

# Alberta 'going backwards': Ghitter

□ Senator says government has little commitment

By Daryl Slade  
Calgary Herald

There is a lack of commitment by the Alberta government to human rights issues these days, Senator Ron Ghitter charged Friday.

Ghitter, a key cog in the establishment of the Alberta Human Rights Commission more than 20 years ago, said Alberta is "going backwards in human rights."

"We don't even know if there will be an Alberta Human Rights Commission (AHRC) next year. They said people who wish to be on the commission should apply, rather than seeking the best people, like Premier (Peter) Lougheed and I did back

## HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

in 1972," Ghitter said on the day the world marked the 45th anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ghitter said there are as many or more complaints today than ever, and not just from minorities. Women, seniors and the disabled are increasingly complaining of discrimination.

"We need leadership when times are tough," said Ghitter, who recently criticized the government for creating a commission without a woman or member of a minority.

"I saw in the last federal election that there is a high degree of intolerance in this country and it's acceptable by the people who applauded it."

Ghitter did not participate in a ceremony at City Hall mark-

ing International Human Rights Day Friday night, because of prior commitments, but he has been a strong proponent of human rights issues through his co-chairmanship of Alberta-based Dignity Foundation.

Friday night, Michael Greene, president of the Alberta Civil Liberties Association, said his group fully endorses the Dignity Foundation's stand.

"We're very concerned with the direction the province is going with the Commission," said Greene.

Jack O'Neill, chief commissioner of the AHRC, defended last month's appointments between participating in ceremonies early in the day in Edmonton and here last night.

"The minister was held up a bit by the system the government put into place, but I'm confident he soon will be able to overcome the problem," O'Neill

said, alluding to Gary Mar, Minister of Alberta Community Development.

"There are no females right now, but I expect Mr. Mar will bridge that gap. As for saying there are no minorities, one of the members is a Metis."

O'Neill said human rights issues are just as important now as in 1948 when they first became an international issue.

"Just this morning, I heard on radio a man was murdered in Montreal - the 16th homosexual in recent years," said O'Neill.

"There is still discrimination

on the basis of color, sex, age in the workplace. That's what we have to do in education rights and regulations

Last night, O'Neill kept out the Susan Mah Aw Calgary lawyer Brian E. Edmonton Blood Tribe n Sharon Venne. Calgary Doreen Spence, who Australia, won the A Human Rights Award. Ms. the award to Spence's daughter Kim, on her behalf.

Mayor Al Duerr was the other dignitaries attending the event.

**IMPROVE YOU  
GET YOUR CHRISTMAS  
ROBINSON'S**

ALL CANON