primarily within the realm of government. It also encompasses companies of a certain size -- I believe over 100 employees -- which have dealings with the government. Where is there any sign of any initiative of this nature within the provincial government? Where is there any sign of any knowledge of the magnitude of the problem? There is none. I think we need a start, and the starting point could and should be within the government to attempt to quantify just how our ethnic minorities are being treated by the government with respect to jobs.

We know that when dealing with the most important majority in our society, that of women -- to refer to their gender, as

the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs would note -- the government has a poor track record in that regard. We're elated that we finally have the first of what hopefully will be more women deputy ministers in respect of employment within the government. To date and up until the recent appointment in the Department of Advanced Education, we had 27 deputy ministers and not a woman. That is unacceptable. Well, if we have that kind of situation and we have many of the other disparities that are all too well known amongst those who follow the lot of women in this province, if we have these many disparities with respect to women, then you can imagine the range of disparity and the problems that are there with respect to the ethnic communities.

Then there is the broader issue of tolerance and understanding and our approach to it in this Legislature. I have some very serious reservations and concerns about the government's dedication to informing itself on the global aspects of this problem. We have very significant evidence of its failures and defalcations in that regard. It goes back again to the Ghitter committee, a committee set up by this government. The Ghitter committee recommended as one of its primary recommendations that the government establish a standing committee of this Legislature on tolerance and understanding. And where is that committee? We asked the Premier about it during the last session, we have asked the Premier about it during this session, and it seems to be as far off as ever, notwithstanding the evidence that this government is very, very badly in need of education and input.

The minister has indicated, in respect of other comments he has made, that he can see a role for enhancing the multicultural communities' input to the Legislature by having a Member of the Legislative Assembly sit on his new commission. Well, why do things in half or quarter or one-hundredth measures? Perhaps the fraction is: why do it in 1/83 measures? Why don't we make every member of this Legislature a representative of tolerance and understanding and multiculturalism by establishing a committee of this Legislature which has the specific mandate to enhance tolerance and understanding?

So these are some of the primary reservations I have, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the government's approach to this issue. Yes, by all means let us focus on the cultural aspects of multiculturalism and let us centre the activities in the Department of Culture, but let's not stop there. As I speak again, I urge and plead with the minister to broaden his horizons, spread his wings, set his sails, feel the wind as to where it may take him on this very, very important voyage to encourage the understanding of each of our racial and religious groups and to enhance the level of tolerance and understanding in this community which so enriches us and so sets us apart from so many other societies in our history and indeed so many other societies we view in this current age. We must remember that we are privileged to live in a wonderful province of this nature, a province in which by and large, particularly in comparison with the problems of a bygone day, the majority of Albertans are truly tolerant and understanding of each other and enlightened.

We must also remember that the best indication of what will happen in the future is what has happened in the past, and we can see a dark day again. There can be a day in which the Keegstras and the Aryan Nations can triumph. I don't believe they will, but they can unless good, well-motivated men, the type of people we do have in this Legislature, understand the need for watchfulness and take the action and the steps I have referred to beyond the narrow focus that this government takes all too often.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton Gold Bar.

MRS. HEWES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a Bill that I too have supported in the past and will again. I am grateful and pleased that the government has reacted in this way and has responded to changes in our thinking about the nature of our society by acknowledging multiculturalism in the important Department of Culture. The title conjures up all kinds of things in our minds, of romance and adventure; of people coming from other parts of the world, often to escape oppression; of looking for freedom, freedom of action, freedom to live their own lives; of coming to a new country. It conjures up thoughts of pioneers and the responsive environment that has been here in Alberta to pioneers over many, many decades; the courage they must have had to leave their homeland and leave their families in many cases and embark on a new life in a new and unknown world; the vigour they must have had, the personal strength, the personal beliefs and values they brought with them; and the friendship they gave to one another in order to survive in this new setting to which they came. It acknowledges all of those things, and I believe that's very important and that the government is sincere in making this change.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am very anxious that it is not simply a change of name. I need some reassurance here that this is not window dressing, that this is not changing a name simply to accommodate and acknowledge a fact but is changing in fact the nature of the department -- changing the nature, hopefully, of the department's relationship to other parts of the government and to the community so that we have here a whole new outlook on what the notion of culture and multicultural can mean in Alberta society.

Because I have that enormous driving desire in me for this to happen, Mr. Speaker, I must express here my concern at the inconsistency I perceive between this Bill, which I do support, and Bills 11 and 33, also referring to cultural, multicultural, and heritage. I have spoken in the House before, and I intend to speak again, in opposition to those Bills, and I regret that we are moving to pass those Bills without what I consider sufficient discussion.

But back to Bill 1. Bill 1, I believe, does in fact acknowledge the strength and the richness we all see every day in Alberta society. Those strengths, Mr. Speaker, and that richness aren't in any way relegated to songs and dance and food, but they do have to do with increased trade and with our relationships with trading partners in Europe and in Asia and the Pacific Rim countries and the kinds of things new Canadians bring to our capacity for increased trade to occur with other trading partners around the world. It also brings to us, Mr. Speaker, the capacity for skills, because we don't have a corner on that market. We find that new Canadians come with a determination and an intelligence and background that has added immeasurably to our labour bank in Alberta. The department hopefully will acknowledge this capacity of new Canadians to bring these skills to Alberta and will capitalize on those and make use of them and free them up, as well as those other traditions of other parts of the world, of family relationships, because we don't have a corner on that market either. There are things to be learned from other cultures about family life that we might well take a leaf from and put in our book.

Mr. Speaker, I think about the business acumen and the busi-

ness skills that new Canadians have brought to our country and that hopefully this department will understand and pass along. I think, for example, of the Ghermezian family of the city of Edmonton. Now, like it or not, the West Edmonton Mall is a different business style and it exhibits that. This family has come from another part of the world, from another culture, and they have demonstrated in our culture that we don't know it all, that in fact their business style and their capacity to introduce new ideas with courage and vigour is successful. This is something in our country that we can learn from and, I think, must learn from and take a leaf from that book.

Mr. Speaker, in agreeing with this Bill and in the promotion of the Bill, I think there's an assumption that we're all going to benefit, that everybody in Alberta will benefit from it: newcomers to the province, ethnic communities, and those communities who have been here for generations. But there are some other things I want out of the Bill. There are some other things I want out of the department, and they are of considerable consequence. My colleague from Calgary Buffalo has already spoken of the Ghitter report, and I commend the government for their initiatives in undertaking and commissioning this report. Like many Albertans, I'd like to see some more action on it. Because I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we're not home yet in this regard. I don't think we have a moment to lose, and I hope the minister with his new title and his department will in fact undertake to entreat his colleagues to make some moves in the direction of the recommendations of that report, because we have some distance to go. I believe intellectually in Alberta we are a tolerant and understanding people, but in some cases we haven't quite yet internalized what it means to be tolerant and understanding. We haven't quite internalized and put into practice on an everyday basis some of those attitudes we have acquired intellectually. I want to see this new department take some initiatives and ensure that the recommendations of that report are not left waiting any longer.

I hope the new department will understand that they have a role and function to perform in preventing and moving in with positive interventions where there is any potential racism, working with communities and institutions of our communities to assist them to develop programs that would be positive interventions in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I would also expect the new department to be working in what I describe sometimes as affirmative action -- I know that's a term that not everyone is comfortable with -- to ensure that new Canadians find their way into the institutions of Alberta on our boards, on committees, into employment, into places where those of us who have been in this country and whose families have been in this country for decades simply take for granted, but where new Canadians often find themselves unable to break down some of those invisible barriers.

We assume in supporting this Bill, Mr. Speaker, that ethnic groups and organizations will be strengthened and enhanced, will in fact accrue more prestige to their organization and to their cultural ways. Because in Alberta and in Canada in fact we don't have a melting pot; we have multicultural activity and multicultural beliefs. It is in fact enshrined in our Canadian Constitution, and I believe we should be grateful for it. So we must expect this new department to enhance those groups that emphasize the strengths of the differences and help us to see how we can use those differences and take them into our own daily lives and into our own family traditions.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I said before, now we see a somewhat larger story as the facts of Bill 33 and Bill 11 are revealed to us.

The minister, for my part, has not really reassured me that the objectives of Bill 1 are going to be so all-surpassing that I need not be concerned about the moves and actions being taken in Bill 33 and Bill 11. Because on the one hand, we appear to be giving more strength to multiculturalism; on the other hand, we appear to be taking it away. And that is of real concern to me and to many of the ethnic groups with whom I have discussed these three Bills in our communities.

The minister likewise hasn't reassured me that he is taking his lead in any depth from these multicultural groups. In making this name change, I'm sure they are comforted and hope for many things -- an enhancement of their programs and support to their programs -- but I don't see, and I have not seen in this Bill and its juxtaposition with the other two, the depth that I would have hoped for. It's rather like the whole Meech Lake experience, where at first we all experienced tremendous euphoria at the notion that Quebec is going to be a willing and pleased partner in the Constitution of Canada and being very grateful for that, and then having a gradual recognition that perhaps that superficial euphoria masked some of the underlying issues of the accord that have given us and given the first ministers and the Prime Minister some problems over the last 48 hours. So I must express my anxiety and that of many people who have spoken with me over the last month regarding the disparities here between Bill 1 and the other two Bills.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that we can anticipate that Bill 1 will result in a new section in the department; that it won't simply be, as I referred to before, a change of name but that in fact it will mean we'll have new staff who will be supporting the community developments of museums where artifacts and treasures can be stored and viewed, treasures that are important to these many ethnic communities that we now welcome in Alberta, and likewise, that we'll see a reinforcement and an increase in festivals.

Festivals have become a very important part of our province, Mr. Speaker, and indeed attract many guests to Alberta from other parts of Canada and the world and become an enormous tourist attraction, one that I think we can capitalize on even further than we have in the past. Hopefully, this new section of the department that I'm anticipating is going to be the result of this name change will be supporting and encouraging and, in fact, providing incentives for more festival activity.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Calgary Buffalo has spoken at some length about education of new Canadians and the barriers they encounter in many cases with language. I would just like to comment briefly about the circumstances that new Canadian women find themselves in. In many cases women have a great deal more difficulty in assimilating in society than their spouse or their children, because they are isolated in the home. When they do make moves to secure positions and find work in our communities, they often are ghettoized in certain kinds of work because of their language difficulties. Mr. Speaker, they are almost invisible. They are hidden away in homes and communities. They only relate to their immediate family. They are, I'm sure, fearful and lead very, very isolated and restricted lives. Hopefully this new department -- which I keep referring to and I have yet to hear the reassurance from the minister that it really will exist as a department -- will reach out to find those isolated persons in our community in the minority groups who lead lives of a very lonely quality, and to whom even the seniors' groups have difficulty relating. Seniors' and women's groups throughout our cities have tried to reach out, but there are so many barriers with language that it makes it vir-

tually impossible to do. Now, I believe that the multicultural department can in fact do that, be very successful in that kind of activity, and can provide so much richness. On the other hand, it's from those elders and the women in the homes that we're going to learn far more about the cultural traditions and enrich our own lives as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the ministry will now be reinforcing in other departments of the government. We have not yet heard, but I'd like to suggest that there should be interdepartmental committees in which the ministry will participate, committees related to the health of new Canadians, to the potential for employment of new Canadians, and to the education of new Canadians. I had hoped for some of these same kinds of activities to occur with the women's commission for which this minister is also responsible, and that it would provoke and stimulate the kind of interdepartmental thinking about how much more we can gain if we work with new Canadians and with ethnic organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that there's been very little mention in all of this of the aboriginal peoples of Alberta, and I really don't yet know where they quite fit in. Our Premier declined to agree at the recent First Ministers' Conference regarding aboriginals because of a lack of definition of inherent rights. How long must aboriginal peoples of Canada and Alberta wait? On the one hand, we have a new department or a new name to our department here; on the other hand, they're still left dangling. We don't know as we stand here today whether, as a result of this change in the department, benefits will accrue to the aboriginal people of Alberta, whether their stature will increase, whether their rights and freedoms will be enhanced. We don't know that. And I believe they have a right to expect to understand some of those things from the minister and from the government of Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I have said I will support Bill 1, and I will, because I have many hopes for this department. I've expressed some of them, as have my colleagues. I have many hopes, many desires for this department, and we in our party have a great deal of vision about the enormous benefits that will accrue to all Albertans as a result of moves that can and should be made. Alas, I have yet to see the commitment from the other side of the House and the in-depth activities that I believe should flow from this Bill. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that I'm going to be proved wrong in this regard, and I certainly will wait with anxiety to have that occur.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to rise and summarize some of the shortcomings that the Official Opposition sees in this Bill. We do intend to support it, but we feel that while it has a nice sound, to change the name of the Department of Culture to become the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism, it may really be nothing more than some lip service. We have some reservations about just what is not in the Bill as much as what is in it.

We think that the Bill should refine what we think is important about multiculturalism, and it doesn't do that. As the Member for Edmonton Highlands said the other day: it's not so much what's in the Bill as what's not in it that leaves us wondering whether it's just lip service. This Bill should specify that it is prepared to keep as the department's greatest objective finding and enacting means by which tolerance and mutual respect

for other races can be advocated and disseminated throughout Alberta. That should be written into the Bill, or some statement of that sort, to give some purpose and direction to the Bill.

[Mr. Musgreave in the Chair]

We also worry about the so-called commitment to multiculturalism by this government as being just a so-called commitment. We haven't heard any government directives to their federal counterparts, for instance, that object to or intervene in the new amendments to the refugee Bill, Bill C-55. I realize that's a federal Bill, but this Bill implies that refugees are either liars or queue jumpers and are not innocent until proved guilty, as is the normal thing in our society, and yet this government does nothing to help or aid those people or to tell the federal government to change their policies and change their attitude and sense of direction.

Alberta has benefited from many immigrants coming to this province, and still we don't jump to their aid when they get into trouble with the federal government. In fact, they make things worse in some ways, because recently there's been a bigger lineup of people for the English as a Second Language courses. They're harder and harder to access. We seem to be putting less and less resources into education that would help these people, for instance in the community schools. I think of the Alex Taylor school as an example, where many immigrants' children go, and there's not the support for those schools that there should be.

We believe that this government lacks a commitment to proactive measures, to what is usually called affirmative action. An example is the federally and provincially sponsored Alberta-based multicultural institute. It's mainly window dressing, with no affirmative action plans to help overcome some of the racial and other forms of discrimination. This Bill should be accompanied by a policy statement which would emphasize that aboriginal peoples, for example, have an inherent right to shape their own future -- yes, even a right to self-determination. And yet there is nothing in this Bill to indicate that.

This Bill makes no real commitment to multiculturalism as an appreciation of cultural diversity, nor does it call on the government to support community development and the full participation of individuals or groups in community development. There is no redress of racism or the promotion of racism. So this Bill is devoid of much content.

We will support this Bill, but it's only because we believe that having paid lip service to the idea of multiculturalism, we will be in a better position to force the government to come through and to live up to some of the expectations this Bill puts forward. So we will be supporting this Bill, but we will be looking more closely at Bill 33 and the other related Bill 11.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Member for Edmonton Meadowlark.

MR. MITCHELL: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I rise to comment on Bill 1, Department of Culture Amendment Act, 1987, and I would like to reiterate and thereby emphasize the arguments that have been made by my colleagues in the Liberal Party. We are in support of this Bill provided that it is what it appears to be, provided that it isn't merely a palliative, and provided that there is some strength behind its intention.

Clearly, multiculturalism is an extremely important feature of our society. It's an important feature of Alberta society and

of Canadian society. It is, therefore, a *prima facie* case and *de facto* a positive step to recognize in the name of the Department of Culture the term and the concept "multiculturalism." However, one must be cautious in addressing a Bill of this nature, because it has become a practice of this government to legislate to replace policy -- weak policy -- by changing the name of a department. We look at the department of career development and any number of other things. It used to be Manpower. It seemed to the people of Alberta at first that this would herald some aggressive new initiatives. Clearly it didn't. Clearly it only heralded less of the same on the one hand, in terms of job creation, and more of the same right-wing rhetoric and right-wing policy that inevitably seems to stem from that kind of rhetoric.

Therefore it is with some caution that we support Bill 1, the Department of Culture Amendment Act, because we want to be convinced that it means something, that it means something to the people of Alberta in substantive terms, that it means considerably more than simply another public relations exercise on the part of this government. And believe me, we've seen one public relations exercise after another in this setting of the Legislature as we view a government that becomes more and more desperate and less and less creative in its approach to the policy-making needs of this province.

If I can digress for but a moment, I would like to place within the realm of the rubric of public relations policy-making the idea of the Alberta capital bonds, which were clearly nothing more than a public relations exercise and a considerably more expensive way to raise money than would have been otherwise raised on the open market or in a more competitive way with the private-sector financial industry.

Therefore, to return specifically to the subject at hand, Bill 1, the Department of Culture Amendment Act that will be amended to be the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism, I would like to emphasize a number of proposals that we think should be included in the mandate or in the initiative of that department to ensure that this Bill is not something as cynical as a public relations name change, which will result in the reprinting of letterhead, which will result in the reprinting of business cards, which will result in a great deal of administrative flap and exercise -- which is only worth it if, in fact, it is directed at specific, substantive, multicultural policy initiatives.

Clearly this government has not done enough in the area of multiculturalism. It has not recognized the tremendous strength and richness that multicultural diversity gives to our society, and therefore we would propose, among other things, the following initiatives.

The people of this province, immigrants in particular, require greater access to English as a Second Language courses. It has been demonstrated by certain members, leaders in our ethnic community today in this province, that it can take as many as five years to bring people to an effective working level of the English language. Currently English as a Second Language programs in our province go no longer than three years. Clearly, based on the assumption that five years is necessary -- and that is a reasonable assumption, a defended assumption; three years is not adequate -- the government is not acknowledging that inadequacy, and the department of multiculturalism would, we would hope, be an advocate for enhanced and increased English as a Second Language courses.

Perhaps the most significant area that would be addressed by the department if it were to fulfill its mandate in the area of multiculturalism is the area of tolerance and understanding. Recent

events have demonstrated to Albertans that there is an emergence of some threat to tolerance and understanding adequately in this province. The fact of the matter is that we've seen the insidiousness of the Aryan Nations' tapes that are being played on our public telephone lines. That's a very, very difficult issue. Certainly on the one hand we want to suppress those tapes and the message of those tapes. The question that has to be asked is: what is the most effective way of doing that? Is it to charge the people involved under hate legislation under the Criminal Code with respect to hate? Is that the way to do it? One can question whether it is, because it may simply give these people the forum that they're looking for. On the other hand, is ignoring it a sufficiently effective way to the extent that it neglects a specific statement by our society that those kinds of messages are absolutely abhorrent? How is it that you can resolve that particular question? It is probably true that that question cannot be resolved; it is always a question of judgment.

But one thing overrides it and one approach overrides it and that is that these messages are meaningless, are ineffectual, at least -- they're never meaningless. They are ineffectual if we have a society that finds those intrinsically abhorrent, that there are no elements in our society within which that kind of message can take root and begin to flourish, and the only way to ensure that that can happen properly is to emphasize tolerance and understanding in our society. If the Aryan Nations case isn't a sufficiently apparent argument for supporting more aggressive initiatives with respect to tolerance and understanding, then the recent fiasco over the appointment of Stephen Stiles and his -- and I emphasize "his" -- decision not to accept that appointment is certainly sufficient argument that more has to be done.

It isn't that this government acted in an indecent or an intentionally negative manner. Certainly not. I think this government simply does not place sufficient emphasis on the arguments involved in tolerance and understanding, and on the case that we are making and has been made by many people -- in fact, by a senior Conservative in the Conservative Party itself. The fact of the matter is that this government simply indulged in an oversight that allowed it to make an appointment of Stephen Stiles, who has been so clearly and publicly associated with an abhorrent position.

The distressing part is that once that error was recognized by this government, they didn't move to correct that error in a sufficiently aggressive way. Instead, they furthered the problem and furthered the mistake by allowing the Premier to say, "You're fired, Stephen Stiles," and he in return would say, "No, I'm not. I quit." Then the Premier stood up in this House and announced clearly that it was Mr. Stiles' decision to step down from this appointment. What the Premier of this government should have done . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

MR. R. MOORE: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I don't see where this relates to the Bill we're discussing in any way, shape, or form.

AN HON. MEMBER: What section are you in?

MR. R. MOORE: Let's get back to the Bill, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Section 23.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, I would be happy to explain to the

hon. member how this relates, Mr. Speaker. On the one hand, we have a Bill that surely has been brought into this Legislature to enhance tolerance and understanding. Clearly, there's a relationship between multiculturalism, its positive and its constructive contribution to our society, and the need for greater tolerance and understanding. There is a causal link. There is a direct relationship. If I can't talk about recent divergences from tolerance and understanding in this society, and if I can't talk about that in this Legislature on this topic, then clearly the problem on the back bench of this government is every bit as deep as the problem on the front bench of this government, the front bench that allowed Mr. Stiles first to receive that appointment and then allowed him . . .

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. Would the hon. member please return to the debate on Bill 1.

MR. MITCHELL: I was the debating the point of order, Mr. Speaker, and I think I'm entitled to do that, am I not? This point of order was raised by the member.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not hear the hon. member say that he was speaking to the point of order.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Thank you. My point was basically finished on the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I will revert to discussing the Bill at hand, Bill 1, the Department of Culture Amendment Act.

The fact of the matter is that tolerance and understanding is very much a part of this Bill. If it is to have significance and substance, this department, with its new name, has to address the issue of tolerance and understanding. And if it ever had to do it, it has to do it in light of the Aryan tapes case. If it ever had to do it, it has to do it in light of the Stephen Stiles appointment and the Stephen Stiles rejection of that appointment. This government should have been very clear to say: "We do not want Stephen Stiles, and we do not want in any way to give credibility to the position with which he has been so clearly, positively identified." They have done a tremendous disservice to multiculturalism and to tolerance and understanding in this society. This government should have admitted its error and should have acted correctly to reverse that error. It missed its chance in the first case, creating the problem, and it's missed its chance to solve the problem in the second case.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked about the need for English as a Second Language. I have talked about the need for greater emphasis on tolerance and understanding. This Bill and the work of this department has to go beyond the very important work of emphasizing cultural heritage, of emphasizing dance and song and cuisine and dress. It has to go beyond that to equally important and equally substantive matters such as services to immigrants, English as a Second Language, efforts to assist immigrants to integrate into our society successfully, and to tolerance and understanding.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. ACTING DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Westlock-Sturgeon.

MR. TAYLOR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In rising to give rather qualified support to Bill 1, I feel it's probably important that multiculturalism is being mentioned, but I'm not absolutely sure that just tacking it on to the Department of Culture is the

right way of going about it. Now certainly, changing the name conjures up all sorts of visions, along with changing the cabinet minister, but I think it was Shakespeare that noted: What's in a name? A rose by any other name will smell as sweet. And I suppose that the ministers over there are glad to be told they smell sweet at any time, because of some of the deals like Olympia & York and a few others that have been going by.

Nevertheless, when it comes to tacking "multiculturalism" onto Culture, I'm a little afraid that "culture" may be getting a bit of a downplaying here. It may also be the case -- just like another child added to the family doesn't mean any less love for the earlier ones -- that the minister has only so much time and so much money, and consequently, culture could suffer.

If one analyzes a modern-day society, nearly two-thirds of the jobs that we depend on in a modern-day society basically come from rendering a service, not manufacturing a product, not digging something out of the ground or cutting a tree down or something. It's in the service end, and that of course is everything from teachers to politicians to designers to bankers to so on, add infinitum -- food services and that. So in that type of agenda, it means then that the services that the rest of the world require can be acquired from nearly any area. In other words, it doesn't have to come from Alberta. Your design and finance and administration could come from any other country.

So, therefore, what does a country have, or what does an area or province have to offer people to locate and to hold jobs? Of course, one of the big areas is the actual culture of an area -- a place where people feel they can meet and talk to people, friends of theirs, people that they know that have certain affinities, whether it's religious or racial or in educational background. They have to have that cross-pollination, or indeed they're going to feel very, very lonely. Of course, if they feel lonely they move on to other climes, and we lose that talent or that ability to have a person in our society that's rendering a service to the rest of society, preferably selling the service on the international scene. Therefore, you might almost say that culture has become a utility, just as in the old days when we created goods to make markets. When we had made goods to make markets, we knew what we needed to make goods. We needed . . .

I got one of these standard things that you always get, Mr. Speaker, when you're speaking -- you know, the little note that says "your fly is open." Mr. Speaker, I just thought I'd let you know that the front bench over there isn't absolutely asleep.

To go on from that, Mr. Speaker, is the point that if culture is a utility of the future, if it's as important as power lines, roads, highways, and pipelines were in the past, it's very, very important then that we do our very best to make sure that our education and our whole process here encourages people, not only of our own cultures but in the multicultural area.

But this is one of the problems that I have. One of the worries that I have is that if indeed we put as much attention on -- what this government has done in multiculturalism in the past, and I've seen them do it so often, which in this case is money to this ethnic group or money to that ethnic group; providing they are running and their support for the Conservative candidate in the area is good enough, then you see the support coming through. It has been a very jaundiced view of multiculturalism. They are people to manipulate and get out to the Conservative leadership convention and whatever other areas that they can use. But really, rather than the interest in their culture, in their education practices, in their interplay of interpersonal relationships, whether we can learn something from that -- it is very

rarely that I have seen, at least as far as this government is concerned, any wish to do anything more than exploit the idea that they are helping ethnic minorities. Consequently, I hope this Bill is a move in the right direction.

But I get concerned when I go on, Mr. Speaker, and I read in the Bill what it says in section 8. They're going to change it

The Provincial Treasurer may

(a) on the recommendation of the Minister. . .

guarantee on behalf of the Government the repayment of principal or interest or both of sums borrowed by a person for an activity or matter related to culture or multiculturalism.

If that isn't an open target to go out and put graft and corruption, make Tammany Hall look like a Sunday school picnic, I don't know what is, Mr. Speaker. When you read things like this, they could have said "any nonprofit society in the cultural field." They could have said "a registered organization." But no, they didn't. They said this "minister," that minister over there.

Some people might think that a cherub or a cupid has the right to give to a person for an activity or a matter related to multiculturalism, guarantee a loan or guarantee repayment of principal. That's a power that's absolutely unheard of in our democratic society. So this is why I wonder just how important the multicultural thing is to this department. When I see that the Premier said when he introduced the Bill that this is the first in a series, I'm just wondering about some of the other Bills coming on, just wondering what kind of power trips they will be, Mr. Speaker. I'm very, very concerned about it.

I'm also worried about the institutionalization of multiculturalism. You can see it now: so many deputy ministers have to be of this or that ethnic origin, so many on this board, so many of that board, affirmative. In other words, a whole checkoff list that the minister has, particularly . . . And the fever for the appointments you can see swelling to quite a pitch as the election becomes nigh, as he -- was it he or she; whoever was in charge at that time -- would be putting out these little goodies to show that multiculturalism was indeed alive and well.

No, Mr. Speaker, I am very worried. There are some parts of it that I've supported, that I supported reluctantly. If I could put forward a Bill of our own -- the Alberta Liberal Party I wouldn't say has invented multiculturalism, but certainly the Liberal Party traditionally has been known as the immigrants' party. It's been known as a party that for years, nationally and provincially, has been very closely associated with the minority groups. And the old blue Tories from Bay Street -- you can see them now -- when you played the Queen, it didn't matter where they were, washroom or anywhere else, there was always that salute to the monarchy and all the rest of it which is fine. But the point is that the Liberal Party has traditionally been the party whereby people felt that there was equality, that you were measured as a Canadian and not how far your ancestry went back in west Europe.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that -- and I notice that they're now fit and wide awake and ready for the rest of the afternoon -- I will mm the House over to you.

Thank you.

MR. STEVENS: Mr. Speaker, on May 26 I expressed some concerns and issued a challenge to the Minister of Culture with respect to Bill 33 and therefore, in effect, to Bill 1 and the other Bills. This Bill today is being debated in third reading. I will be brief, as I think all legislators should be at third reading stage.

This is a very historic day, the 1987 constitutional accord,

and we're debating this Bill, which will see changes developing in our government and being furthered in our government with our communities. Unlike the Member for Edmonton Highlands, I do not believe Bill 1 is intended to fight intolerance. Unlike the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar, this is not a window-dressing Bill. Unlike the comments of the Member for Calgary Buffalo, this is not a Bill to fight racism, or the comments of the Member for Edmonton Kingsway who felt this Bill is lip service, the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark who thought it is a public relations exercise. I am most astonished at the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark's comments. If any comments today were less tolerant or less in understanding than the comments made today by the Member for Edmonton Meadowlark, I have not heard them.

The Member for Westlock-Sturgeon suggested that the Bill should not be exploitive and talked about the Liberal Party as being a party of equality. My goodness, the party of equality. Think of what has changed as a result of today's signing. Think of the national energy program. Think of the destruction of this country by that party, by the Member for Edmonton Gold Bar who advocates all sorts of rules and regulations and more staff, more bureaucracy. That's just a horrible way of doing this.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, I said is not intended to fight intolerance or ignorance or racism. These battles belong to every one of us -- every employee, every employer, every part of our society -- not just government. Every individual is involved in those battles. This Bill is a commitment; it's a commitment by this government to multiculturalism. As the minister indicated, it is the heritage from which we all come and that which we share amongst each other which gives us strength and understanding.

I am so astonished if we look at the words that were said today by the members of the Liberal Party. Here are the words that they used, and these are words they used: aggressive, take charge, new staff, new activities, new directions. "Here's the government, and we are here to help you." Isn't that the Liberal message? "We'll tell you how to live; we'll tell you how to share your culture": that's what the Liberals said today.

AN HON. MEMBER: New initiatives.

MR. STEVENS: Then new initiatives from the NDP. Here's the New Democratic Party. Now, Mr. New Democratic Party, here's your position.

AN HON. MEMBER: NDP.

MR. STEVENS: Yes, the NDP socialists. Proactive. Advocates. There is a party that will tell us again how to behave. There's a party that will tell cultures how to share.

I truly hope, Mr. Speaker, that we will strengthen our ethnocultural communities and not take away from them their own responsibilities and their own obligations to each other and to ourselves. I don't see this Minister of Culture as a czar of culture, as the Member for Calgary Buffalo suggested. I see this minister as a sensitive, caring, and committed minister, and I know he will continue to work toward strengthening our province and our country.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Comments by the hon. Minister of Culture will close debate on Bill 1.

MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief. I believe we have explored this Bill and others to be debated today to a great degree in both second reading and Committee of the Whole.

I would only say that comments made with respect to deficiencies which may be in existence with respect to multiculturalism policy in Alberta are not borne out by the facts to any degree. We can always improve the circumstance, and that's indeed what we're doing. We can always heighten the awareness of multiculturalism and promote the concepts of understanding and of sharing, and that's what we're doing. We can in all cases inject in education, both formal and informal, the ideas that are necessary to ensure that we do get the benefit from our cultural heritage and that we do understand all people and share with all people.

However, this government is second to none. No Liberal government, no NDP government, no other Conservative government in the country when it comes to the support that it's given the multicultural community -- this Bill underlines the level of commitment that we're giving. And of course the other Bill that we'll be debating in a moment does that as well. It's easy for me to make the commitment asked for by the Member for Edmonton Highlands that we will be more than a department of song and dance. We are currently more than a department of song and dance, and this will enhance our involvement.

I would disagree to some degree with the Member for Calgary Buffalo, who said that all should be centralized in this department, though I realize centralizing is a philosophy, by and large, of the Liberal Party. However, Mr. Speaker, we believe that multiculturalism and the sharing of our cultural heritage must be an inherent part of all aspects of the government, and we look forward to assisting and co-ordinating other departments in that respect, but not centralizing in only one spot the commitment that this whole government has to that concept.

Mr. Speaker, despite those comments, all members have expressed their support of the Bill, and I look forward to a unanimous vote on this particular item.

[Motion carried; Bill 1 read a third time]

Bill 33 Alberta Cultural Heritage Amendment Act, 1987

MR. ANDERSON: Mr. Speaker, this Bill has been debated very extensively in second reading and in Committee of the Whole. I do not wish to waste, as I'm sure other members don't, the time of the people of Alberta by rehashing the debates in that respect.

But I would say just briefly in introduction of this Bill for third reading and moving indeed that it be read for a third time, that this Bill underlines our commitment to the preservation of language. It underlines our commitment to the concept of sharing our multicultural history, and those are two aspects of the Bill. The third one for the first time in the nation establishes a multicultural commission which brings together all of our available resources, making a strong body, one with direct input on an ongoing basis from the multicultural organizations, particularly through the member on the commission who is the chairman of the Cultural Heritage Council, and ties it into this Assembly so that we here will have the benefit of that advice and the benefit of the programming on an ongoing basis by the appointment as chairman of a member of this Assembly.

This commission will be the arm of multiculturalism in the Department of Culture and Multiculturalism, as now agreed to for the third time by the House. It will have a mandate to first of all involve both the Cultural Heritage Council and the foundation in bringing it together between now and October or November, and after that point to discuss with all ethnocultural groups who want to discuss the topic in the province and other individuals what directions we should be taking, how we should enhance our programming, what ideas and concepts should be considered.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to introduce third reading debate on this. As I say, other discussion has taken place to a significant degree in the other stages of this Bill, and I ask for the members' support in third reading.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton Kingsway.

MR. McEACHERN: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to just summarize some of the main objections of this party to this Bill. While we had some reservations about Bill 1, we nonetheless accepted it, but we do not accept Bill 33, the Alberta Cultural Heritage Amendment Act, 1987. It sets up an Alberta multicultural commission and abolishes the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation. The minister, quoting from the Committee of the Whole, stated that:

The other change which we suggest, the first change being the one about paying some of the people on the commission,

again circulated on the same sheet of paper, is that we tie directly the activities of the commission to the objectives of the Act in total so that's clear and no one has a question about that commitment in that respect. That would read:

The Commission has the duties and the powers given it by the Minister and shall fulfill those duties and exercise those powers in accordance with the objectives of this Act.

Mr. Speaker, what we find objectionable is the degree to which the minister seems to want to take all power into his own hands. The objectives and goals and commitments to multiculturalism are not laid out in a way that other people can participate in laying out those goals. Whatever definition we're going to get in the long run is going to be one by the minister. Now, if he would put that into the Bill and lay it out so we could see it and debate it, then perhaps we would find it acceptable. But he isn't saying what it is; he's just saying that he will decide what it is.

It's fairly clear that the minister has not consulted sufficiently with the ethnocultural and multicultural groups around Alberta to allay their fears that the government, and we share that fear, is seizing a greater control over what has been the process in the past and intends to centralize or take more of that control onto the minister in the future. We believe that process should be reversed, that we should be setting up more of a democratic process, not a less democratic process. If the minister appoints everyone who thinks like he does, then what's the sense in that? It's sort of like Grant Notley said: if everybody thinks the same, then nobody thinks very much. It seems to me that the people on this commission, some of them at least, should be elected rather than everybody being appointed, although the problem is even deeper than that. You have to go back to some of the organizations and the council and get a

more democratic process for who's on the council and who's on the heritage foundation. I would like to point out at this stage that the government of Manitoba is not afraid of the democratic process. In their case, the heritage intercultural council has a fairly large say in government policy, some 85 percent of the recommendations being accepted by the government.

In this Bill the minister is going from a foundation of 14 members to a commission of five members. Considering that he is in some sense the chief pooh-bah himself, if he appoints an M L A and also a member of the department and only has a five-member commission, then what chance has a five-member commission got of having any sort of independent thought or input when the other up to three members are going to be chosen by the minister anyway? He might decide to choose no extra members past the M L A and past the member from the department, or maybe one or maybe two. In either case then, the department people -- the minister and the M L A from this Assembly, who one assumes would be one of his colleagues, and the member from the department -- would outvote easily the other members unless there were at least three, in which case they would tie them. So it does seem to me that the minister is loading this thing so that he can keep very tight control of it quite unnecessarily.

In our amendment we proposed that at least six members be appointed, and we did allow for appointment by the minister, given that the democratic structures are not in place to have a more open and democratic process in terms of council and heritage foundation members. That's something that the minister should be working in the other direction, rather than in the direction of centralizing power into his own hands.

We proposed six people, and it wasn't just the numbers that we were thinking about there, but also the background of those people. And I want to read a quote from that amendment:

6 persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council who, when making the appointment, shall consider the knowledge, background and expertise of each person appointed and shall bear in mind the desirability of equal numbers of men and women on the Commission and of representation of each major geographic region of the province.

The minister rejected that idea, saying that there were other considerations that were perhaps more important.

None of those other considerations -- that is, what councils or ethnocultural groups the members might be chosen from -- would stop the minister from seriously considering the ideas embodied in that amendment. Certainly there are people all over the province from most of the ethnocultural groups. Certainly there are males and females, well-qualified ones, from most of the ethnocultural groups. The knowledge, background, and expertise of the person becoming important would help to make it more difficult for the minister to just pick anybody who happened to think the same way he does or somebody who had worked on his campaign committee, for example, and would make it mandatory that he give a more thoughtful analysis as to who he was putting on the committee and why. And perhaps we would end up with a better committee, even if it were appointed instead of perhaps elected, as it would make more sense.

Section 15 of the Bill should be reinstated. The minister should have some guidelines, and they should be put into the Bill, as to what direction and orientation the department should be taking. It should be, for instance, promoting tolerance and understanding, respect for all ethnocultural communities in Alberta. If this were set as, say, the highest priority of the com-

mission and of the department, then the commission would not be in danger of just becoming a granting agency, which is a possibility now under the present arrangement. And that's a very important consideration.

Section 12, where it says that the minister may charge fees, may turn out to be a fairly serious disincentive for use of the department and its resources. It puts a cost on affirmative action; it puts roadblocks in the way to building a better society. The department should be encouraging, not building barriers to, ethnocultural groups who have problems and need help with them. The people this most affects, of course, are the ethnocultural groups, and we don't think the government should be putting those kinds of difficulties in the way. They should be encouraging and helping the ethnocultural groups, not putting user fees in the way of their advancement.

Mr. Speaker, we do not want the political football approach that some aspects of this Bill seem to imply or make possible. We do not want funding only for the umbrella organizations, and we would like to see a more democratic process to decide the policies and directions of the department and the ethnocultural communities, the multicultural communities. What we and they do want to see, though, is that their ranks are fairly represented throughout all the levels of society.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like to say that the multicultural groups of this province deserve a better Bill than this, and we do not intend to support this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. Before proceeding, the Chair would remind hon. members that the House did adopt the principle of this Bill in second reading, and there was ample opportunity for amendments, and it passed that stage. The Chair would simply remind hon. members that at third reading perhaps they could be summarizing those points instead of making second reading speeches.

The hon. Member for Calgary Buffalo.

MR. CHUMIR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would stand to make an amendment to this motion for third reading. I have copies to be circulated to the House, if I might. While the pages circulate the amendment, I would take the . . . [interjection] I'll wait until they're circulated to read the amendment so that hon. members can read along with Mitch.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The amendment proposed by Calgary Buffalo is the six-month hoist, and it would appear to be -- order please -- in order once the Table officer advises the Chair.

MR. CHUMIR: I take it the matter is in order, and I'd refer to rule 802(1) on that. The amendment, Mr. Speaker, is an amendment to the motion, and it provides that the motion for third reading of Bill 33, the Alberta Cultural Heritage Amendment Act, be amended as follows:

Delete all the words after "that" and substitute the following:

Bill 33, the Alberta Cultural Heritage Amendment Act, 1987, be not now read a third time but that it be read a third time this day six months hence.

AN HON. MEMBER: Question.

MR. CHUMIR: I believe that is known as the six-month hoist and to say the least . . .

MR. ORMAN: You'll be in Hawaii.

MR. CHUMIR: The minister will be in Hawaii and thinking about how he's going to spend the lottery funds.

The purpose of the amendment is, to say the least, a reflection of modest confidence in the government and even less support for this particular piece of legislation. We are in fact, as a caucus, most strongly opposed. We find it a reprehensible piece of legislation with a hidden motivation, and we are particularly concerned about the speed with which this Bill is being pushed through and, in particular, with the absence of consultation with respect to the ethnic communities. And insofar as the ethnic communities are concerned, there is increasing evidence of a lack of consultation, and in fact there is increasing evidence of the willingness of these communities to speak out. They're not readily willing to do so, because the government controls the purse strings with respect to a great number of grants and appointments, and many of these communities don't come from traditional backgrounds which encourage speaking out on political matters.

However, I have noted a greater willingness to do so. I noted that at a meeting which I attended two evenings ago, and I am noting that with the discussions I am having with multicultural groups. I suspect that the minister's nose tells him that this is what's happening, and the speed with which we are moving from committee two evenings ago to third reading on this legislation, amongst the first legislation to reach third reading, is calculated to nip the potential dissent in the bud by presenting the ethnic communities with a fait accompli. I think that is wrong, and that is why the Liberal caucus is doing its best, as the government members and the minister will have noted in our comments today, to ensure that this legislation does not pass in haste without the opportunity for further reflection and for the ethnic communities to speak out.

The concern, of course, of the ethnic communities and the concern that we have is that the main purpose of the legislation is to enable the government to increase the political control of grants to ethnic and multicultural communities. If one reads the legislation carefully and tries to search for a rationale and a purpose, there can be no other rationale or purpose and there is no other rationale or purpose other than to increase the political control. The minister spoke of all of Alberta enjoying the benefits of this multicultural heritage. Well, what we see here is the government taking steps to enjoy the political benefits of cash going to the multicultural groups.

This is in direct contrast to the way in which the multicultural groups have conceived of the process in the past. If one looks at the annual report of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation, one finds in the statement of the chairman a reference to the pride in the arm's length nature in which the foundation is operated. The concern is that this arm's length nature is being terminated, and I would present as some reason and some support of the contentions that I am making, Mr. Speaker, a letter which I have here from Mr. William T. Pidruchney, active in the multicultural communities. I'm prepared to file a copy with the House. Mr. Pidruchney is the recently retired head of the Alberta Securities Commission, hardly known as an opponent of the government, and his concerns and comments here are reflective of the growing concern that we see in the multicultural community and a growing concern that we particularly share.

The letter is dated May 28; it's to the Minister of Culture, with copies to the Premier, to members of the cabinet committee on multiculturalism, to Mr. Oldring, M.L.A., and to "numerous

persons in the multicultural community." It's with respect to Bill 33, and it states:

Dear Sir:

As I promised at our meeting of May 27th I am writing to support the proposal of the ethno-cultural community that Bill 33 be withdrawn or allowed to the on the order paper of this sitting of the Legislature to allow a full and bona fide discussion to be held in consultation with the community affected before the Bill is re-introduced again at a later sitting.

Bill 33 was prepared in confidentiality without consultation with the community at large. The bill contains fundamental changes of great significance as well as gaps and deficiencies. Numerous individuals have now brought these to your attention but you indicated that you intend to go to third reading notwithstanding these representations.

The seven senior community leaders who met with you on May 27 have stressed the serious loss of confidence and credibility which will occur without a legitimate consultative process.

Bill 33 got off to a bad start but the damage is not irreversible if it is held for community consultation.

Attached is a schedule of my observations respecting the shortcomings of the bill.

I do hope that you will reconsider your decision and stay the bill.

This is a letter which I heard of yesterday and did not get into my possession until this moment. It's quite clear that it has had a dramatic impact on the minister. It's been like a classic example of Newton's law; it's had exactly the opposite reaction requested. Rather than receiving any delay, the minister sniffed out the need to move this along with great dispatch, and that's why we're here so quickly and so soon after committee reading, with a very busy schedule in this House and many, many things do, important things like Motion 14, which the government seems to be unable to find time for.

When you look at the schedule of this letter, a copy of which has been filed, you find that there are a number of very important concerns, many of which were raised by myself and by my colleagues in this House during committee reading. The first concern is the absence of consultation with the community affected, with a reference to that being "contrary to a 17 year tradition of consultation." There's a complaint with respect to the secrecy of the process. Mr. Pidruchney says that

those few people who were consulted were instructed to keep the matter totally confidential. No reason has been given for this secrecy. The amendments were "sprung" on the community after the bill was prepared, by way of information only.

Well, Mr. Pidruchney may be surprised, those who have few dealings with the government may be surprised, but we who've been sitting in this Legislature are hardly astonished. We can say: what else is new? Because this government is the most secretive government in this country. Secrecy is its motto, secrecy above all.

Significantly, and as I noted in my opening comments here, the third deficiency referred to by Mr. Pidruchney is that no reason is demonstrated for change.

The Minister has not explained what problems existed with the present systems that require such drastic change. If there are any problems then an attempt should first be made to resolve them in current context.

How many times have I heard the members of the government say: if it ain't broke, don't fix it? Well, what's broke? Perhaps there is a problem; the problem may be not quite enough independence for the foundation. It prides itself on its arm's length nature. It could be more independent. It could be independent in the sense of having some elected personnel, perhaps members of the council, on it as members.

We note, however, from amendments to take place with respect to Bill 11, that the government is moving in the reverse direction; it's removing three elected members in respect of Bill 11. So that's obviously not an appealing direction. But it's certainly the responsible direction to take if quality in the nature of the granting process by the foundation is an issue. It's not the direction to go if political mileage is what is being sought: gratitude and largess. That's exactly what we are seeing.

The fundamental changes caused by the Bill are of some concern by way of a fourth point raised by Mr. Pidruchney. He points out that

the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation is being dissolved! What is the problem which requires dissolution? Are all other Foundations which distribute lottery funds to be dissolved? If not, then why this one? Is there a hidden agenda . . .

Well, it certainly is strong action, Mr. Speaker. We find the dissolution of the foundation. We find that we moved from a 14-person foundation to a far more manageable, a more malleable, a more pliable five-person body, headed by an M.L.A. We hear suggestions that the M.L.A. is there to bring the voice of multiculturalism into the Legislature.

Well, as I have noted, for every decibel of voice that we hear with respect to multiculturalism in this Legislature as a result of that M.L.A.'s membership on the new commission, there will be 100 decibels of voice from the government into the deliberations of that commission. If we want voice on multiculturalism in this House, then let the government follow the recommendation of the Ghitter commission, which it established, and set up a standing committee on tolerance and understanding in this House.

We have another point made by Mr. Pidruchney:

Power over grants for cultural heritage projects from lottery funds now given over to the Minister or his employees.

He states that

presently grants of lottery funds are made and determined by the Foundation . . . which consists of 14 or more community representatives who represent a broad cross-section of Alberta's cultural heritage and multicultural community. The bill now gives the sole and exclusive power to make grants to the Minister or to his employee (so far undesignated). The proposed new Commission does not have any power to make grants or to indulge in any spending at all. It does not have any power to recommend respecting grants.

Under the current legislation, section 14 legislates -- the Legislature mandated -- that the foundation is going to have power to make grants, amongst other powers. We look at Bill 33 and look for that same provision, and we look in vain because there is no such provision. What the commission is going to have is provided for by a new section 9(1). The commission will have "the duties and powers given it by the Minister."

On top of that, we have a new direction in Bill 33, a new provision. We look at section 15 and for the first time we find that the minister is to have power to make direct grants to ethnic

and multicultural organizations. Of course, it's subject to the approval of the cabinet, which will be very difficult to obtain, I'm sure. But this is a new direction, the need for which has not been explained by the minister either to this House or to the multicultural communities or to the people of this province in any way. I think that without such explanation it leads to the valid concern that the government is trying to and the minister is trying to get greater control of the funds in order to obtain political benefits. I think that is wrong and in itself is good reason for opposing this legislation.

Mr. Pidruchney goes on to comment that lottery funds previously used for granting and for the Council are now merged and mingled with departmental and other funds.

His concern is that

lottery funds have lost their exclusive use for grants for community projects. They are now mingled with other funds in a single merged fund (sec. 13) from which the Minister need only make grants arbitrarily (sec. 13(4)) as a secondary objective. No grants may be made unless Cabinet grants the right to do so to the Minister (sec. 15(2)(a)). What agenda does the Cabinet have for a granting program? Are grants to be terminated altogether or reduced in any way? The community expresses grave concern.

And finally, the concern expressed by Mr. Pidruchney is that the bill does not contain any statement of purpose or mission statement respecting the new Commission. The Minister advises that he invites advice as to the function of the Commission after the bill is passed . . .

of course.

The Minister does not disclose any kind of game plan or strategy for future directions of multiculturalism in Alberta, nor for the new Commission. Why are different structures being created when there is no plan disclosed? No Regulations have been proposed as yet! The entire cultural heritage community looks for leadership with its involvement by advance consultation.

Well, these indeed are serious concerns, and they are serious questions. And I'm astonished that the minister would proceed in this haphazard way, this irresponsible way, without consulting the members of the multicultural community and without ensuring that the answers have been given and have been provided.

So I would urge the members of the House to support the amendment that we have presented to support the need for a delay in the implementation of this legislation, in order that the members of this Assembly and concerned individuals will have a chance to get answers from the minister with respect to what the true agenda of the minister and the government is with respect to this legislation. We should not be proceeding with such haste without answering these questions, and I urge the members of this House to support this amendment.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Member for Edmonton Highlands.

MS BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of . . .

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the amendment?

MS BARRETT: Yes. On behalf of the Official Opposition caucus, I'd be pleased to support this hoist. I think that we dealt

in a fair amount of detail on Monday night in this Assembly with the specific contents of the Bill. My understanding of the rules that govern this House is that that's where you're supposed to have a look at the specifics, not just the principles, and try to amend a Bill and see if you can convince your colleagues and counterparts throughout the Assembly to do that.

I regret to say that the amendments sponsored by myself that evening failed. I thought those amendments would certainly help remedy what was so severely deficient in the Bill. On the other hand, it occurs to me, Mr. Speaker, that a hoist, in the event of the defeated amendments which I sponsored, is the next best thing. I have no objection to progressing through the ranks in development of multiculturalism by way of statutes or regulation or changes therein. I think we have to be forward looking on the whole issue of multiculturalism, and I think what we should consign to the dustbin of history is the political manipulation that is either inherent in something like Bill 33 or at least is perceived to be inherent in Bill 33. I personally and our caucus subscribe to the former not the latter view; that is, in fact, that there is substance to the observation that it is not merely phenomenal.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the minister and this government have nothing to lose by agreeing to a six-month hoist on this particular Bill. It doesn't mean that the minister won't become the Minister of Culture and Multiculturalism when he's sworn in after the Premier's Bill 1 receives Royal Assent, which I anticipate will happen within a matter of days. It doesn't mean that the minister can't go on and continue to provide the funding that Albertans have agreed to supply by way of purchase of lottery tickets. It certainly doesn't mean that Albertans can't get on with the larger job at hand in my view, which is to embark upon a course of programs and campaigns that will eradicate the growing sense of intolerance, nonunderstanding, and lack of respect that I believe to be happening in this province right now. As a matter of fact, I think that's such a priority, Mr. Speaker, that I'm going to expedite the process by sitting down and saying I support the hoist.

MRS. HEWES: Mr. Speaker, I support the amendment. [interjections] Amazing, isn't it? Surprising. Yes, I support the amendment, and I would respectfully ask the members of the government to support it as well. I think it's the only reasonable and sensible move and the only prudent move to make at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, there's an anomaly here. Our caucus supported Bill 1, and when all of us read Bill 1, there was a certain kind of excitement about that, the recognition and acknowledgment of the wealth and the benefit of our multicultural community, and I'm grateful for that. I believe the multicultural community was grateful for it as well.

Then along came Bill 33, and it gives one reason to pause and think about this. Well, now wait a minute; how are these two things connected? My instinct told me that there was something a little deeper here than appeared on the surface. It's a little puzzling. It appears, Mr. Speaker, that exactly that same thought process occurred in our many ethnic groups and many communities. The odd thing about it is that these groups, these organizations, our ethnic and multicultural communities, have been partners with this government and have worked very closely with this government and have assisted this government over many years in what has been a very healthy partnership for many of us. Many of us have benefited in Alberta as a result of the partnership.

So what is happening? Well, the reason we want to see delay is because the minister is now saying: "We're going to change those arrangements. We're going to change what that partnership is. We're going to change how it works and who does what to whom, and a commission is going to replace the foundation." Now, the other night I quoted from an annual report of the foundation, a glowing report about their work which would indicate that it was a good arrangement and that it was one that benefited Albertans and that it was one the government was comfortable with. I expect that is all true, but now we have a commission that's going to replace it, and one has to ask why.

Now, the foundation heretofore has advised the minister and has allocated funds on behalf of the government to various cultural and ethnic organizations and communities. It's been a proud part of the work of the government, and it's worked well. So one says: all right, has the foundation asked for this? Has the foundation said: Mr. Minister, we think this could work better if it was rearranged -- if it were rearranged. You always use the subjunctive. Anyway, if it were rearranged, could it work better? I can imagine that that might happen, and the minister would respond positively and say to the foundation, "Well, let's sit down and talk about it, and let's see what you've got in mind for a better working arrangement here." But that's not what happened. This didn't initiate with the foundation suggesting: disband the foundation; set up a commission. That's not the way it happened.

So then one says: all right, did the council come to the minister? I mean, these are the people that are there to advise him and on whom he calls, whose expertise he calls. Did the council come to the minister and say: "Mr. Minister, we want to make some changes. We believe this whole process could be strengthened if you disbanded the foundation and put a commission in its place, and we'll have a member on that commission"? Is that what happened, Mr. Speaker? No way; that's not what happened. The council didn't come to the minister. Mr. Treasurer, they didn't go near him. They didn't even know about this. The council and the communities say, "We haven't been consulted."

Well, this is a strange kind of move, because here is a minister who sets up a department and gives it a new name to enshrine forever the belief of the government, to give it all the weight that we can, to say how important this is in Alberta. They've done that on one hand, but on the other hand they're moving unilaterally. They're moving on their own without consultation with those groups most intimately involved, who have been their partners, on whom they have relied for many years. They're moving, without presumably the initiative of the foundation itself, to disband it.

Now, I could accept all of this if the foundation had not served well or if there had been problems with the way it was serving or if the council said, "Mr. Minister, we need something

different in order to accommodate the needs of the multicultural community." I could accept it. But that isn't what has occurred.

I see in this Bill -- and the reason I want to see it laid on the table, Mr. Speaker, for at least six months for some input, for some discussion in the public and with our communities -- no particular benefit coming to the ethnic organizations, no particular benefit coming to Albertans. There is no more money coming to us. There is no more activity coming to us as a result of this Bill. And the minister has not as yet satisfied me, nor has he satisfied that community, as to what benefits are anticipated because of this change.

Now, my colleague from Calgary Buffalo says: if it isn't broken, don't fix it. Why are we doing this? And that's when the cultural organizations start saying to all of us -- and I'm sure many of you have heard from them as well. They start saying, "What could the reason be?" Well, it doesn't take long for that other overtone to creep in. I don't want to think that but what else is there to think? I don't want to think that the reason is so that we now will have political control over the activities and over the spending of money. I don't want to believe that but that's the only thing that's left for us to believe. Because there has been no consultation; there have been no initiatives by those communities themselves, who have the most to win or lose -- well, no they don't. We have a great deal to win or lose. We have an enormous amount to lose, Mr. Speaker, if we make the wrong move now.

Now, my suggestion is that if you want to strengthen something, and if the minister did in fact unilaterally decide that he was going to strengthen this whole process, that he's going to create a multicultural department fine; good move. And he's going to strengthen it in other ways too. I believe that the best way to strengthen it would be to free it up further. This is how you strengthen that community: increase their autonomy, not take it away. And I think that's been proved over and over. I think it could have been, and I think that the ethnic and multicultural community would have responded in kind and would have leapt at the opportunity to work with the new ministry. They would have leapt at it to serve the people from their own cultural background and also all Albertans.

Mr. Speaker, I said at the outset that we need to leave this on the table. These people have served well without remuneration.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please.

MRS. HEWES: May I adjourn debate, Mr. Speaker?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please. The Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at half past 2.

[At 5:30 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday at 2:30 p.m.]