



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 30th Legislature
Second Session

Standing Committee
on
Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

Bill 212, Official Sport of Alberta Act

Monday, March 1, 2021
9 a.m.

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Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

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Schow, Joseph R., Cardston-Siksika (UC), Deputy Chair

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Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills

Participants

Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women

Lora Pillipow, Deputy Minister

Nathaniel Smith, Acting Executive Director, Policy, Planning and Legislative Services

9 a.m. Monday, March 1, 2021

[Mr. Ellis in the chair]

The Chair: All right. Thank you. Good morning, everyone. I'd like to call this meeting of the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills to order and welcome everyone in attendance.

My name is Mike Ellis, MLA for Calgary-West and chair of the committee. I'd like to ask the members and those joining the committee at the table to introduce themselves for the record, and then I will call on those joining in by videoconference. We'll begin to my right.

Mr. Schow: Joseph Schow, MLA, Cardston-Siksika.

Mr. Getson: Shane Getson, MLA, Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland.

Mr. Amery: Good morning. Mickey Amery, MLA, Calgary-Cross.

Ms Glasgow: Michaela Glasgow, MLA, Brooks-Medicine Hat.

Mr. Nielsen: Good morning, everyone. Chris Nielsen, MLA for Edmonton-Decore.

Ms Govindarajan: Vani Govindarajan with the office of Parliamentary Counsel.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. Philip Massolin, Clerk Assistant and director of House services.

Mr. Huffman: Good morning. Warren Huffman, committee clerk.

The Chair: Thank you. And those joining us via videoconference: I have an alphabetical-ordered list here.

Mr. Dang, are you on the line? Name and constituency please, sir. We can come back to Mr. Dang.

All right. We have Mr. Dach.

Mr. Dach: Lorne Dach, MLA, Edmonton-McClung.

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Rutherford: Brad Rutherford, Leduc-Beaumont.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Sigurdson: Good morning. It's Lori Sigurdson, Edmonton-Riverview.

Mr. Sigurdson: R.J. Sigurdson, MLA, Highwood.

The Chair: Thank you.

Try again and see if the audio is working for Member Dang.

Mr. Dang: Thank you. Thomas Dang, Edmonton-South.

The Chair: Awesome. Thank you very much, sir.

All right. Official substitutions: Member Lorne Dach for Janis Irwin.

A few housekeeping items to address before we turn to the business at hand. Pursuant to the February 22, 2021, memo from the hon. Speaker Cooper I would remind everyone of the updated committee room protocols, which encourages members to wear masks in committee rooms while seated except when speaking, at which time they may choose not to wear a face mask covering. Based on the recommendations from the chief medical officer of health regarding physical distancing, attendees at today's meeting

are reminded to leave the appropriate distance between themselves and other meeting participants.

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To request to be put on the speakers list, members participating virtually are asked to e-mail or send a message in the group chat to the committee clerk, and members in the room are asked to please wave or otherwise signal to the chair.

Please set your cellphones and other devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

We'll next move to the approval of the agenda. One important thing to note before we move to the approval of the agenda is the update that was made necessary as a result of the passage of Government Motion 66 in the Assembly on Thursday, February 25, which moved Bill 211, Municipal Government (Firearms) Amendment Act, 2020, to Government Bills and Orders on the Order Paper. As a result Bill 211 is no longer subject to Standing Order 74.1(1) and no longer stands referred to this committee for review. The agenda has therefore been updated to remove Bill 211 from the business to be discussed at today's meeting.

Are there any changes or additions to the draft agenda at this time? If not, would someone like to make a motion to approve the agenda? All right. Mr. Amery. Thank you. Mr. Amery will move that the agenda for the March 1, 2021, meeting of the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills be adopted as distributed. All those in favour, say aye. On the phone? Thank you. Any opposed, say no. On the phone opposed, say no. There are none. That motion has been adopted and carried.

All right. We'll move to the approval of the minutes. Next we have the draft minutes to review from our previous meeting. Are there any errors or omissions to note? If not, would a member like to make a motion to approve the minutes as distributed? Thank you, Mr. Getson. Mr. Getson to move that the minutes of the February 26, 2021, meeting of the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills be approved as distributed. All those in favour, say aye. On the phone? Thank you. Any opposed, say no. On the phone, anybody say no? Hearing none – okay – that motion has been passed. Thank you.

I guess next we'll move to the review of Bill 212, Official Sport of Alberta Act, a presentation by our friend Mr. Muhammad Yaseen, the MLA for Calgary-North. Hon. members, Bill 212, Official Sport of Alberta Act, was referred to the committee on Tuesday, December 8, 2020. In accordance with Standing Order 74.11 the timeline means that the committee's report to the Assembly is due on March 17.

At this time I'd like to invite Mr. Muhammad Yaseen, who I see on the camera – welcome, sir – the MLA for Calgary-North, to provide a five-minute presentation, and then I'll open up the floor to questions from committee members. Mr. Yaseen, thank you very much for being here and attending the committee this morning. The floor is yours, sir. Go ahead.

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you very much, Chair and members, for allotting this time for me to speak to private member's Bill 212, which proposes rodeo as Alberta's official sport. Alberta has been my home for over 40 years, and I had the pleasure and opportunity to live in rural Alberta in conjunction with my oil and gas work. Here I learned and experienced the rich rural culture, a culture of

hospitality and our love for rodeo, with rodeo being a most favoured sport.

The rodeo is an important part in the rich cultural fabric of our province. The rodeo is about competition, entertainment, music, food, and community. Rodeo brings together people from all walks of life and all different backgrounds, newcomers like myself and people who have been here in Alberta for generations.

Making rodeo Alberta's official sport would help illustrate the importance of rodeo to our province and to our local communities, who work year-round preparing for the rodeo season. Individuals, families, local businesses, and community associations rely on the income they make from the rodeo season. Our tradition is something we share as Albertans, and I want that to be officially recognized in legislation.

As a proud Calgarian I was deeply saddened that the iconic Calgary Stampede had to be cancelled last year. This bill will be a beacon of hope for Albertans as we make our way through another challenging year and will serve as a reminder that we have much to look forward to. Rodeo is an exciting sport, and it is cherished throughout local communities. It has become a cultural staple for Albertans. Rodeo is not just about competition but about identity, income, and culture.

The first Canadian rodeo was held in Raymond, Alberta in 1903, a full two years before the province was established. This quickly led to the first Calgary Stampede in 1912, which attracted 75,000 spectators, nearly double the population at that time. From its humble beginning the Calgary Stampede has grown to over 1 million visitors yearly and is one of the world's largest rodeos, which gives you an idea of the attraction that rodeo brings to Alberta. Each year there is a community pancake drive, where visitors have the chance to chat and meet people.

9:10

The economic impact that rodeos have on local communities is essential. For example, CTV News reported in July that Rockyford, a small town of 325, hosts a three-day event that on its busiest day seats 1,500 people in the stands, not to mention that \$50,000 made from food sales goes to the Lions Club and local community organizations. The town of Strathmore suffered about a \$4 million loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted many businesses who use the rodeo as a chance to sell their services and merchandise. This is for last year. As you can see, the benefit and economic impact that rodeos have on rural communities in Alberta is extensive. The Canadian Finals Rodeo has an economic impact of \$37 million. This is pre-pandemic again.

It is my hope that this bill will bring people together to experience the rich rural culture of Alberta.

Thank you. Thank you, all.

The Chair: Well, thank you, Mr. Yaseen. Thank you for your comments and your presentation.

This is a government member's bill so, as with the convention of this committee, we will go to the Official Opposition for a series of questions and go back and forth.

Mr. Nielsen, I see that you are ready. We'll start with Mr. Nielsen for questions for our guest.

Mr. Nielsen: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair, and, of course, thanks to Member Yaseen for coming before the committee and presenting on his bill. I guess, for declaring an official sport within the province, what's your understanding? Does that have to go through legislation, or are there other means by which that could happen?

Mr. Yaseen: Well, thank you for the question. I think the only other possibility was to go through the Emblems of Alberta Act; however, while I was preparing for this bill, I was told by Parliamentary Counsel that the Emblems of Alberta Act carries certain penalties for the misuse of an official emblem. I didn't feel that was appropriate for the intention of my bill, which is to highlight the positives associated with rodeo and its importance to our culture as Albertans.

The Chair: Okay. A follow-up, please.

Mr. Nielsen: Yes. Thanks, Chair. I guess that I'm just wondering. Through your consultations and – of course, we always have to keep in mind that private members don't always have the exact same access to being able to do the same thing that government does – probably getting a chance to speak with the minister of culture on this topic, I was wondering if you might want to share maybe some of the conversations you had with the minister on this.

Mr. Yaseen: Yes. I spoke to the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women on this. The ministry is very supportive of this bill, and they are looking forward to rodeo becoming the official sport of Alberta.

The Chair: Great. Thank you very much.

We'll now go to Member Getson for a question and a followed supplement.

Mr. Getson: Thank you very much, Chair. MLA Yaseen, I'm very excited that you brought this forward. I mean, I'm not sure if the folks at home understand the relevance or the significance of a private member having a bill and that you elected to choose this. You know, some folks that hunt are happy and jumping up and down when they get a moose tag. This is even more rare than that, so the fact that you would do that is pretty incredible.

The other thing I'd like to share with you is that I'd mentioned this to my wife and children today, that I was coming into town to listen to a private member's bill, and when I mentioned your last name, there was that same look. There was a bit of a cocked eyebrow. You know, for the record, sir, your last name doesn't necessarily lend itself to some of the most famous bull riders we've ever produced out of the province. With that, you kind of touched on how you were welcomed into rural Alberta and the fact that you would bring this forward. Can you expand a little bit on that, about your experience with rural Alberta and why you would choose rodeo? If you could fill us in a bit more, please.

Mr. Yaseen: Thank you very much, Member Getson, for this question. Yes. Neither my last name nor my first name, they don't jibe with rodeo. However, let me share this with you. I had the opportunity to live in rural Alberta early on in my life, when I started my oil and gas career, and through that I learned a lot about rural culture and their entertainment and what they like and, you know, what the culture is and how people attract and co-operate and collaborate with each other and all that. During my first summer – actually, it was summer when I started, and rodeos were already happening. I'm talking about way back, the late '70s, 1979, to be exact. For me it was the first time to witness a rodeo. Actually, it wasn't the first time to witness a rodeo, you know, in Alberta because I had been in Calgary and had already been at the Calgary Stampede one or two times. But in rural Alberta this is a very important economic activity in addition to bringing people together, because there I learned that as people got together, they'd talk about their previous interactions, the last time they'd met, what has changed, what's up in the future, and all that.

That's where I learned about rodeo and, you know, people from Alberta in rural areas. Actually, you know what? As a newcomer it was an amazing kind of eye-opener for me, how friendly, how welcoming people of rural Alberta were. I was literally adopted into a family there. Without going beyond and into detail, in the first month or so I just became a member of that family and its closeness. It's what the rural culture offers you as a newcomer like myself, right? I was so, so impressed. You know what? I enjoyed my two and a half years there, and this is my way of giving back to that culture, to my friendship of many years. Still, the friendship that I made there is lifelong. It's everlasting.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

A brief follow-up, please.

Mr. Getson: No. There's not much for a follow-up, Chair.

MLA Yaseen, thank you so much for bringing this forward and sharing your experience of what we have with rural culture. This is wonderful.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you to both of you.

We'll go to Member Dach for a question. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair. Thank you for giving me time to speak today. Many of you in the Legislature, my colleagues, will know that my background is from rural Alberta. Thorhild, Alberta, a small village, was my original hometown. From 1958 to 1978 I never missed a Thorhild Stampede. My parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were instrumental in setting up the Thorhild Stampede early on and provided stock and also participated in the rodeo and helped build the infrastructure that formed the initial Thorhild Stampede. Later on, as I was attending, we would of course be participants ourselves. Part of my volunteer work with the Thorhild Stampede over the years was to work behind the chutes, taking off the rigging from the animals after they were finished in the arena. From an early age of 10 to 12 years old that's what I did at the Thorhild rodeo.

My grandmother, as a town councillor and deputy mayor, also was instrumental in the Thorhild Community Association, which, of course, is one of the nonprofit associations you find throughout the province that are called agricultural societies, which run and finance the rural Alberta rodeos. Now, many of the rodeos, as has been mentioned by Mr. Yaseen, are very successful, the large ones in particular. The Calgary Stampede is a \$150 million enterprise. The CFR in Red Deer, as he mentioned, is a \$37 million enterprise as well. Ponoka is pretty big. I've got my Ponoka Stampede jean jacket on right now, having attended there recently.

What I'm getting at is that the big rodeos are pretty successful and doing well, but the smaller ones, like the Thorhild Stampede and others that Mr. Yaseen has mentioned, are really struggling. And this was before the pandemic. They were really struggling, struggling to finance themselves and to survive for a variety of reasons. The infrastructure that they rely upon in many cases is in need of maintenance and repair and replacement, and also operational dollars are lacking. What I want to ensure, Mr. Yaseen, is that this bill that you're bringing forward has some substance to it, that it's more than simply a drive-by, symbolic, token gesture to make rural Alberta feel good. Especially postpandemic, these smaller rodeos are going to need support, so there had better be some money behind this gesture to ensure that these small-town rodeos can actually survive.

9:20

In my view, it would be a huge insult to rural Alberta if we pass this bill and say, "Yahoo; rodeo is Alberta's provincial sport" and

then leave them out to dry and dwindle and perhaps fail in many cases whereas rodeo, that has been long-standing in the province, could thrive if indeed it had the financial supports that it requires through the ag societies. I'm wondering, sir, if you have consulted with the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies, which is responsible for operating and financing many of these rodeos throughout the smaller parts of rural Alberta, to get their opinions as to not only what is heralding rodeo as a provincial sport but also what their needs are financially so that they actually can survive.

Mr. Yaseen: Well, thank you very much, Member Dach, for your comments here. No, I haven't had a chance to talk to Alberta agricultural societies. However, I did talk to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and I got some background as to how these rodeos are held and how the ministry helps these rodeos in our province. What I learned from that was that there are grants, funding that is available to, primarily, agricultural societies as well as regional cultural societies in addition to the main rodeo, the Calgary Stampede. There is a significant amount of funding that is provided for these, and I am sure, considering what has happened in the last year, that the level of funding that has been there before would probably – I would hope that the ministry would probably review their funding for this very important sport, as you mentioned, and bring that up to level and work with Alberta agricultural societies to address any deficiencies that may be there.

Mr. Dach: If I may, Mr. Yaseen, you highlight my concern precisely, because hope is not a plan or is not a financing arrangement. My concern is that we're going to be heralding properly rodeo in Alberta as a provincial sport, but indeed we're going to be perhaps not backing them up as we should. You'd indicated that you have not spoken to the agricultural societies. The ministry of agriculture itself, which is where the ag societies are under, in their department, is the one that has the money, so it's the ag societies that are making the ask. The ag societies are the ones that are struggling, so the ministry is the best one to consult.

Mr. Rutherford: Point of order, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: A point of order has been called. Can you just pause the clock, please? Okay.

Mr. Rutherford, that was you? Go ahead.

Mr. Rutherford: Yes, Mr. Chair. Standing Order 23(b)(i). We're talking about Bill 212, and we're getting into a conversation about what government ministries are going to do or spend money on. I just want to refocus the conversation on what the bill is and what it's actually trying to do. I think we're completely off topic.

The Chair: Okay. Is there anybody from the Official Opposition who would like to respond? Mr. Nielsen.

Mr. Nielsen: Thanks, Mr. Chair. This is not a point of order. I mean, this is certainly a part of the conversation. I think that if we're talking about making this a provincial sport, possibly any lack of funding could impact that. I don't think that adding this to the conversation detracts from what this bill is trying to do. So this would not be a point of order.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Nielsen, and thank you, Mr. Rutherford. As I look in here, it says that the member

(b) speaks to matters other than

(i) the question under discussion.

So I will say this. Mr. Dach, we are bordering very, very closely, quite frankly, to questions that may be beyond Mr. Yaseen's scope and ability to deal with.

I will sit here and say that we never presuppose the outcome of the committee, nor would I presuppose the outcome of decisions that may be made within the Legislature, but some of these questions I believe are good, and I think that they actually even may be relevant to our next guest, who might be coming from the ministry.

That being said, I'm going to find that there is no point of order, but I will ask you, Mr. Dach, to be – you are on your supplemental question right now. If you can be very brief so that Mr. Yaseen can answer.

Thank you.

Mr. Dach: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'll get back in the saddle again here.

I had simply hoped to determine the substance of the bill in my line of questioning of Mr. Yaseen to ensure that the people in rural Alberta who are trying to sustain the rodeos that we're going to be heralding by this bill are feeling supported and able to complete their roles and keep those rodeos going, because if we don't have them surviving, there's not going to be a whole lot of sport to cheer about.

In any event, what I'll do is perhaps let it be known that, you know, rodeo is very important to everybody, on all sides of the House, in this province. I know that we are all concerned about the survival of, particularly, small-town rodeos, where dozens and dozens of communities and hundreds and maybe thousands of Albertans like my grandparents and great-grandparents, who struggled every year to get a small-town rodeo off the ground to provide the income that they needed to sustain their community facilities – they are looking for more than symbolic, token support.

Mr. Yaseen: Well, thank you. Thank you for your comments again. One thing that this bill is going to do is that it will signify the importance of rodeo, and with that, you know, other things that go along with it will also be looked into. It's not going to in any way harm what is right now in this industry.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

We'll now move on to Member Glasgo. Go ahead, please.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you. Mr. Yaseen, I just wanted to, on behalf of the constituents of Brooks-Medicine Hat, who've missed many rodeos in the last year, thank you very much for this bill. I think, you know, our government is really focused on making sure that lives and livelihoods are protected in the pandemic, and that's one of the reasons why we actually expedited ag society funding earlier this year in order to make sure that these societies had what they needed to keep going because of all the red tape requirements of having so many events per year and this, that, and the other thing. I know that I asked that question in the Assembly in question period to get clarity from the minister, and I was very pleased with that answer, as were the ag societies in my riding.

They went through a lot this year, and I think that Albertans as a whole went through a lot this year. We've seen some of the events that we cling to for hope be decimated because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our inability to gather together, and our inability to see our friends and take part in the sports that we love such as rodeo. I know there's nothing that brings me more joy than watching the mutton busting and the greased hog, with the little kids running around trying to hold on and whatever. It's just one of the most fun things you can watch.

You know, I just wanted to say thank you again. I know that you as a person are so joyous, and you have such a zest for life. I think that you bring that to every part of your job. How do you think that your bill will help to bring hope back to your constituents in Calgary

and bring hope back to Albertans who are struggling to find it right now?

Mr. Yaseen: Yeah. Thank you very much, Member Glasgo. When I moved this bill, I received a number of phone calls from my own constituency. There are people in my constituency who lived in rural Alberta. Plus, they live in the city of Calgary, that holds the biggest rodeo in the world, one of the biggest ones anyway, so they were so excited about this bill. I have received phone calls from a couple of radio stations as well in rural Alberta as well as, you know, one in Calgary.

People are looking forward. People are thinking that this bill will highlight the importance, the significance of rodeo and bringing people together, the economic activity that takes place during that time, especially in view of the fact of what happened last year. People miss that, and they're looking forward, you know, to a point where rodeos and stampedes are held again.

9:30

I will say this to you. I spoke about this sometime earlier in the Legislature, about a motion about the culture of rodeo, and that got separated all over the province, and I got phone calls from as far as the town of Raymond. The council of the town of Raymond was so happy about the shout-out about this rodeo that I talked about in the Legislature speech. To tell you the truth, I did not even know that this was not already the official sport until I did the search. At that time I found it particularly for myself – boom; just like that – and I was so happy to make this private member's bill to make rodeo Alberta's official sport.

This is a beacon of hope. Everybody, not only rural culture but as well as in our cities of Calgary and Edmonton, you know, the Calgary Stampede and Edmonton Klondike Days. People are so looking forward to this becoming an official sport.

Thank you.

The Chair: Follow-up, please.

Ms Glasgo: No further questions, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

We'll now go to Member Lori Sigurdson for a question. Thank you.

Ms Sigurdson: Yes. Good morning. Thank you very much, Mr. Yaseen, for your presentation this morning. I just want to sort of add my voice, too. I mean, I grew up in Valleyview, a town in the Peace River country, and certainly going to the rodeo each year was something we did. Just a little bit of a side note. My brother used to calf wrestle. Nothing professional, but his good buddy was Rod Warren, who's been the all-Canadian, all-around champion nine times, and he's in the hall of fame for rodeo. So I feel like I have certainly a good experience and understanding in this area.

My question to you, Mr. Yaseen, is that in the spring of 2020 the UCP Member for Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright brought forward Motion 502, which recognized the cultural importance of rodeo. It was voted on and passed unanimously by everyone in the House. So what exactly is different about what you're doing here?

Mr. Yaseen: So that was just to – if I can recollect, I spoke on that motion as well. It was just to highlight the culture, the importance of rodeo, what it does, and all of that. But that motion did not make this sport an official sport for Alberta. That was just around the culture, rodeo culture, what it does and the significance and importance of that. It was, I think, from that motion that I got the idea for doing this, what I'm doing right now. Then I did research,

and I found out that rodeo is not an official – you know what? I always thought this was an official sport for some reason because I was, when earlier on . . .

The Chair: Mr. Yaseen, your time has expired. Do you want to finish your thought, and then we can move on?

Mr. Yaseen: Yeah. What that motion did, for me, was to do a little bit more research on this particular topic, and as a result of that motion or discussion, I brought this bill forward.

The Chair: All right. Well, thank you very much, committee members, and thank you, Mr. Yaseen. The time, as I mentioned, has expired for discussion on this bill as it pertains to the questions and answers by Mr. Yaseen, so thank you very much to everybody.

We are now going to move on to the technical briefing. Mr. Yaseen, you certainly are welcome to stay on the line and listen to the technical briefing by the Ministry of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women.

We will now hear a technical briefing from the ministry of culture on Bill 212. We have Deputy Minister Lora Pillipow here to present. Thank you for being here. I see you online. Thank you very much. You have five minutes for your presentation. Can you please introduce those presenting with you, if there is anybody? You may begin when you're ready, and the floor is yours.

Thank you very much.

Ms Pillipow: Thank you, Chair. As noted for the record, my name is Lora Pillipow, Deputy Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women. I am joined by Nathaniel Smith online. He is the acting executive director of policy planning and legislative services. I'm just wanting to confirm: is the slide up on the screen?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms Pillipow: Slide 2. As you know, the Legislature has referred Bill 212, the Official Sport of Alberta Act, to the committee for your consideration. The act has the following stated purpose: to recognize rodeo as the official sport of Alberta.

Slide 3. I just want to give a little bit of an overview on what our ministry does to support rodeo. We do support rodeo through the major fairs program. Funding through this program goes to the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede and to the Westerner for the Canadian Finals Rodeo. As you know, Agriculture and Forestry additionally provides funding to the agricultural societies to host agriculture event days, including rodeos. Rodeos held outside of an agricultural society are not tracked by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

I do, however, want to talk a little bit about . . .

The Chair: Ms Pillipow?

Ms Pillipow: Yes?

The Chair: Excuse me. Can you maybe get a little closer to the mic? You're kind of cutting in and out, and a few of us in the room . . .

Ms Pillipow: Is that better, Chair?

The Chair: A little bit. There's a little bit of an echo there.

Ms Pillipow: Is that better?

The Chair: Yeah. We can try that. I just want to make sure: what slide are we on?

Ms Pillipow: I'm on slide 3.

The Chair: Okay. We're on slide 3. Just let us know when you move to a different slide, and we'll make sure everybody else can see that.

Thank you.

Ms Pillipow: Just to note that I can't see anyone in the room or the presentation. I apologize.

The Chair: No worries. Thank you so much. You may continue.

Ms Pillipow: Okay. Thank you. I was referring to the 94 primary agricultural societies, who host 138 rodeos. Additionally, there are other regional agricultural societies that are located in Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Olds, Camrose, Lloydminster, and Grande Prairie, so a lot of rodeos are happening throughout Alberta. We also know, of course, that the Westerner Park in Red Deer, Ponoka and Strathmore rodeos, as the member mentioned, are very important parts of Alberta's cultural uniqueness.

Agriculture and Forestry provides \$11.5 million annually to the agricultural societies grant program, which funds the entire program, not specifically rodeo. Of course, the member mentioned that there are incredible economic impacts to each of these organizations in Alberta.

I'm going to go to slide 4 now. Bill 212 does not prescribe a responsible minister. However, the subject matter of this act does have a similar objective with the mandate of the Emblems of Alberta Act, where the minister is responsible for sport and recreation, and thus there is an overlap with the minister's responsibility for an official sport of Alberta. An alternative could be to amend the Emblems of Alberta Act to include an official sport.

Slide 5. I'll just note as well that the Emblems of Alberta Act also establishes provincial emblems and governs the reproduction and use of emblems. The act lists out 13 official emblems of Alberta and one symbol of distinction. I won't go into the list. You can see on this slide that there are many emblems that recognize a cultural group and the contribution to Alberta's culturally diverse society such as the flag of Alberta, the official tree, and the official colours. These are all things that help us understand and recognize the deep connections to Alberta's cultural uniqueness such as rodeo would do.

Slide 6. The department did do a review of similar statutes across Canada. As shown, we found that the government of Canada and Saskatchewan have designated official sports. Canada officially recognized hockey and lacrosse as the official summer and winter sports in Canada in 1994, and Saskatchewan recognized curling as their official sport in 2001; important sports for those areas.

If I move to slide 7, when we assessed the impact of implementing the act, there is no staffing necessary. We don't see any financial implications. If passed, it would be recognized as an official entity, and therefore it would be featured on alberta.ca.

9:40

I just wanted to note in closing, on slide 8 – and I'm happy to speak to this – that the Fair Deal Panel had recommended important policy considerations for looking at Alberta's cultural heritage. When we look at rodeo, we also see Alberta's deep cultural connections to rodeo in the broader community and lifestyle around the sport, just the music, the crafts, the textiles, and the community . . .

The Chair: Ms Pillipow, your time has expired. I'll let you finish your point, though. Go ahead.

Ms Pillipow: I'm done. I think that I can take questions.

I'm sorry for the sound.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you for very much. You're going to take questions.

We will continue with the Official Opposition to start it off, and I see that Mr. Nielsen is prepared to ask the first question.

Mr. Nielsen: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the staff from the ministry for coming in to present to us. I know you touched on this a little bit. I'm hoping you might be able to expand a little further. I guess I'm wondering what kind of implications there are should the sport be recognized as an official sport. I know you had mentioned, you know, that it would be shown on the website. Are there any other additional responsibilities that might come with this, I guess, any costs to any changes for recognition of the sport? I'm just hoping you might be able to expand on that a little bit.

Ms Pillipow: Sure. Thank you, Chair. If I was to compare it to the current Emblems of Alberta Act, we don't incur any costs for the implementation of that act. When we assessed the implementation considerations of Bill 212, we don't anticipate that there would be any costs as the recognition of the sport is not a cost that we would need to incur in the ministry.

The Chair: Okay. A follow-up, sir?

Mr. Nielsen: Yeah. I guess, would there be any additional responsibilities that would be placed on the department for implementing this?

Ms Pillipow: If I use the example, really, about the responsibility that we have with anything under the Emblems of Alberta Act, we don't currently play a wide range of responsibilities in promoting those types of important emblems in the act. We do however have a sport and recreation stakeholder group, so we would want to make sure that we're engaging with the stakeholder groups and encouraging participation in rodeo within those sectors.

The Chair: All right. Thank you.

Mr. Schow, go ahead, sir.

Mr. Schow: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, everyone who has presented on this bill this morning, and thank you for bringing it forward, Mr. Yaseen. I had some questions for you when you were presenting, but time constraints didn't allow for that. Hopefully, I get an opportunity to speak on it when the time comes if it's the will of the committee that this bill proceed and the will of the Legislature.

I do have a question, though, for the department, if I could, Ms Pillipow. What would be the annual economic impact of rodeo in Alberta, if you have any data or statistics on that?

Ms Pillipow: What I do have is economic data on some specific rodeos that I'll just share with you. The Canadian Finals Rodeo, which is a six-day event, has an economic impact of about \$37 million. As everyone knows, the Calgary Stampede, over the 10 days, has an economic impact of \$282.5 million while the Ponoka Stampede has an economic impact of \$10 million, and the Strathmore Stampede has an economic impact of \$4 million. I don't have the broad numbers, but individually you can see that those rodeos have a very important economic impact on the communities.

The Chair: All right. Follow-up, Mr. Schow?

Mr. Schow: Absolutely. Yes. I appreciate that. Thank you very much. You know, those are some big numbers, and they certainly mean a lot to the rodeo community and to me in particular. Southern Alberta is my home. You may or may not know that. The first rodeo actually came out of southern Alberta in Raymond in 1903, I believe it was. Although Raymond isn't in my constituency, we in the south like to brag, if we ever get a chance to, about anything that happens down there. It is a beautiful place to be.

Just kind of going along the same vein, not so much about the economic side but more the employment side, I know there would be direct, indirect, and even induced labour. Would you have any statistics or information about jobs that are being created through rodeo?

Ms Pillipow: Thank you for the question. I have high-level economic data. I'm just going to ask my colleague Nathaniel Smith if he has specific jobs data on the impact of rodeos.

Mr. Smith: Thank you. No, we actually don't have specific jobs as a whole, similar to the provincial-wide data on economic impact. We don't have that information available at the moment.

Ms Pillipow: May I ask my colleague to pull the information for our stabilize program, and then we can get to the next question?

The Chair: Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

We'll now go to the Official Opposition. I have nobody on the list. Mr. Nielsen, go ahead.

Mr. Nielsen: Yeah. Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just in following up a little bit from Mr. Schow's question – I don't know – if for some reason the bill was never declared, if an official sport was never declared, would there be any impact to the sport of rodeo? You know, you had mentioned some economic numbers there. Would that decrease if it wasn't declared, or would it just keep doing what it's been doing?

Ms Pillipow: Just a clarification, Chair. Are you asking if the impact of rodeo economically would decrease or stay the same if we didn't acknowledge it?

Mr. Nielsen: That's correct. Yeah. If it wasn't acknowledged as a provincial sport, would that negatively impact it, or would it do anything? I'm just curious.

Ms Pillipow: Thank you for the question. I think what's important to note is that when we have a sport that has been hit as hard as it has during the pandemic, recognizing rodeo as an official sport would be an important point to elevating the sport and encouraging it, encouraging Albertans to reconvene. I think it would be a great honour to be able to have people in Alberta be able to recognize rodeo's contribution to the province and then, in turn, feel safe to come back to enjoy the rodeos in their communities.

The Chair: Thank you.

A follow-up?

Mr. Nielsen: Yeah. Just a follow-up, Mr. Chair. As was talked about earlier, there was a motion that had come before the House, Motion 502, about recognizing the sport. Did the department not feel that maybe that was a bit of an opportunity to explore creating an official sport with rodeo? I guess I'm kind of wondering what happened. You know, we passed the motion, I believe, unanimously as well. Then did anything happen with it? Did it fall off the table? What happened?

Ms Pillipow: I'm just trying to recall. In the fall, when that motion was passed, we would have looked at implementation as well. Given this bill coming forward in the spring, we wanted to support making sure that we understood what the implications would be with the motion versus the legislation. From our perspective, having something honoured in legislation also elevates the status of the sport as well. I think, from my perspective, I would just answer that there wasn't anything, necessarily, that happened to the motion. It was an opportunity for us to be able to have a broader discussion in legislation and honour the rodeo as a sport.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Pillipow, do you mind turning your video off? It might help with the audio. Sometimes that tends to help out, at least in my experience in doing these things.

Ms Pillipow: Is that better, Chair?

The Chair: Maybe. Let's move on to the next question here, and we'll see if it improves at all.

Mr. Getson, go ahead, please, sir.

Mr. Getson: Yes. Thanks, Ms Pillipow. I really appreciate the presentation. You know, trying times with the audio and technology: it gets the best of us most times.

With multiculturalism and tourism, you know, the broad portfolio that you have there as well, can you also talk about the significance of rodeo for First Nations? Again, I'd be remiss if I didn't bring that up. Any time that I've brought folks to rodeos for business or otherwise – and the Calgary Stampede is a showcase of that for international visitors. Can you touch on that, please, and how this might also touch those communities?

Ms Pillipow: Absolutely. I think what's important – I'm sorry. Is my sound still really terrible?

The Chair: Well, it's still breaking up, so apparently the video has nothing to do with it. It's no better or worse than what it was, but we can still hear you. Go ahead.

Ms Pillipow: Okay. I apologize.

The Chair: It's okay.

Ms Pillipow: When we can all meet again in person, one of the things that I can personally attest to is the importance that the Stampede places on engaging with the indigenous community on the Stampede grounds during Stampede and how important that is to the community. Having toured the site and partaken in the activities, I think it's fair to say that it's an important consideration for the peoples that first were on that land, and the Stampede spans a lot of time. Ensuring and engaging with the indigenous communities to make the Stampede a meaningful place for them during the Stampede by representing their culture and convening on the site with their families: I think it's a really important part of the celebration, and it's definitely a part of Stampede in integrating both the past and the future together.

9:50

The Chair: Okay. A follow-up, Mr. Getson?

Mr. Getson: Yes. Just one if I may, Chair. Thank you for that. Again, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Paul, Alexander, and Alexis. They're, you know, folks that I serve and represent here as well in the Legislature.

The other item that I did want to touch on if possible: if this bill does pass and it does become our official sport, does that, at the department's level, put it on a status or on a playing field, I guess, that could have additional funds allocated other than the traditional items that are going towards it that you already mentioned, either the two main events or through the ag societies? So if it does have that status, is there, in your experience in your department, an opportunity for additional funding or, as we pointed out with the First Nations, for collaboration there for culture?

Ms Pillipow: One thing I would say is that our ministry funds the two major fairs, as you note. What I wanted to also note was that there was additional funding in recognizing the impact of the COVID shutdown on the live experience sector, which includes rodeos. So Minister Aheer has announced additional funding through the stabilize program. She will also be looking at opportunities to be able to engage the arts, culture, and rodeo sector some into this fiscal year, as she has also identified some dollars to support additional stabilize programming to stabilize that sector. Ongoing funding past the stabilize program as a result of the legislation is something that I would have to consult with the minister on.

Thank you, Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Member Dach, go ahead, please, sir.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair. To follow up on Mr. Getson's point, Chair, I just wanted to ask Ms Pillipow if indeed, as she had indicated quite clearly on numerous occasions in her presentation, there were no financial implications to the ministry with respect to the passage of this bill if it passes. I take it from that that there would be no budgetary demand on the Ag and Forestry ministry or the culture ministry as a result of this bill passing. So what one would conclude from that is that this bill is simply a symbolic gesture because there's no money attached to it and there are no outcomes other than the symbolism attached to it. Would that be a correct conclusion?

Ms Pillipow: I think what's important to note, Member – and thank you for the question, Chair – is that this bill has an opportunity to elevate and acknowledge the importance of sports and rodeo as a sport in this community. I think that the ministry's ongoing support for the stabilize program and investing dollars that support rodeo and recognize rodeo as an impacted sport during COVID does more than say that it's just a token. I also think that in recognizing and elevating the importance of the shutdown during COVID, this presents an opportunity to give Albertans a place to go back to and reinforce the importance of those economic impacts in those communities.

Mr. Dach: All right. Well, if I may just also ask you, as I did Mr. Yaseen: have your officials or yourself talked to the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies to ask them about the requirements for their continued success postpandemic, beyond the scope of the limited funding increases that you have spoken about already from the ministry of culture?

Ms Pillipow: Thank you very much for the question, Chair. I can't speak to the funding from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, so I do apologize. It's not my purview to speak about their budget. The information that I've provided in my presentation provides the overarching funding to ag societies. I apologize, Member.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much.

We'll now move on to Mr. Amery. Go ahead, please, sir.

Mr. Amery: Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you very much, Ms Pillipow, for that presentation. I want to thank you for being here and for coming forward and discussing this proposed private member's bill before this committee. I also want to thank Member Yaseen for bringing this very exciting bill forward, because the more that I listen, the more excited I become, and I can see the positive impact that rodeo has for Alberta's economic prosperity.

My question is a little bit different, though. I've heard your presentation. Generally I view Alberta as a trailblazer when it comes to many things, and this might be one of those examples. You mentioned in your presentation that no other province has named an official sport, so I'm excited to be part of this one. My question is somewhat prompted by Member Nielsen's questions about implications. Has your department reviewed whether there are any conflicts or implications with naming rodeo as Alberta's provincial sport in contrast with our national sports of hockey and lacrosse?

Ms Pillipow: Thank you for the question. Just to confirm, the province of Saskatchewan has declared curling as their official sport, and I just wanted to note that in our review we didn't see any conflict with having a separate provincial sport in Alberta as rodeo.

I'm just going to ask my colleague Nathaniel Smith if he has any supplemental information that he wanted to provide from the jurisdictional analysis.

Mr. Smith: Thank you. Yeah. In fact, just to answer your question, every province has a piece of legislation that speaks to official symbols and emblems, and they are complementary to the ones that are designated at higher levels and are meant to identify the specific cultural, heritage, and geographic uniqueness of the symbol that is designated in every province. We don't believe there will be any conflict with anything that's designated by the federal government.

The Chair: Okay. No follow-up?

Mr. Amery: No follow-up. Thank you.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you.

We'll go to the Official Opposition. Is there anybody who has a question?

Mr. Nielsen: Yeah. Just a real quick one, maybe just a follow-up from MLA Amery. I suppose that if somebody wanted to try to work towards designating another sport – I mean, I know some friends that are rabid hockey fans – this wouldn't prevent, I guess, that process from happening somewhere in the future.

Ms Pillipow: I'm just going to ask Nathaniel to address that question, please.

Mr. Smith: Traditionally speaking, with the Emblems of Alberta Act and similar legislation across Canada, we tend to not have multiple official symbols in each of the categories. It wouldn't be impossible, but I don't believe that it would be something that we would do once we designate one item or one thing as an official emblem or symbol.

The Chair: Okay. Do you have a follow-up? No? No follow-up.

Okay. We'll go to the government members. Does anybody have a question?

Hearing and seeing none. Okay. I'll go back to the Official Opposition.

Hearing and seeing none. All right.

Ms Pillipow, thank you very much for taking the time to be with us today, and thank you for taking questions from our committee members.

Mr. Yaseen, thank you as well for everything that you've done and for being on the line as well.

Next, members of the committee, we're going to move to decisions on the review of Bill 212. Hon. members, having heard the presentations, the committee is now ready to decide how to conduct the review of Bill 212. In accordance with our previously approved process, the committee may choose to invite additional feedback from up to six stakeholders, three from each caucus. Alternatively, the committee may also choose to expedite this review and proceed to deliberations.

Does anyone have any thoughts on this? Member Glasgo, go ahead.

Ms Glasgo: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think the presentation was very thorough from Member Yaseen. But I think it was clear that, you know, maybe we could hear from more stakeholders, particularly Alberta ag societies or even specific ag societies, just to provide more context to the Assembly, so I wouldn't have a problem hearing from stakeholders. I think that more consultation is better, so let's do that.

The Chair: Okay. Any other comments?

Mr. Nielsen: Yeah. I will concur. Let's hear from a few others, you know, in case some other group comes in and says: why not our sport? I mean, I don't know; I'm reaching here. But, yeah, let's give the opportunity at least.

The Chair: Okay. All right. I'm hearing some consensus. Does anybody have maybe an opposite view?

Hearing and seeing none. Okay. We have a possible draft motion for stakeholders.

Mr. Schow, would you like to maybe say something?

Mr. Schow: Sure. Yeah. I will say a few things, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much. The convention of this committee is that we do bring in stakeholders and allow a couple of days for the members to determine who those stakeholders are. Those stakeholders: I think there's a maximum of three. That is what we have done in the past. Actually, I don't think; I know. But to give the proper time to find and inform those stakeholders would probably be about two business days, which I think is what we did last week on Friday if I'm not mistaken.

10:00

The Chair: Okay. Well, I have a possible draft motion.

Mr. Schow: I'd love to hear your draft motion.

The Chair: All right. This would possibly say – and please correct me if I'm wrong – that Mr. Schow would move that the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills invite up to six stakeholders, three proposed by the government caucus and three proposed by the Official Opposition caucus, to make presentations regarding Bill 212, Official Sport of Alberta Act, at an upcoming meeting and provide a stakeholders list to the chair by noon on Wednesday, March 3, 2021. It looks like it's up on the screen. Does that look about right, Mr. Schow?

Mr. Schow: Excellent work, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: All right. Thank you very much.

I guess for the record I will read this motion just one more time, and then I will ask the committee to vote. Mr. Schow will move that the Standing Committee on Private Bills and Private Members' Public Bills invite up to six stakeholders, three proposed by the government member caucus and three proposed by the Official Opposition caucus, to make presentations regarding Bill 212, Official Sport of Alberta Act, at an upcoming meeting and provide a stakeholders list to the chair by noon on Wednesday, March 3, 2021.

Okay. Sorry. Before we vote, Mr. Dach wanted to make a comment. Go ahead, please, sir.

Mr. Dach: Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to know with respect to the limitation of three invitations per caucus – I know that there is the intention of the committee to hear from the agricultural societies. Of course, they have an association, the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies, but there also may be individual ag societies which have interest in appearing individually to make their own cases. I'm just wondering if that limitation of three would restrict some of those who might actually wish to make or plead their own case individually on top of their overarching organization. Would the member perhaps consider increasing that to maybe as many as a half a dozen suggestions for submissions for each caucus?

The Chair: Mr. Dach – and a few people want to say something here – I appreciate that I know you're new to this committee. This is an agreed-upon agreement between both parties, to have three invitees each. Certainly, if somebody else wanted to have some further input, the committee does welcome written submissions, so that might be an option for some of these other groups that you've enquired about. Does anybody else have any further comments? No?

Mr. Schow: There are time constraints as well of when they need to go back.

The Chair: Yeah. That's right. Mr. Schow makes a good point. We also have time constraints here, which causes us some other issues as far as getting this back into the House.

Really, the options for anybody else other than the three, which, again, is three by the Official Opposition and three by the government members – certainly, they are welcome to provide their input through written submissions to the committee. Any further comments by anybody?

Okay. That being said, again, the motion as proposed by Mr. Schow. All those in favour, say aye. On the phone? Okay. Any opposed, say no. On the phone? Okay. All right.

That motion appears to be carried.

Thank you very much.

Next – yes, Mr. Nielsen.

Mr. Nielsen: Maybe just a point of clarification, then, for Member Dach. If other organizations were to make some kind of a submission, what would be that date, I guess?

The Chair: Sure. Maybe I'll ask Dr. Massolin. Do you have a possible date recommendation?

Dr. Massolin: Yeah. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I think that working back from the due dates of this bill – and Mr. Huffman, your committee clerk, has that available; I'll let him speak after this – you would give a reasonable amount of time, I think, for the written submissions. Within this tight time frame as well you could look at maybe early next week as a deadline, perhaps Monday or Tuesday.

The Chair: Okay. Does that provide some clarification? Sir, go ahead. Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. March 17 is the due date where the committee has to report back, just for the committee's information.

The Chair: Okay. Great. Thank you very much. I hope that provides some clarification there.

All right. That being said, I guess we'll go to other business. Are there any other issues for discussion at today's meeting?

Hearing and seeing none. All right. Date of next meeting will be at the call of the chair.

Would somebody like to move to adjourn?

Mr. Nielsen: So moved.

The Chair: Mr. Nielsen moved that the meeting be adjourned. All those in favour, say aye. Any opposed? Hearing none. The motion is carried.

Everybody have a great day. Thanks very much.

[The committee adjourned at 10:06 a.m.]

