



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature  
First Session

# Alberta Hansard

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The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

# Legislative Assembly of Alberta

## The 27th Legislature

First Session

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[Errata, if any, appear inside back cover]

## Legislative Assembly of Alberta

7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 27, 2008

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please be seated.

### Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

#### Bill 17

#### Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2008

[Adjourned debate May 26: Mr. Renner]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a little bit surprised. I thought we were starting with Bill 22, so that's what I was ready to go on. Forgive me while I shift my file folders around here. Yup. Definitely had Bill 22 as first thing up this evening. Okay.

Bill 17, Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2008, is actually an act that I think a lot of people are looking forward to. I think it's certainly timely, if not past time for it. What's essentially being put in place here is that a number of the exemption amounts, or the sort of benchmark amounts below which or above which people are eligible to claim income tax credits, have been increased, I think in recognition of people's actual salaries or actual incomes in this day and age. One of the things I find interesting is that two of the cases that I've most recently been working on would not in fact benefit from any of these tax credits that are involved here. But I'll come back to that at the end.

Let's talk about what's good. First of all, what I am pleased to see is that the government had a plan. They had a plan that they talked about in their throne speech. I think they actually talked about it in their election platform. They talked about it in their throne speech. They talked about it in the budget. Here it is. I like that. I like to see those plans put in place and followed through. This was not a surprise. We've been expecting it, and in fact here it is, so kudos to the Minister of Finance and Enterprise for doing that.

There are a number of expected outcomes here. We're looking at the caregiver amount being increased, and the income threshold level is also raised. The infirm dependents: again, the credit is raised by \$5,000, in both cases here bringing us up to just shy of \$10,000. Again, the income threshold level at which the caregiver is eligible to get that credit is also increased. The final two pieces are the disability and disability supplement. The credit there is increased, again, by \$5,000 and the disability supplement as well by \$5,000, and also increasing the amount of the tax credit per child for low-income families under the Alberta family employment tax credit. That, in particular, works because it's recognizing things very clearly with what's happening to families today. That's increasing a maximum benefit amount, well, from \$581 to \$669 for the first child, and then incrementally it goes up for each child up to four children.

I am recommending to my colleagues in the Alberta Liberal caucus that they support this bill. It does offer financial assistance to caregivers, which we have expressed concerns about for some time, and also to persons with disabilities. In particular, it's clearly targeted at low- and middle-income families. I appreciate the people who have a great deal of personal income in this province, but I think that when we're targeting programs, I really like to see it benefit. So, for example, I wasn't too keen on the flat tax, which

gave an extraordinary benefit to the high-end income earners but not so much to the middle-income earners.

I do have a couple of concerns. They're not critical, because I'm still willing to go ahead with the bill. Part of this is that these are tax credits, so really the actual amount that an Albertan sees is about 10 per cent of the figure that's listed because it's based on the writeoff that would have otherwise been taxed at 10 per cent. What you are really saving here is the tax of 10 per cent. That's to many people very important and enough to make a big difference in their lives. I don't want to negate that at all, but I think it is reasonable to ask the question of whether or not these amounts are serious enough to actually provide the assistance that people are looking for. It sounds pretty grand that you're talking about all these \$5,000 and \$10,000 amounts, but that's not what people would actually get. They would get 10 per cent of that amount, of whatever that qualifying amount is. It could be under the \$9,355. It's a tax credit, so it's just giving you a break on the taxes that you would have paid on that amount of money. It's not actually \$10,000 that people are getting. It's 10 per cent of that. That's more problematic.

I think that for people that are offering direct caregiving assistance in this province right now, it's costing them a lot more than that. A number of them can't afford to do it, frankly, either because they have jobs which wouldn't give them the time off to do it or they just could not afford to not work even for the 10 per cent tax credit they're going to get here and to forgo, you know, their working revenue in order to offer care for someone. Certainly, someone who has a frail parent in long-term care: you consider these things. We all do. We all look at it. We all wish we could, or we worry that we should do more, but we can't. I question whether we're really giving enough assistance here to a goodly number of Albertans who have forgone a lot of revenue in order to offer caregiving services to a loved one.

The truth is that most of these people are elderly spouses, and they are offering caregiver services to their elderly spouse. It's bloody hard work. It's physical work lifting and shifting people around and assisting them, and it's never ending. You can't you know take a break every couple of hours and just go off somewhere. In many cases you can't leave people unsupervised.

I do have a question about whether, if this is what the government is going to offer, this is going to be enough to provide serious assistance to those that are offering caregiver assistance to frail, elderly relatives, spouses usually, or to people with disabilities that are dependent on them for care in their lives.

The other part of this is that the money doesn't come right away. This is not a grant. It's not an assistance program. What we're looking at is if you qualify for these various tax credits and you file your income tax, at some point – whatever is that familiar phrase to all of us? – six to eight weeks from now there would be some money that would come back to you. You know, if we were, for example, talking about today, which is the 27th of May, for caregiver services that I might be offering to someone, I'm not going to see that money until at least a year from now, assuming that I file my taxes on time, which . . .

**Mr. Taylor:** Which you would do, would you not?

**Ms Blakeman:** Yes. Which of course all good MLAs would do on time. Those are the concerns I want to raise about whether this is really going to be enough assistance to help people achieve some kind of liftoff out of either the sort of poverty or the unrelenting pressures that caregivers are working with.

The tax credits for the first series do disproportionately benefit wealthier people. In a number of cases you need to be making

enough money that a tax credit would actually apply to you. That's why they're giving these various ranges of people and how much money they have to have either to be above or below that. You need to be making enough money that you've actually got an income to apply these tax credits to, so we're back to my previous concern about whether we're really offering assistance to people that are offering family caregiver services here.

7:40

I do want to make it clear that the concerns I've just outlined do not apply to the Alberta family employment tax credit changes. Those figures, which I think I started to read out, are actually the real amount that the families would get for each child up to four children. That program in particular is targeted at the poor, and they do not therefore also fall into the problem of disproportionately advantaging the wealthier in our province.

I do have a question here. What proportion of eligible recipients are currently actually receiving these benefits, and what proportion are those figures then based upon? I'd be interested in hearing back from the Minister of Finance and Enterprise when she's able to respond, perhaps in Committee of the Whole, with a response to that question.

Interestingly, a couple of the people that I've been working with most recently would not benefit from anything that is happening here. One of them was a woman that I introduced here in the Assembly, and she is the mother of an adult with Down's syndrome. I raised some questions about the lack of co-ordination between moving people from handicapped children's services as they cross 18 and move into receiving AISH and PDD and the issues that have been raised there. But this, for example, would not assist my friend or her son in any way, shape, or form.

As for many people of my age group I've now gone through the death of a number of friends. Seven friends have died of cancer in the last two years. Of course, some of them have gone very quickly, and relatives have taken time off work to be caregivers for them. I don't think that what's being offered here would actually have benefited any of them either. It's a good program, but it's a very restrictive program in who it's actually going to be able to help and how much assistance it's actually going to be able to give them in the long run.

I am supportive of it. I think it's worth it. I have raised the issues and put them on the record, but my larger concern is really about: is this going to be enough? My response to that is no; it's not.

The government needs to recognize that if we really are going to get people to deliver caregiver services to families – that's what this is clearly saying. It covers marriage and blood relationships, and thankfully it doesn't restrict it to spouse and child, because in the situation I was talking about with my friends who've died of cancer, in a number of cases they were cared for by siblings. At the time that the first woman died, her sister cared for her, but in fact the federal caregiver program had not clicked in at that point, and she was not eligible for any kinds of assistance through that federal program because it was specific to spouses, parents, or children but did not allow for siblings or an aunt and a niece relationship, for example.

You know what? With the size of our families in this day and age I think we've got to deal with what we get, and we've got to be a bit more flexible in how we deal with that and recognize that families configure themselves in many different ways in this day and age. Actually the blended and the second families and all the different combinations we can have in this day and age are more common now than the, sort of, first-time married, dad works, mom stays

home, nuclear family configuration. The rest of those families are actually more common in our society today.

With those comments I will take my seat. I think I have, yes, one colleague that's probably going to speak to that as well. I am willing to support this as it's put before us today. I'd just like to see some additional work done by the government to support the other aspects that I've identified.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 17 in second reading. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, will rise to speak to Bill 17, the Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2008, which actually is a good bill in itself in that it recognizes the fact that we really must recognize and give credit to caregivers who are looking after, certainly, members of their family who are seniors and elderly or the infirm or the physically or mentally handicapped. The best caregivers in the world are really your own families, and to be able to give them a chance to stay at home and not be monetarily punished for that is a very good thing in itself. My colleague has stated that probably these dollars aren't quite enough, and I agree totally; however, it is a good start to be able to at least get the concept and to accept the concept that we should be able to make it easy for people to stay at home and look after.

I guess where I'd like to see something like this end up is: often in European countries, and I know certainly in Holland, someone can actually stay home full-time and still be able to pay into a pension and still be able to get the credits that they would if they worked out of the home and in the sector. I think that these are some of the benefits that we're going to have to look at further down the road. In the end there's a tremendous savings to the health care system if we can keep our own family members at home.

One of the other things that has to be looked at, though – and I do believe that it's a legislative responsibility – is that we have to have some form of being able to monitor the kind of care so that the particularly vulnerable elderly, particularly those that suffer from Alzheimer's, are not being mistreated. I'm a professional geriatric specialist, and it's easy for me to be able to work eight, 10, 12 hours a day with the people. You certainly do get to love them very much and know them very well, but I also know that I'm going home. To have to deal with someone going through the different stages of Alzheimer's within your home without any respite truly, I think, is impossible, and I think it sets up scenarios where abuse could become rampant.

Certainly, we see abuse out there already today. There's physical abuse of the elderly, monetary abuse, and then also we have families who fight amongst themselves for what they think is best for their parent, which is probably a very good argument for a bill that I know will be coming forward for discussion, I believe, at a committee level: the fact that we all should be encouraged to have personal directives so that when the time comes for whatever care we require, we simply must have that written down and make sure that the person that we have assigned to implement our orders is someone that we trust and someone that has understood exactly what we want. It's a legalized document, and therefore that person has the responsibility, but it also gives them that little bit of extra. If the personal directive has been done properly, it gives them that little bit of extra where there are many siblings that might argue.

Usually with a personal directive if someone has done it correctly – and I go back to my own mother, who had an amazing document because there were six of us, and there wasn't one speck of discussion about what was going to happen. It was very clear. She had it

laid out in a legal document. We all had signed it at the same time, so we all knew exactly what she wanted, and there was never any discussion about whether this was the right thing or the wrong thing. So I think personal directives are very important. They are sort of a side issue to this, but I believe that they're certainly a part of it.

7:50

According to the fiscal plan of 2008-11 the three changes that are actually coming through in terms of the dollars will cost the government \$20 million a year. I know that sounds like a lot, but as I've already pointed out, just that kind of money being saved within the health care system, I'm sure, would more than adequately pay for that.

The other part of this bill that I think actually would come under health is that we have to be able to ensure that there's some kind of home care, not surveillance but help. Often particularly lower income families don't have the training or the actual understanding of the aging process. If there was someone able to help them through that, they could understand exactly what's going on, that some of the behaviours that perhaps are bizarre at, say, 50 could well be normal at 85. So there's that sort of training, and I believe that should certainly be part of it.

One of the other things to look at in terms of that \$20 million that we think it's actually costing us but I believe would be saved in the long run is that it's very stressful for families, particularly in this day and age – I hope it changes, but it certainly hasn't as long as I've been here – to have to have whoever that they are responsible for put into a long-term care facility or even assisted living. It's very stressful when they go and they see that the person they're responsible for is not getting the care that they need, that there simply isn't enough staff. Then they come away feeling guilty. There's tremendous stress put on families who cannot be assured that their loved one is receiving the care that they deserve and, actually, even the respect because the staff doesn't have enough time for respect; they just have enough time to do the job. So in that way we're cutting down on the stress factor for families.

Again, lower income families are not going to be able to afford the extra dollars that sometimes their loved ones need in assisted living, because in assisted living they only get the very basics. If they need an extra bath, if they need to be toiletted, if they need to be fed, basically if they just need to be looked after beyond their own sort of frail independence, they often cannot afford that extra cost.

There's a movement afoot that people are, in my opinion, sometimes assessed incorrectly and put into assisted living to keep them out of long-term care because, of course, long-term care is more expensive to the government system, and I'm not sure how we get around that. I believe that it really has to be looked at through the minister of health to say exactly how people should be assessed. One of the good things about having one board is, I am hoping, what I've been asking for for the last four years: having provincial standards that are absolutely the same across the board and across every region, which now doesn't exist across this province, that they are all actually the same and that people know exactly what they can expect. The other thing that I'm asking for and I'm hoping may come through is that we have an assessment system that is exactly the same across the province. Some regions use an assessment tool that I personally believe is basically based toward care; it's not based toward where you should be living.

I'm looking forward to those things, but in the meantime I think that this is certainly a good bill that I would be supporting because I think it's a really good first step. I believe that the concept has been accepted by the government that we should have incentives for

people to be able to stay home with their families and look after their own family members.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'll take my seat, and I move adjournment of the debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Bill 9

### Land Agents Licensing Amendment Act, 2008

[Adjourned debate May 26: Mr. Mitzel]

**Ms Blakeman:** Well, it's a very interesting evening here. Things are not in order. Votes are happening where I was promised things would adjourn.

**Some Hon. Members:** It adjourned.

**Ms Blakeman:** Oh, it did adjourn. Okay. That will take the steam off me a bit, won't it? [interjection] Pretty much. Yeah. Nothing like a House leader really fired up. Okay.

Bill 9, Land Agents Licensing Amendment Act, 2008. This is – I can't believe this – another good bill because I think what it does is really empower the individual landowners. I think that's the impetus behind it, that not all landowners wanted to work with the agent that was essentially the oil and gas company's man. I think in Alberta, actually, they're all men except for one woman that I've read about, but let's hope there are more women than that.

The problem is that the individual landowners wanted to be able to work with someone in some cases that they felt were more on their side, and that wasn't really possible because given the way the legislation was written, they pretty much had to be – and I think 99.9 per cent of them, in fact, were – employed directly by the oil and gas companies. So this is altering that.

I've read quite a few newspaper articles where the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat has been a great advocate for this particular sector, and he, in fact, is the sponsor of the bill. The notes that I've made are really just going over and essentially saying that this is a good idea. I mean, it's a very simple bill. Let's face it, guys. It's a couple of pages long here. Oh, yes. Most of it's on one page, and on the second page it's, "This Act comes into force on Proclamation." You know, it's not a tome. You could easily tuck that one in your pocket and take it home. Really, what it's doing is changing the definition of land agent, and that's opening up the possibility for people.

I think the current situation has been long viewed by stakeholders and by the courts, I might add, as a flawed piece of legislation. I noticed as I read through some of the backup documentation that the courts were pretty blunt in their assessment of the legislation and that it was a flawed piece of legislation and it did really restrict individual landowners in their choice of who could represent them. The current procedure definitely favoured the oil companies over the farmers is one way to put it because the landowners felt that they really were not free to choose an agent that they wanted to work with. The pool of people that they could, who were approved for licensing, tended to be those who were directly employed by the oil and gas companies.

Credit, I think, should go to the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat for seeing a problem and for following through on it and for getting the legislation up. Things work differently in the government caucus than they do in the opposition caucus. I know that it's not always easy for members of the government caucus to be able to drive through a piece of legislation, particularly as a member of the backbench, that they feel strongly about. But I think that that's part

of it: if you really do feel strongly about something, you'll make it happen. Clearly, this particular MLA did feel strongly about this and has followed through on it. Our Official Opposition shadow minister for this area is not available to speak to the bill, and therefore I have made arrangements that we will not vote on it tonight to allow our shadow minister an opportunity to actually comment on the bill. We try and make sure that our people in that position actually speak first to the bills, and we're not able to do that tonight, so I will be asking for adjournment later.

In the meantime, speaking not on his behalf but on my behalf, from what I've seen in this, I'm very happy to support second reading of Bill 9, to support in principle what is outlined in the Land Agents Licensing Amendment Act, 2008.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

8:00

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up and join debate on Bill 9, Land Agents Licensing Amendment Act, 2008, in second reading. I won't take a long time with my remarks.

**An Hon. Member:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Taylor:** Did I hear, "Hear, hear"? I think I did. It's a nice evening. I think they want to get out and sit by the pool and enjoy the fountain.

**Ms Blakeman:** No, no. I heard them asking for you to share more.

**Mr. Taylor:** Oh, did they? Well, okay. I can continue if you'd like. I'm going to try this and see how it shows up in *Hansard*: pa rum pum.

All right. Seriously, folks, I am speaking in favour of Bill 9, the Land Agents Licensing Amendment Act, 2008. Like my colleague from Edmonton-Centre I, too, think it looks like a good piece of legislation. Like my colleague from Edmonton-Centre I will await with interest the comments that our shadow minister for this particular field has to offer in debate when he gets the chance to join the debate because he is the authority in this area. I am not.

It's pretty hard, if you've followed the news and followed events in this province over the last, really, several years now to not notice the ongoing conflicts between landowners and energy companies. It happens with great frequency these days, with increasing frequency as activity in the oil patch goes up, and it is a real issue for landowners. Their feelings for years now have been that they are not adequately represented or protected and that the playing field is not level when it comes time to deal with a big oil company or even a small oil company, for that matter. It doesn't have to be a big oil company for them to feel as though they are over a barrel.

The most extreme example of a conflict between a landowner and an energy company that I'm aware of – and I remember this from my days covering the news in media. I do not specifically remember what year it was, but I'm sure some people in this House will recall that there was a very tragic incident in which an oil company representative was in fact shot and killed by a landowner some years ago now in what was, I guess, the ultimate tragic outcome of one of these intractable disputes. Now, I'm not holding that up as an example that's typical of disputes between landowners and energy companies necessarily. It was obviously extreme. There were at the time, as I recall, extenuating circumstances and all of that. Never-

theless, it happened, and it exists, and it is not one of the happier moments in the history of the province of Alberta.

You know, it doesn't need to be that way. There are a number of approaches that we can take and that I think we are taking to address these ongoing conflicts. I will again acknowledge the draft land-use framework that the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development has brought forward as really, I suppose, a whole series of positive steps in aid of reducing conflict over land use between competing interests. Landowners and energy companies compete. Energy companies and forestry companies compete. Recreational users and industrial users compete. You know, people in cities compete over land uses. Simply, as our population continues to grow and we reach the 3 and a half million mark, those conflicts happen with much more regularity because there are many more opportunities for conflict in terms of person to person and person to industry and industrial activity to industrial activity. I'm including agriculture in there, broadly described as an industrial activity.

This particular bill, Bill 9, is going to make it easier. It certainly appears on the surface to make sense to me. It's going to make it easier for landowners to hire anyone they want to represent them in land-use negotiations with energy companies. It addresses what has been a very real problem for many landowners, a very real thorn in their side, which the Member for Cypress-Medicine Hat, who is the sponsor of this bill, has acknowledged and recognizes: only licensed land agents or lawyers are permitted to charge a fee for providing advice on land negotiations. A funny darn thing: almost all the licensed land agents in the province work for the oil business, work for oil companies. Again we see that the playing field, as it stands now, is not level.

We are all familiar with the case of Raymond Strom of Two Hills, who actually was fined over \$500 by a Provincial Court judge for acting as a land agent without being licensed. At the time the trial judge conceded that the Land Agent's Licensing Act is arguably bad legislation that may very well favour oil companies over farmers but noted that it's not for the courts to correct the problem. That's our job here. The Court of Appeal judge said that the trial judge correctly interpreted the act: bad legislation and not up to them to fix it. It's our fault; it's our responsibility to fix it. Would that politicians at all levels of government took that responsibility a little more seriously rather than just whining about activist judges when court rulings don't go the way they would like or courts point out that legislation is bad. But I digress into, perhaps, federal territory.

In any event, we are taking responsibility here with Bill 9. We are recognizing that legislation is our responsibility. Good legislation is our responsibility to advance, and bad legislation is our responsibility to recognize or, having had it pointed out to us, to change it. On that basis in principle I am certainly prepared to support Bill 9, the Land Agents Licensing Amendment Act, 2008. However, as I said, Mr. Speaker, our shadow minister on the portfolio is going to want to speak to it at a later time.

With that in mind and to leave open the possibility of that, I would like to move adjournment of debate on Bill 9 at this time.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## Bill 20 Agriculture Statutes Repeal Act, 2008

[Adjourned debate May 26: Mr. Griffiths]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise and speak to Bill 20, the Agriculture Statutes Repeal Act,

2008. I actually have exactly the same situation with this. The government is getting bills coming at us fast and furious, and with the capacity issue that we're dealing with in our staff, we just can't get the briefings done fast enough, especially not if we're going to consult any stakeholders and do a sort of feedback loop in the community. In this particular instance I don't have the right person here tonight to be speaking to it, so later on we will be asking for adjournment of this as well so that we can have our shadow minister actually speak to this bill.

**8:10**

I've looked it over. Well, this is another bill you just fold up, put in your pocket and go home with because it's really light. It's one page shorter than the last one; it's only one page long. Essentially what it's doing is repealing four acts, three of which were actually never proclaimed. They were passed but never brought into being with a proclamation. Those would be the Agricultural Societies Amendment Act, the Gas Distribution Amendment Act, and I think the Gas Utilities Statutes Amendment Act.

One of them actually repealed another one, so there's a bit of an interesting insider joke there. Section 4 of Bill 20 repeals a section of the Gas Utilities Statutes Amendment Act, which repeals the Gas Distribution Amendment Act, and section 3 of Bill 20 also repeals the Gas Distribution Amendment Act. We're hitting them upside the head from both sides, so surely they will go down now. That's what's happening here. For the most part these never actually got into play, which, of course, as these things occur, always make me wonder why we did this in the first place if it never actually got proclaimed.

The Federal-Provincial Farm Assistance Act gave the minister responsible the authority to enter into agreements with ministers of the government of Canada to provide financial assistance for the benefit of Alberta farmers. As you know, we've got a lot of other farm benefit programs available, so that may be why that one never happened.

The Agricultural Societies Amendment Act had added sections around requirements under regs to form an agricultural society and then to send information from that society through to the minister.

The Gas Distribution Amendment Act had added definitions to the act and increased the scope of regulations. It also gave our very favourite Alberta Energy and Utilities Board the authority to make a distributor provide transportation of gas after refusing to do so and a complaint being issued by a consumer or a direct seller.

So pretty straightforward stuff. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this, but I do need to reserve the protocol option for my shadow minister to speak directly to this bill. I'm okay with it, but we'll have to hear from him. He sets the tone for the opposition caucus on government bills. So given that he's not available to me at this moment, I would beg the indulgence of the House and move adjournment of Bill 20.

Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

## **Bill 22 Appropriation Act, 2008**

[Adjourned debate May 27: Mr. Kang]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to rise and speak in second reading to the Appropriation Act, 2008, always an opportunity I look forward to. In Committee of Supply you're trying to focus on the particular

ministry of the evening, and obviously in our opposition benches right now the chances are pretty high that you'd be a critic of more than one area. You don't always get an opportunity to raise issues that constituents have raised with you, for example. So I really prize these opportunities in the readings of the appropriation bill to be able to get up and talk about some of the debates that I wasn't able to participate in or didn't get on the list when there was vigorous debate involved and also in some cases to raise issues that my constituents had raised in reaction to the budget debate or where I just wasn't able to get their comments in.

A couple of areas I'd like to talk about: libraries, victims of crime, LPNs, housing and the housing and eviction protection fund, confusion around where all of our housing programs are, lodge assistance—I can't read my writing—oh, yes, what's happening with rental housing and some of the things that are going on around charging for utilities now, cultural venues, and funding for the arts.

Let me go back to the beginning there and just talk briefly about libraries. I did have quite an exchange with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who is now responsible for libraries, around libraries, but I have to say that I'm a little concerned with the answers I got back from him because there wasn't a lot of clarity there. There wasn't a lot of decisiveness about what was happening.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I have to say this overall: in a lot of cases I couldn't pull details from the ministers that I was questioning during various ministries debates. In particular, here I'm going to single out the health minister because he felt very strongly that, you know, he wasn't able to give me information because the yes or no on a particular item or the timing on an item or even the amount on an item was going to go through caucus. He felt very strongly that it's a caucus decision, that it should run through caucus, and that's why he couldn't give me the information now.

Now, I have a problem with that because we're in budget debate, and the government decides when we're going to have the budget and when we're going to have the budget debate. I appreciate that there is an internal caucus decision process that members of the government caucus would like to follow, but as an opposition member I'm trying to get information, and I'm trying to look at a budget document and say: "Okay, this is your plan. What's in your plan?" That is the first series of questions. "How are you going to measure your success in that plan, and what are you going to do if it goes wrong?" That series of questions I'm going to be pretty consistently asking.

Then to have someone say, "Well, I can't tell you what my plan is because my caucus hasn't approved it yet" makes me really take a step back and go, "Then what are the numbers in your budget?" If you don't know what you're going to do because caucus hasn't told you yet or hasn't made a decision yet, what are those numbers? Are they inventions? Are they figments of your imagination? What is the point of a budget if you can't tell me what's in there because your caucus hasn't made a decision yet?

That was most pronounced with the minister of health. I understand his reasoning for it. I just obviously flat out disagree because I think if you're going to publish numbers in a book and call this your government budget and make that document available on the web for other people to have a look at, you should be able to tell me what's in that budget, or I'm going to be questioning you, as I am now, saying: "You don't know what those numbers mean. Do you really mean it, or are you going to change those numbers down the line?" You should be able to tell me what those numbers mean. You know, what are you going to build? How many people is it going to take to do it? What's the cost of the different projects that you're doing? It was very difficult to get specific answers out of that particular minister, but frankly he wasn't the only one.

Libraries, which is the other place I was trying to pull information and wasn't being very successful in getting something out of the minister. Now, clearly he's got something cooking, and he's thinking about it really hard, and he's very interested in what's happening with libraries, but again I couldn't get any kind of definitive answer that I could take back to the groups or the individuals. I'm blessed with having a number of librarians as constituents who, of course, were asking me questions that they wanted me to raise in the budget debates.

I continue to be concerned on a number of levels about funding for libraries. One, because this is yet another area that has been downloaded from the provincial government onto the backs of the municipal governments, and they've been told to just deal with it. You know, once again the municipalities are going: well, we have to deal with it because this is really important and really affects our quality of life and what a good town or city we are. So they have picked up the ball.

But every time the municipalities pick up the ball, whether it's on after school funding or child care or FCSS programs or library funding or arts funding, which the city of Edmonton has done spectacularly, you know, that puts more of a strain on their ability, and of course taxes go up. Boy, can I talk about that. But I am concerned about libraries. This is an underpinning for us, and it's a worthy underpinning for us in this province. We're inviting a number of people from other countries to move here and to join our community and to become part of it. Literacy in the English language is key to that. One of the largest user groups of public libraries are newcomers. Now, that was something I didn't know. I was educated about that by one of my librarian constituents. I went: "Okay. That makes perfect sense. I guess if I went to another country, where would I go for access to a lot of different parts of information with staff that were paid to help me find it? Yeah, I'd probably go to public libraries as well. That makes perfect sense."

8:20

Our library staff have adapted to technology and different kinds of referencing material and the whole world of the Internet with amazing both goodwill but also energy. They really got into it and learned their stuff, and they are incredibly helpful resource people, so I don't like to see the government being so stingy with them and, I would argue, not valuing public libraries as much as we should. I think it's really important that we get the funding straightened out. I think we need to be funding on a per capita basis that is current and with numbers that are accurate. Wherever they're pulling their numbers from, we need to know that they're recently enumerated if you're going to do per capita funding.

We always seem to be three or four years behind in our per capita funding for libraries here. Frankly, in 2008 if you're funding on 2005 numbers, that's a huge difference in some of the communities in Alberta. I know that some of the MLAs that are sitting here know that, where they've watched towns just balloon in front of them in the last three years. Imagine the stress that your public library is under because they've been funded on per capita numbers from three years ago. It makes a huge difference.

The other thing is that the rate also needs to be improved. I did get that out of the minister, that we are still paying on the same rate that we used to pay back – way back – in 1993. I'm guessing here, but if it was, like, \$4.59 per capita, it's still \$4.59, and we're a lot further down the road. I mean, 1993 to 2008. Even though the per capita in any particular town may have gone from 2,000 to 5,000, yes, they're getting a bit more money, but in 2008 they might well have 8,000 people living in that town. So there is a real issue about timeliness of funding.

The other thing is that I know the libraries appreciate the one-time funding increases they got through the development initiative grant, which helped them with some service expansion, but really what they need is the increase to the baseline funding. They need their core funding respected and upheld. They do want as well to work with the other systems like the regional library systems and the Alberta Library, which are other systems that they all work with and share resources and things. They've really worked hard to be contemporary, and they're not getting rewarded for that, so I make a special plea for libraries there.

Obviously, that funding is not going to happen this year, but the way this government does sort of hand out prizes based on unanticipated, unallocated surplus money, it's worth my saying it because you never know; it might get allocated.

I'd also like to talk about the victims of crime fund. This one is a particular irritant for me because I was the critic for Solicitor General way back when. At that time I was incensed that the government was sitting on a slush fund that they were collecting the money for victims of crime, which is a fine system, right? They were collecting that money. It was coming back from the feds. They were holding it in an account, and it was getting bigger and bigger and bigger, yet the money was not flowing out to the community and, indeed, to the government departments that were asking for it. At that time I was outraged because the slush fund was, I think, \$3.8 million.

Well, you can imagine my horror when I read the transcripts, the *Hansard*, and now find out that we're somewhere near – this out of the mouth of the Solicitor General – a \$42 million surplus in the victims of crime fund. I cannot believe that when there is so much to be done in this province, when we give such lip service to violence against women initiatives and family violence initiatives and bullying initiatives. We all say we want to do this stuff. There is \$42 million that is tagged specifically to that kind of initiative, and the government is sitting on it. That is abominable. That is horrid. I can't think of enough nasty names to call you guys for doing that.

Do you know that that's what's going on, that there are projects in your community that are waiting for funding, and there is \$42 million in a victims' services fund that this government is sitting on? Get on your Solicitor General, you guys. Shake him up a bit and get that money loosened out into your communities, okay? If the Solicitor General wants to join in the debate, I'm sure he will, but in the meantime get on him. Don't let this happen. That money should be out in your communities working in those programs.

Here's one of the ways that you can make it happen. Currently they have raised the amounts, and credit to the Solicitor General for having raised the amounts under the victims' services that they're allowed to get. Basically, it was at a \$100,000 limit, and they've raised that. Interestingly enough, for the police victims' services they've raised the limit to \$300,000, but for the groups working out in the community, which often do the same, more, perhaps some would argue better work, their limit is \$150,000, for which I say: why? The programs are essentially the same.

Are somehow the police-run victims' services more worthy of getting money than any of these community groups? I don't think so. This seems to me to be an arbitrary amount of money, and I think the first thing the Solicitor General could do – and he doesn't need legislation for this, and he doesn't need a budget for this – is to raise that amount for the community-based groups to the same \$300,000 that he lifted the other one to for the police-based victims' services.

Those community-based groups need that money. You've heard me talk before in this House – and some others of you have gotten up and talked – about the need to be able to attract and retain good



staff in the not-for-profit sector. That's exactly what we're talking about here. You've got \$42 million sitting in a fund which is legislated to be allocated out to these groups. It should be. You're sitting on \$42 million of it. That is, in my opinion, a crime.

I don't mean to be dramatic about it, but honestly, you guys, considering how much work has to be done out there and how much they need that money, it is a crime if you're sitting on \$42 million worth of surplus, money that is actually legislated to be spent on these programs. We even have the Crown, who refers people to these not-for-profit groups in the community to do work for them. We have the government referring people to these groups, and they won't raise the limit on the money. It's not as though you guys don't have the money. You do. Why aren't you raising that limit to \$300,000 for all of those groups that are out there? [Ms Blakeman's speaking time expired] Oh, I'm so looking forward to Committee of the Whole.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a joy tonight to be able rise to speak to Bill 22. I have a few points to make and will of course make more in Committee of the Whole in third reading. We are struggling to catch up with all the important actions taking place on the part of government that we need to get our research on.

**Ms Blakeman:** You need more help with your researchers.

**Ms Notley:** I believe it's probably the case that we would contribute overall to the debate in this House were we to have – I don't know – seven or eight more researchers, at least as a starting point. Anyway, notwithstanding that, we will soldier on, and I will soldier on to talk a little bit about some of the concerns we have around the budget as a whole at this point. It will come as no surprise, I'm sure, to members opposite that our party in particular took great interest in the revenue side of the equation with respect to the budget and how much money we were looking at receiving here and in particular what we were receiving through the royalty structure. Of course, that ultimately has a huge impact on all the expenditures that flow.

8:30

Needless to say, to the extent that anybody was listening to our campaign during the election, we spent a lot of time talking about royalty rate systems in other jurisdictions and looking at what Alberta could reasonably expect to collect on behalf of the people of Alberta. When we looked at other jurisdictions, we certainly didn't take the absolute highest example out there; quite the opposite. We referred to a jurisdiction that is run by a Republican governor that was quite conservative, really, in terms of the approach that they were taking to their royalty regime, not conservative compared to us but conservative, certainly, compared to the rest of the world. Notwithstanding that, you see that they actually have a royalty scheme that amounts to roughly 60 per cent more than ours in terms of the overall amount of income that's collected.

It is, of course, our view that this budget should include revenue projection based on a royalty scheme which is more geared to representing the interests of the owners of the resource in this province, that being the people of Alberta, rather than the oil companies who are doing so well off of the current structure. Nonetheless, based on that, as I make the further comments, bear in mind that we are starting from the notion that there's actually quite a bit more money to be had.

There are a few areas that I'd like to just talk about tonight. I

won't talk about them all, but a few of the priority areas. One of them relates to the area of Children and Youth Services. We've had a number of comments in the Legislature over the course of the session about the issue of public child care and publicly funded child care, and it is our view that our advocated approach to public child care is, in effect, a qualitatively different approach to providing child care than that which has been discussed by, frankly, any of the other members of the Legislature in that we were absolutely looking at more than doubling the expenditures that should be committed to child care.

The reason for that is because, again, we're looking at issues of trying to ensure affordability for average Albertans. Many, many families know that child care is not something that they necessarily choose because they want to be sitting at home chewing on bonbons ignoring their kids because they hate family. No, no, no. Instead they're in a situation where, like most Albertans, both parents have to work as much as they would rather have at least one parent stay home and, you know, share the joy of parenting or experience it in all of its . . .

**Ms Blakeman:** Wonder.

**Ms Notley:** . . . wonder. Thank you for that.

Nonetheless, most people are forced to have both parents go out and work, and as a result they need to seek child care. I can certainly talk about what I experienced, knowing that I had to go back into the workforce when my first child was six months old and desperately looking around for affordable, safe child care where I knew I could leave my six-month-old baby with that person and know that he was safe and that he was getting not only tolerable care but the kind of care that would ensure that he grew and would be exposed to as many positive experiences as I would expose him to as a parent. It's a very, very difficult situation for parents to be in.

In Alberta we're in a situation where a lot of parents are forced to come up with very last-minute arrangements where, you know, they may have three caregivers at a time, and they're ferrying their child from one to the other depending on who's there. They're asking a relative to skip a shift or drop a shift. They're dumping their kids on parents who are in many cases too old or not well enough, frankly, to take care of the kids.

**Ms Blakeman:** Or they've got their own life.

**Ms Notley:** Frankly, they may even have their own life and aren't interested in it.

They're doing crisis management all the time, trying to ensure that they can show up to work on time and at the same time ensure that their kids are safe.

A key response to this is to ensure that we have a comprehensive, affordable child care system in place. In my view, you know, the issue of getting proper, comprehensive, publicly funded child care is as critical to where we can go in the future as a publicly funded system of medicare was 40 years ago. I see the two as having the same value to the social fabric of our communities, and I see the foot-dragging as being a similar impediment that we saw being placed by people who were opposed to medicare many, many years ago.

All that is to say that a first step, and only a first step, to that kind of affordability would be to ensure that we had child care where fees were capped and where sufficient funding was put in place to allow for quality child care to be provided. To do that, you would need to start by doubling the government's budget for child care right now. So I'm disappointed that we're not seeing that although, you know,

the minister has certainly put more money into the budget for child care, and I do appreciate it. It's because we're looking at a qualitatively different approach. It's simply not enough, and ultimately it won't be successful because it's not approaching it from a fully thought out, comprehensive approach. That's the first thing.

The second thing in that area actually spans two ministries, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and also the ministry of seniors, and that's the issue that relates to the staffing costs associated with so many people who work in the nonprofit sector providing care to people with disabilities, providing care to children with disabilities, providing care to seniors, all that kind of work that, frankly, was once primarily done by the government up until the mid-90s, when we decided to slash and burn everything and download it all onto the nonprofit sector. We now have a crisis in that area. We have a lot of people who cannot get their adult diapers changed because they can't find somebody to come and do that job for \$13 or \$14 an hour.

**Ms Pastoor:** And they can't afford the diaper.

**Ms Notley:** Yeah. That's right.

I mean, there is a building in my riding that is about 15, 20 storeys high, and on each floor there is a 250- to 300-square-foot bachelor suite. In each of those suites lives people with a variety of disabilities. As I went through that building during the election canvassing, time and time again I would come to doors where they would tell me how they were in complete crisis because they could not get their basic needs met. On every floor of that building there was an advertisement: "Looking for personal care aide. Will top up your salary." These people, who are probably only making \$1,000 a month, were actually offering to pay more under the table to top up the salary of these people so that they could find someone to care for them, so that they could get their diaper changed. So that's one thing.

Then we have, you know, the people who have very complex disabilities who need to be cared for by people who have a very informed understanding of the nature of that disability that they are managing and providing for. Again, how is it you can expect somebody to deal with someone who has behavioural issues such that they are a danger to their parents, a danger to their family, likely to, you know, just turn on the gas one day just on a lark and expect those people to be cared for by somebody making \$11 or \$12 or \$13 an hour? You're putting a heck of a lot on the shoulders of the person earning \$11 or \$12 or \$13 an hour.

We had a close family friend who was working in that situation – she was making \$12 an hour – and she told us how horrified she was when she went to work one day and was told she had to change the stomach feeding tube of a patient for \$12 an hour. Without any training she's changing stomach feeding tubes. She was scared to death that she'd done something to hurt the patient. Soon after she left that particular group home because she couldn't handle the pressure.

**8:40**

You know, we've got this huge surplus. We've heard how rich we are and how prosperous we are and how great we are at managing money and all that kind of stuff, and those in our society who most need care are being provided for by people in non-union, nonprofit settings at poverty-level wages. We do not have provision in the budget to correct this problem. What the budget does is propose to give them a 5 or a 10 per cent raise. Well, when you're at \$14 an hour, 5 or 10 or 15 per cent even of \$14 an hour means nothing. It

is not going to change whether or not you agree to carry on with that type of work. In our view this is a huge gap in the budget and in this bill in that this crisis is not being addressed in a more immediate fashion and that the emergency of it is not being recognized within this budget.

Another area that we have some concerns about that I'll mention briefly, again talking about seniors, is the issue of the education portion of property taxes. I believe that it was sort of in the mid-90s that seniors were told that if they, you know, rolled up their sleeves and jumped on in and decided to help out in what I would call the mostly manufactured crisis of the time to slay that debt that sooner or later they would be rewarded. Well, what we have now in this budget is a slim, slim attempt to address the need identified by many seniors to deal with the education portion of property taxes. Those seniors who now would receive it receive just a small subsidy, and they receive it on the basis of income, so low-income people are receiving a small subsidy. It is about one-tenth of what they're really looking for in terms of having that education property tax removed. That was a tax that was imposed on seniors to help slay the debt. At the time they were told that once the debt was under control, then that particular obligation would be removed, yet here we are however many years later – I guess it's roughly 12, give or take – and that decision has not yet been made and is not reflected in the budget.

Another area of concern relates to the area of education funding. While we have certainly seen that the funding allowed for this year will maintain the status quo, we know that in general it will not allow for the government to ultimately implement the recommendations made by its own Learning Commission several years ago in that we don't have any kind of quantitative plan to ultimately reduce class sizes. We still have children who are in classes which are far larger than ever recommended. That's a problem I think I've mentioned in the past. [Ms Notley's speaking time expired] I'll get back to this. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Hon. members, Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of questions and comments to the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. Anybody? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much. The Member for Edmonton-Strathcona was talking about enrolments in education and classroom sizes, and I'm wondering if she wanted to expand on the point that she was making.

**Ms Notley:** Well, thank you. Just a couple of things. Maybe more. We'll see. I was just going to talk about the fact that, again, in my own personal experience one of my children is in a class that has 30 children in it – he's in grade 3 – and another is in a grade 1 class that has 25 children in it.

**Ms Blakeman:** And how many special needs?

**Ms Notley:** There are about three or four in both, actually. In fact, both of these classes. Although it's a fabulous school and I cannot say enough about how hard the staff there work and how happy we are with the quality of education they receive from those staff who are working in difficult circumstances, nonetheless this far exceeds the recommendations of the Learning Commission, this government's own Learning Commission, in terms of how best to achieve the best educational results and the best educational outcomes for our children.

Among other things, I would suggest that this is something that

needs to be addressed in the budget to get at, ultimately, finally reducing the class sizes, as has been promised year after year after year.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you. It's not just about reducing class sizes. It's offering the adequate amount of support for the mix that we currently have in our classes now. I think we appreciate and value having a diversity of children in our classes, but there is a cost to that, and things like adequate teaching assistants and aides make that possible. Without it, it's a huge burden upon the teacher. Can you comment on that?

**Ms Notley:** Well, thank you to the Member for Edmonton-Centre for that question. Absolutely. Just today I was looking at figures that show that in Edmonton public, for example, the funding that is received from the provincial government for the provision of assistants to special-needs children in the best-case scenario appears to represent about half of the cost of having that child in the classroom. I personally could not be a bigger advocate for integration. I think that's absolutely the best in most cases. I mean, obviously, there are individual cases, and we don't ever want to be bound by strict policy. Integration is certainly an option that should be supported if at all possible.

But it's very difficult if special-needs children are in classrooms and they're only given the support at one-quarter FTE, for instance. The teacher and the teacher's aide, neither of whom is particularly trained in that particular special need, are trying to juggle that when the resource person can't be there, for example. So we see that, and we can see that having a negative impact on other people in the classes.

The other problem that exists is that, frankly, funding – again, it goes back to the point I was making with respect to funding for people that provide services in the nonprofit sector. Providing educational support to children with special needs is another very complex, very rewarding task but certainly not something that you can just walk in off the street and do. The funding structure in place right now barely gets you past people who are walking in off the street and doing it. The people that do it, again, do it because they're so deeply committed to the work that they're doing. But as a government, you know, and as a province we should not be relying on their own commitment to allow them to shortchange sometimes themselves and certainly their own training in terms of providing that support in the classroom. We're just simply not providing enough support for the valuable and effective education of special-needs children within our system.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Any other member?

The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

**Mr. Taylor:** Are we continuing the debate now? Are we done with 29(2)(a)?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Continue the debate.

**Mr. Taylor:** All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to join the debate in second reading on Bill 22, the Appropriation Act, 2008. Just looking at some of the numbers in here in the context of the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona talking about some of her own personal family experiences with a six-month-old child and children in grade 1 and grade 3, if the House will permit me to get nostalgic for a very brief moment, it sort of took me back

to the day when the Taylor family used to describe ourselves as a sitcom family – single income, two children, outrageous mortgage – and the struggles back before we could afford a computer and we used to write it out in longhand, the struggles that Martha and I used to go through to create and balance the family budget, which was most assuredly at the time measured in terms of thousands of dollars, not millions of dollars and certainly not billions of dollars and certainly not \$37 billion, which is essentially the sum total of what we are debating this year.

8:50

I would just very quickly note that that amount that we're debating – now, I'm going to leave aside the difference and the contradiction between what we've debated in the past month and what this government has actually ended up spending in a fiscal year because one bears only a passing resemblance to the other. The amount that we are debating in Budget 2008, in the Appropriation Act, 2008, is for all intents and purposes 50 per cent higher than the amount that we debated in 2005, the year that I participated in my first budget debate in this House. A 50 per cent increase in three fiscal years – '05-06, '06-07, '07-08 – well, we'll call it four fiscal years because we're talking about '08-09 now.

In terms of my own critic responsibilities, or shadow minister responsibilities, if you want to use that term, I'm responsible for offering the Official Opposition's take on, let's see: Advanced Education and Technology, about 3 and a half billion dollars; plus Housing and Urban Affairs, another \$600 million, so let's just round it off to half a billion there, so \$4 billion; and Health and Wellness, \$13 billion and change, one-third of the budget right there in one department.

Of course, I mean, we shouldn't be surprised that one-third of the budget is dedicated to the Ministry of Health and Wellness now because it was several years ago that a succession of provincial treasurers and finance ministers and health ministers started talking about, you know: if we stay on the course that we're on, pretty soon health is going to consume one-third of the provincial budget and maybe some day one-half and maybe some day 187.3 per cent. I don't know. You know, the numbers just keep going up.

I have two comments about that, both of which I think are relevant to what we're discussing today and this year. One, when we talk about the percentage of the budget that is taken up with health care, it is worth also looking at the percentage of GDP that we spend on health care because it ends up being considerably less. Well, it's about 6 per cent right now, I gather, if we're spending \$13 billion this year, and our GDP in this province is about \$242 billion. And 6 per cent of GDP I think gives us a little perspective on this because it certainly sounds somewhat less alarming than: "Oh, my gosh. We're spending one-third of our budget on health care."

If we go back to the family budget example, Mr. Speaker, a pretty large chunk of the family budget year in and year out gets spent on groceries; I'd say roughly a third, you know, if the family is big enough. That doesn't necessarily portend doom although it certainly looks like that when you have teenagers in the house. You come home from grocery shopping on Monday night, you fill the fridge, and by bedtime on Tuesday it's empty again, as the Member for Edmonton-Strathcona will discover in, oh, about 10 years, maybe less, actually. If she's got one in grade 3, it's more like eight years. There's that to consider in terms of health care, too.

The other thing that there is to consider from our point of view here on the Alberta Liberal Official Opposition side of the House is that we do not say that we're not spending enough on health care. I notice that the Member for Calgary-Nose Hill looked in my direction because a little earlier, as the Member for Edmonton-

Strathcona was talking about the need to invest more in child care in this province, the Member for Calgary-Nose Hill muttered: yeah, it's never enough. Well, you know what? With us guys sometimes it is enough, and with health care \$13 billion is enough.

Our question is not whether we're spending enough on health care. Our question is whether we're spending it wisely and whether we're spending it well. "Well" is a good word to use in this case. As we went through this year's estimates debate on the Health and Wellness budget, the Member for Edmonton-Centre, my colleague, expressed her personal frustration, which I share, with the lack of answers that we were getting from the health minister and this notion that, you know, although he was asking us to bless a \$13 billion budget, he couldn't really tell us much about it because his caucus hadn't weighed in with a final decision on anything. It's all very democratic of him to consult his 71 colleagues, but that leaves about 3,499,000 and some-odd Albertans with whom he hasn't consulted. I mean, it's not that democratic.

The fact is that as we went through this budget – and colleague from Edmonton-Centre, I don't know if you'll agree with me or not – my impression was that we were still very focused as a minister, as a ministry, as a Legislative Assembly, as a health care system on caring for people who are already sick and not doing enough to keep them from getting sick in the first place, not doing enough to promote wellness, not doing enough to promote injury prevention, not doing enough to prevent people from getting sick, from getting hurt, from hurting themselves, from making themselves sick; well, as an example, because it's come up in question period several times since, not wanting to take a stand on smoking in the car when children are present. That's just one example that I use that comes to mind because we've been talking about that in this House in question period off and on over the past few weeks.

I'm not saying, by the way, that if we bring a bill forward that does that and we pass that law, suddenly we're going to be able to chop the health care budget from \$13 billion down to half of that or even notice any huge difference in and of itself right there. But that's part of a mindset, a mindset that I would still like to see us wrap our collective heads around – and I don't care if we're Liberals, Conservatives, New Democrats, or other – as elected members of the Alberta Legislature speaking on behalf of and trying to make good law to the benefit of the public good, wrap our heads around this notion that there is much more that we can do to keep people from getting sick, much more that we should be trying to do.

We're not going to see immediate impacts on the bottom line. We all know that that's a challenge for us here in the House because we all have to go back to the people every four years or so and say: "So how did I do? Do you want to give me another shot at this? Do you want to renew my contract for another four years?" That tends to bring upon us some fairly short-term thinking sometimes: will this get me votes a few years hence or not?

I would just urge that we try wherever we can to take a longer term view of that and keep our fingers crossed and jump into the deep end of the pool, which in and of itself may not be a great example of promoting wellness, to jump into the deep water without having looked first to see if there are any rocks down there, but to take a jump of faith and hope that by doing the right thing, we also get votes, by doing the right thing and communicating in a good way that we've done the right thing.

I would certainly like to see more wellness promotion in the operations of the ministry of health in this province as the minister continues with his plans to reorganize, re-engineer, right size, rejig, remake – whatever word you want to use – the acute care system, the health care system in this province. I hope he's keeping that in mind, and I hope we are all keeping that in mind.

The other thing, of course, is the management issue of the system. We've talked about that here several times, and I'm sure that we will continue to do that as we go forward.

That's a big chunk of money: \$13 billion. We have a responsibility individually and collectively to the people who put us here and to the people who didn't: the people who voted against us, the people who just stayed home, the people who were in Arizona on March 3 or wherever they were. We have a responsibility to all the people of Alberta, including those too young to vote and too old to manage to get out and vote and everybody in between, to do right by them with their tax dollars, their \$13.2 billion of tax money, and their need for quality health care, which we all agree in this province, I think, still exists once you can actually get to it. It's an access problem primarily, and that's where we need to really focus our efforts. We need to be sure that when we're spending this kind of money, we are very, very focused on doing it well and doing it wisely and getting results.

9:00

So there are some things that we have talked about around the edges on health care and which we as legislators should be debating and discussing more that, I think, will have impacts on several bottom lines where health care is concerned, whether it's the amount of money that we spend over a period of time, whether it's the access issue, wait times, so on and so forth. We need to get more health care professionals of just about all sorts into that sector, working, which means we need to educate more; we need to train more; we also need to recruit and retain more. We need to re-examine the ratios of full-time to part-time, nurses especially but health care workers generally, and determine whether we're not just causing ourselves more problems than we're solving by having so many part-time – nurses again especially are what I'm thinking about but health care workers in the system – racking up pretty significant overtime bills.

We need to make sure that we are actively working on solutions to the bed blocker problem. I don't know if I can say this in the House or not. It was said to me by a surgeon recently who is, you know, like a lot of surgeons, a pretty blunt talker. He says: everybody knows that if things are constipated at the back end, stuff is going to come back out the front end. That essentially is the description. He actually put it a little more bluntly than that, but in respect for *Hansard's* ears, I'll leave it at that.

But, you know, that essentially is the problem that we see with these incredible wait times in emergency, these long lineups in emergency, triage tents in the parking lots outside our hospitals. That's all backed up and coming out the front end, when it should be going in the front end. We can't move people through the system and get them into a bed when they need to be admitted into the hospital. Why? Because we have too many people in those beds who need to be somewhere else, who need some level of continuing care, and that level of continuing care is not available. Whether it's a long-term care facility, whether it's home care, whatever it is, the end result is bed blockers. We certainly need to be focused on that going forward over these next 12 months and beyond that. That should be a priority.

Okay. I've talked enough about health care. I'm not even sure how much time I have left, but I'm going to swing over to housing and make a point that I tried to make with the minister when we were debating the estimates of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. I do recognize that it's a new ministry, but we need to get a better handle on the organization of that ministry because . . . [Mr. Taylor's speaking time expired] I'm sure I'll pick up on this in Committee of the Whole.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments and questions. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you. I'm aware that this member is also the critic for Housing and Urban Affairs, and I'm wondering – he was just turning to talk about housing, and I'm hoping that he could make a couple of points for me on that particular issue.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie.

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to make a couple of points on that, the idea here being that – and if you go back in *Hansard* and you read the debate from the estimates for Housing and Urban Affairs that night, you will see that there was some discussion of this – different programs are living in different ministries. There may be responsibility for funding the program in Housing and Urban Affairs, but it's being delivered by Employment and Immigration or someplace else, that sort of thing. There is, I believe, a real need to pull not only responsibility and funding issues but delivery issues together under one ministry.

I want to be careful on this, Mr. Speaker, because I'm not the kind of guy who wants to expand the cabinet. It's pretty big as it is. Executive Council is pretty big as it with the Premier and 23 members. I'm aware that, you know, it's a whole lot easier to make things like that bigger than it is to make them smaller. But if you can justify philosophically or if you can justify with the need that is caused by the affordable housing crisis in this province a need to set up a separate and specific ministry of housing – and the urban affairs part is to come later; government hasn't really figured out what to do with urban affairs yet – then it only makes sense that you pull all of those elements together under the ministry of housing and you put one minister in charge of overseeing all of that and, you know, try to minimize the amount of cross-ministry stuff that has to go on.

When cross-ministry stuff goes on – and sometimes it's essential – there's always an added tendency to sit around and talk about things and plan to make a plan rather than make a plan of action. With the affordable housing crisis and the homelessness issue that we face in this province, we don't need plans to make plans. I know the minister knows that. We need a plan of action. We need to move forward. We have the solutions, we need to implement those solutions, and we need them quickly because everybody needs a home.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak in second reading to the Appropriation Act, 2008, Bill 22. When I look at all these numbers, they are quite impressive. However, what I look at is what I think is probably missing. One of the things that I'd like to speak about, although my colleague already has spoken about libraries, is that I don't think enough can be said about the importance of libraries in our communities.

We have a good library in Lethbridge, the Lethbridge public library. There's also a companion library association. It's called Chinook Arch. They actually are the library system, so to speak, for many of the rural areas around Lethbridge. They have book exchanges, and if you've got a library card in one, you can use it in another. You can order books by distance, et cetera.

One of the things that I'd like to point out is that the Chinook Arch looks after places like Waterton; Lee Lake, where I have a place; Beaver Mines; Castle Mountain; and many places in southern Alberta. A lot of these are now recreation homes. I certainly know

many people who are blessed and fortunate – and in perhaps my younger days I was as well – where actually they can spend the summer reading books. Summer is for reading books . . . [A computer sounded] Now, if my hon. colleague from Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills would read books, we wouldn't have to worry about his computer going off. I will introduce him to our wonderful library in Lethbridge, and he can take out some good books. Good books don't make noise.

However, particularly the library in Pincher Creek, I know, is always being used by people in summer cottages and summer residences. There are many small camps for kids around there, too, and I know that those children are taken to the library to take out books to read. So libraries are absolutely essential.

I know that people think that we live on computers. That's great. Computers are becoming a great expense to our libraries because they have to keep them updated, and it certainly isn't inexpensive to have a very updated computer system that people can use and that they want to use and in fact want to learn.

9:10

Again, back to the Lethbridge public library. They have an excellent program to help people learn, particularly how to research properly on the Internet. I think it's one thing to press buttons and look at pictures and wonderful words, but you have to really know how to discern the information that you're taking off and be able to actually authenticate it in a paper you may be writing.

One of the other things that I think is very important is audiobooks. I know that when I was working in nursing homes as a geriatric specialist, it was one of the true enjoyments for the people that we often worked with. Particularly the ones that were more cognitively aware but that couldn't read anymore for whatever reasons – macular degeneration, which is quite common among the elderly and really is not curable, some people that had cataracts and hadn't had the surgery yet – really, really appreciated getting the audiobooks.

The other people that use audiobooks in libraries are snowbirds going south. They'll put the audiobooks into their DVDs or the CDs, I guess, in their cars and listen to them. Actually, truck drivers listen to audiobooks, too. They probably hide them from their buddies when they're in the truck stops, but I do know that some of them actually listen to books that probably we'd be surprised about.

The other thing is actually, believe it or not, that there really are some parents that don't want their kids watching DVDs when they're going on their vacation. It's beyond my comprehension that I would take a kid on a vacation out into the country or drive someplace and then allow them to watch a DVD and never really leave the inside of their van. I do know that this is, again, a place where parents use audiobooks to at least let the kids use their imagination and not have all their thinking done for them by watching DVDs.

I believe that we really, seriously have to look at funding our libraries. The college and our university in Lethbridge certainly have good libraries, but they're often more specific for people who are actually, you know, studying at those institutions. But, certainly, we do have a good reciprocal agreement with them, and people can use those as well as our own public library.

I'll go on to the seniors and community supports. The board of directors for the Greater Edmonton Foundation Housing for Seniors is very disappointed that there wasn't any increase in the lodge assistance program provided in the '08-09 provincial budget. The last increase for the lodge assistance program was on April 1 of '05. I think we all are aware of how the increase in costs for everything that would pertain to lodges has gone up. Certainly, the food costs, utility costs, heating costs: all of those costs have gone up without

any significant help from the government. The operating costs alone have increased significantly, an average of 5 per cent per year, which is very substantial when people are trying to run a large organization. What's happened is that it's put an even greater burden on the city of Edmonton, who fund the foundation's operating deficit. We have a foundation in Lethbridge that actually has taxing privileges, but even they are starting to now find a very difficult time in funding lodges and being able to provide that basic housing that they need.

The Minister of Seniors and Community Supports should really look at increasing the lodge assistance program by a minimum of at least a dollar a day per resident to help address these ever-increasing lodge operating costs. Again, more often than not the people that are in these lodges are more of the lower economic strata because they can't afford, really, to go anywhere, and we need to ensure that they can live with dignity.

Another thing that happens in lodges and now partly in assisted living and partly in designated assisted living is that because things are overlapping, although the definitions appear to be there, the lines are getting blurred between these different housing choices. People must be left with \$257 at the end of the month, and \$257 for someone who is still minimally active really isn't enough in this day and age of our superheated economy with prices going up on everything.

There are very many extras that they have to pay for. Often they have to pay for meds that have been delisted. They don't get them on their seniors' benefit. Denture and dental care, again, are often extra because what is covered at the moment is your own teeth or dentures, so should you have caps or crowns or any of those sorts of things that need care, it is out of your own pocket. They have to pay for cable and telephone. If they want to go outside of their building and actually go to a show in the evening, it's expensive, really, so it sometimes cuts off their ability to be able to get around outside of their particular building.

Another thing is clothes. When people move into lodges or assisted living or whatever, if they've been in their home and not eating well, they'll often gain weight. Or if they've been eating well and they don't like the food, they'll lose weight. So now they're into clothes that simply don't fit them. Then they have to turn around and try to be able to supply clothes for themselves out of that little bit of extra money.

One of the things that we spoke about before, actually, is Depends. Those are, I guess, for lack of a clear-cut description, really an adult diaper. Now, they're not cheap, and they do come out of their own pockets. You'll find that some seniors are wearing them all day because they don't want to have to buy more. Actually, the advertisement for some of these say: oh, they're good for 24 hours. Well, they're not good for 24 hours. This is when we develop bladder infections and perineal rashes that are really quite ugly to deal with, especially if they don't have staff that can help them with that. I think, too, the other thing that's important is that when people are, unfortunately, having to wear Depends and those sorts of things, personal hygiene is of the absolute most importance, and often that is not being done correctly because they need help with it. They aren't getting that help.

Back to the clothes. Often washing is the responsibility of the family, and if the family can't do it, then there again is another cost just to have their clothes washed. It's \$40 a month out of \$257 to have your laundry done, and now your phone is \$50 and cable is usually \$60. You're pretty much confined to either your building or your room for any kind of entertainment.

Seniors staying at home. I spoke about this before, and I think it's something that has to be looked at seriously. Seniors do want to stay in their homes for as long as they can, particularly if they're active and they can look after each other, but by this time often their homes

are needing extra care. Sometimes it's a new furnace. Sometimes it's a new roof. Sometimes it's just actually patching up as they go around the house. I think there should be some loans that the government could give them to keep them in their homes, and those loans actually should become a debt caveat against the property that would be repaid when it was sold.

9:20

I guess that we should be asking ourselves some questions. I'm thinking in terms of PDD, but I'm thinking in terms of the vulnerable, too. The question is: we are a very wealthy society, probably the best place to live on this planet both in our country and in our province. Should the vulnerable in our society be a commodity on someone's bottom line? Should we make a profit off their backs? These are public dollars that are being paid to make a profit off the backs of the vulnerable of our society. Should we not be counted on as being the best society because we treat our vulnerable and needy with respect, dignity, and financial support? One day we will be judged on how we've looked after our vulnerable, and I don't believe that people will be looking at the bottom line when they do that.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate lost]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The debate carries on. Any other members?

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

[The voice vote indicated that the motion for second reading carried]

[Several members rose calling for a division. The division bell was rung at 9:22 p.m.]

[Ten minutes having elapsed, the Assembly divided]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

For the motion:

Amery	Goudreau	McFarland
Anderson	Hayden	Ouellette
Berger	Horne	Renner
Bhardwaj	Horner	Rodney
Bhullar	Jacobs	Sandhu
Brown	Klimchuk	Snelgrove
Campbell	Lindsay	Weadick
Danyluk	Lund	Woo-Paw
Drysdale	Marz	Xiao

Against the motion:

Blakeman	Pastoor	Taylor
Notley		

Totals:	For – 27	Against – 4
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[Motion carried; Bill 22 read a second time]

### Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

**The Chair:** I would like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

**Bill 1**  
**Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility**  
**Agreement Implementation Statutes**  
**Amendment Act, 2008**

**The Chair:** Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with respect to this bill? The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to stand and speak to Bill 1, commonly known as TILMA, again. I've said many times that I think the concept of interprovincial trade is a good one and should be going through despite the fact that there already is, actually, a fairly good agreement on internal trade between the provinces. I think perhaps Alberta didn't work as hard at it as they could have. They could have made friends with other provinces. However, it's gone through as this.

As I've said, the concept itself of opening trade east-west as opposed to north-south is a good and sound one. However, my contention against this bill always has been and remains that I really believe that it is going to be very detrimental to elected people in this province; i.e., municipal and any elected board. I believe that they will lose their autonomy and that their bylaws could be overruled by a nonelected appeal board.

It isn't just me that's saying that. Certainly, there have been some very strong discussions in the B.C. Legislature. They pointed out that

there is limited support for TILMA anywhere in Canada. In spite of what has been said, it has been rejected as an entire document right across Canada. TILMA has far-reaching implications for business, local governments, labour, professional certification standards and communities across British Columbia.

Of course, this is coming out of the British Columbia Legislature.

One of the quotes that they have used here is an old one from June '06 by the Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations at the time in our Legislature. He was quoted as saying that it's everything Canadian business asked for. That isn't quite accurate in terms of the people that appear to be against, in particular, the governance side of this bill. Canadian businesses don't represent all the interests, I believe, of either British Columbians or Albertans. It's only the interests of Canadian businesses that they are looking out for. That's what business is about. They should be looking out after business, but the business of government is to look after the legislation. The business of government is to ensure that there is a level playing field and that, in fact, consumers who are the engine, so to speak, of running a business – the business wouldn't make money without consumers – are actually protected as well.

In August of '07 TILMA was rejected at the first ministers' meeting in Moncton. They actually backed more of Manitoba's idea of a national strategy, which of course would fall under the agreement of internal trade that exists now between all of the provinces.

Saskatchewan's Premier, the newly elected Mr. Wall, who had spoken to the Regina *Leader-Post* on April 16, '08, said that "his Saskatchewan Party government still has concerns about the trade pact," citing outstanding issues such as TILMA's impact on trade incentives and on Crown corporations. Mr. Wall was quoted as saying that "TILMA has been presented as a take-it-or-leave-it agreement" and "under those circumstances we will not take it." So it isn't just the rosy picture that we have been led to believe.

9:40

Again, this is coming out of the B.C. Legislature. These are certainly some of the arguments that I believe I've brought out over the time as well.

School boards are covered by TILMA as of April 1, 2007, because they are forbidden to do anything inconsistent with its provisions. Many educational policies and administrative decisions, such as the province's healthy schools initiative or ethical purchasing policies put in place by individual boards, can impact investments and, therefore, are placed in jeopardy by the provisions of TILMA.

That comes up with the example of Pepsi and junk food in the schools, which I've spoken about, certainly, many times. I really fear for the autonomy of elected boards. When elected people lose their autonomy and lose their power, it's democracy that really suffers. I believe that that's what we're here for in this House. We're here to defend and uphold democracy and to make sure that democracy works.

It removes the right . . . of local government to govern. It allows the policies of governments to be challenged by a three-person panel.

Again, this is coming out of the B.C. Legislature. When I first read this, I thought perhaps I had written it, but I didn't. It's just that I also am basically saying the same thing.

Another thing along the same vein:

Under TILMA, local government policies could be challenged before a trade tribunal appointed by the respective provincial governments. Only the provincial governments, as parties, are allowed to defend measures before a TILMA tribunal, which means that whether and how municipal policies are defended is up to the province.

The province is the signatory to this agreement, so if they disagree with the municipalities, they can very easily override them and not defend what the municipalities want. From that point of view, I really am quite disturbed when I see how quickly this is moving along. Believe it or not, there still are people in this province who don't know what TILMA is, other than they think that they can open up a business in B.C. I think it goes way beyond opening up a business in B.C.

Some of the implementation of the bill affects local government and the environment.

The sweeping nature of TILMA itself has prohibitions against measures that impact trade, investment and labour mobility. The potential application of these prohibitions to key environmental measures because of the limited TILMA exemptions for environmental measures . . . Remember: not stated, not included in TILMA, you're covered by TILMA.

And that's a huge area that really hasn't been totally described or written.

The University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre pointed out the concern of the unsatisfactory dispute resolution process. It's noted that

much of the language in the Agreement is undefined or ambiguous. As a result, a full understanding of TILMA's impacts awaits future panel/court rulings and amendments by the Parties. However, current wording of the Agreement clearly raises concerns for local governments that want to protect the environment.

Another reason that I think we have to be afraid of the governance and how the governance of this bill would be going forward.

Another group of people that have spoken out on this is the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, and they said:

In our striving for the ideal of a domestic free market open to unrestricted competition, it is critically important that we remember that not all standards and regulations are inherently bad, nor are they necessarily anti-competitive. Particularly where the standards and regulations are present for the specific purpose of protecting the public.

And that is partly my point as well. Legislation is to protect the public. Legislation is to create an even playing field for businesses who want to operate within our legislative jurisdictions. There's nothing wrong with businesses competing on a level playing field. I don't believe it's our business as legislators to say how businesses

compete amongst each other, but I do think that it's up to us to create a level playing field, which I understand in a way is part of what we're trying to do with the labour mobility part of it and being able to trade across borders. That in itself, as I've said many times, is good.

I really, really am very concerned about the governance of this bill. To me that's the crux of the whole matter. With that in mind, I would like to bring forward an amendment, which I believe we can have the pages distribute. This would strike out section 1.

**The Chair:** We will pause for a minute so the pages can distribute the amendment.

The committee now has amendment A2. The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would bring this amendment forward because we have some time before April of '09. I realize that time is passing and that many agreements are being made between different groups, but I still believe that if we amended and struck out section 1, at some point it would go back to the drawing board in terms of how this really should be set up in terms of the governance.

It's about the agreement and how it was entered into: very little discussion, certainly, in the public, at least on this side of the border. It certainly got more play in the Legislature in B.C. but very little in this House.

I think I will leave it at that. The whole point of removing section 1 would be to be able to take another look at exactly how this is going to affect the elected municipalities and elected school boards and other elected boards in this province in terms of being able to maintain their local autonomy and not have to have the province fight their fight. They should be able to fight their own fight, and they shouldn't have to go in front of a panel of unelected people that can then overturn decisions that have been made by an elected board.

**The Chair:** On the amendment the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'm pleased to rise in support of the amendment from my hon. colleague from Lethbridge-East. Essentially, our concern that is reflected in this amendment is around governance, and there are two parts to my concern here.

By the way, for any of you that have not read the *Hansard* from the B.C. debate on this, I can highly recommend it – very interesting reading from both sides, actually – to see what the sponsor of their implementation bill had to say about things, but also, frankly, the amount of work that the opposition critic was able to do is very helpful to us because they were able to do a lot more work than we've been able to do in surveying what's been said in Saskatchewan and Ontario and a number of other places. I found it very helpful to read what they had to say about what was going on.

9:50

Let me talk about the two parts of the governance that concern me the most, that we're trying to address here. One is the fact that you would now have this three-person panel who would now decide on any of the disputes that are brought before them. This panel is powerful because once this panel decides something, there is a fine schedule that goes along with it, and that fine can be levied not just once to cover a series of the same mistakes made repeatedly, but it can allow that that fine is levied over and over and over again for every time the mistake or the error or the breach has been made.

Usually what you get is that, you know, if you did the same thing repeatedly, not realizing you shouldn't be doing that thing, you would be punished once because you made the same mistake a series of times. You didn't do something one way and then a different way and then a different way again. You've been consistent, so you're punished once. Under this agreement you'll be punished every time you made the mistake or the misunderstanding or the breach, however you wish to describe it. So that makes that governance panel really, really important in the scheme of things here.

How and who gets appointed to that dispute panel becomes really important. Frankly, off the top of my head I can't remember. I think that each province chooses one. [interjection] There are only three on the panel?

**Ms Pastoor:** They have six they can choose from.

**Ms Blakeman:** They have six they can choose from. So that makes them incredibly powerful, and that gives me pause.

But the second part of this is the effect of that and the way the implementation of this bill has been set up in that anything that's not specifically excluded is included, as my colleague mentioned. So anything you haven't thought of is included, which is a pretty big crystal ball to be using for something like this. You know, there are precedents for this because when you look at the Canadian Constitution, they went at it similarly but with a different result. When they divvied up who was responsible for what in the different levels of government, they were quite prescient and said: well, anything we haven't thought about here, the federal government will be responsible for.

But what we have happening here is different. It's that "anything we haven't thought of" that is going to fall under this particular governance model whether you like it or not, whether it's reasonable or not, whether it should be under here or not. It doesn't matter. There's not going to be a debate about it. There's not going to be an opportunity to object or raise concerns about it. It's going to be included. Anything we haven't considered, any new technology that's coming five years down the road or 10 years down the road or any new business product that is invented that wants to be sold: tough beans; it's under. I mean, how many of us thought we would understand the complications of googling 15 years ago? Probably not many in this House. So it encompasses a great deal.

I think the final bit about governance that concerns me with this act is that, as my colleague from Lethbridge-East has pointed out, it concerns municipal governance. This is where I go back to the comments that were made by the introducer of the B.C. bill, and I'm referring to their *Hansard* of Tuesday, May 13, the morning sitting, volume 33, number 3, commencing on pages 12321 and continuing on. That should help anybody that's looking for this find it. Here's the point I was making earlier about the monetary awards.

Bill 32 also ensures that monetary awards that may potentially be awarded under the agreement are in fact enforceable. This is one of the biggest weaknesses in the agreement on internal trade. There really is no significant dispute settlement mechanism within the agreement on internal trade.

He was also very excited when he was talking about the detractors of the bill. I looked very carefully to see if he had some kind of slam dunk argument that was going to convince me. I hadn't heard one in Alberta, but maybe I was going to hear one from B.C., and I didn't. He says, "I just want to address some of the things that TILMA is not" and then talks about going on some websites and that they're stirring up opposition. I duly read through everything he said, and nowhere in here does he actually have a good argument to refute any of the other arguments that have been raised. I was pretty



disappointed in that. I can understand why this government wouldn't give me the arguments. They never give me the arguments. I thought maybe I'd get them out of B.C., but no, not even B.C. could actually come up with any arguments that satisfied this.

I'm taking from that that they actually don't have those arguments that can refute the concerns that are being raised by municipalities and others about this particular governance model and that three-member panel being able to implement things that will limit the ability of local governments to develop public policy, to make choices about what their communities look like, and to pass bylaws or laws or regulations that would put that into place. We get a sort of waving of the hand and a sort of: oh, don't bother yourself about that. Well, really?

The truth of the matter is that this will get figured out in the courts. That's the way these things always play out. Someone has a dispute on a piece of legislation like this, and they test it in court. They go to court and say that this shouldn't have happened or that this should have happened, and they test it in the courts. Then it'll often get appealed because we've got governments involved here, and governments love to appeal things when it goes against them. It will get appealed and appealed. At some point someone is going to cry uncle and quit trying to appeal it, but it may work its way all the way up to the Supreme Court, and then you have a definitive answer. There's no more appealing after that. That is how we will actually define how TILMA is going to work, and that's how the test happens and the outcomes of those tests. Where we haven't been able to get any reassurance about public policy, for example, or how it will affect municipalities is how the test will happen.

I was quite interested to see quotes in this document from the B.C. equivalent to AUMA and AAMD and C, which are organizations that many of the people on the government side are intimately acquainted with and very concerned about. The Union of B.C. Municipalities passed a resolution, one dissenting vote from hundreds of delegates. This was the position they took, that they should

review the [TILMA] between British Columbia and Alberta and enter into discussions with the provincial government and local governments with the intent of either making changes to the agreement to more specifically address local government concerns, exempt local governments from the agreement or request that the province withdraw from the agreement altogether.

That's pretty powerful because I know this government pays attention to what AUMA and AAMD and C says. That's what the B.C. equivalent has said to their own government: that they want the government to reconsider it, renegotiate it, or get out altogether.

That's a very sort of round-the-world description of why I am supporting the Member for Lethbridge-East's amendment regarding removing section 1, which is around the governance section of this particular bill. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favour of this. I urge all of my colleagues in the Assembly tonight to do the same.

**The Chair:** Any other members on the amendment? The hon. Member for Calgary-Currie on the amendment.

10:00

**Mr. Taylor:** Thank you. My hon. colleague from Edmonton-Centre, I thought, put it very eloquently and very well and left me with very little to say, actually. However, I did just want to stand up and join debate briefly to say that I will be supporting my colleague from Lethbridge-East on this amendment as well. I think it is an appropriate way to go at this time because we have not had – and by we I don't mean just us on this side of the House or members of any other party; I mean we the people of Alberta – an appropriate

opportunity to be consulted on this and to contribute our thoughts as to the implications of TILMA, the governance of TILMA, and the like.

My colleague from Edmonton-Centre is pointing out a passage from *British Columbia Hansard*, Tuesday, May 13, that refers to the report *A Space for Cities in Trade Agreements*. It notes that

an economic agreement such as the TILMA, struck between governments at the provincial level, does not adequately reflect the concerns and realities that confront cities. The Estey Centre senior associate and university international trade economist Mr. Bill Kerr states that senior governments tend to think of cities as mini-versions of themselves rather than as entities whose operations and law-making can have huge ramifications for investment decisions made by local, national and international companies within their boundaries.

This is a very real issue in the 21st century in a province such as Alberta, where two-thirds of the population live in the two biggest metropolitan areas, Calgary and greater Edmonton; in a province such as Alberta, where over 80 per cent of our population now lives in urban areas. Not all cities are created equal. Or is that equally? [interjection] I shall ignore that snarky little chirping from the member from this fabulous constituency, who's obviously ill informed on that one, but we won't get into that right now.

No. Not all cities are created equally. Big cities – and I don't mean to imply that big cities are better than medium-sized or small cities – by their very nature are called upon to provide many more services and do many more things and be many more things to the people who live not only within their own limits but in the trading areas and the service areas which they serve. The needs, the aspirations, the requirements, the challenges of cities, especially big cities, must be taken into consideration in everything we do going forward for, I think, decades to come. The recognition must be there at all times that especially in the case of big cities but really in the case of municipal governments generally we need to be reorienting our thinking to view municipalities as an equal level of government with the federal and provincial governments.

The TILMA does not take that into consideration at all, in my view, and I think that is a good enough reason in and of itself to support this amendment to Bill 1, that my colleague from Lethbridge-East has moved. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**The Chair:** On the amendment the hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona.

**Ms Notley:** Thank you. I rise as well to support this amendment in that it would effectively delay moving forward with this bill as a whole were it passed. Generally speaking, I'd like to see moving forward on this bill as a whole delayed because we are not in support of it, as we've stated, I believe, even when it was introduced for first reading.

TILMA is a broad-ranging, broad-reaching initiative which will have extensive consequences in Alberta both with respect to the authority of this Assembly and with respect to the authority of municipal bodies and other public bodies. This Assembly, notwithstanding the fact that we all got here with 40 per cent of the vote, is nonetheless a body which is accountable to the citizens of the province. School boards are accountable to people who elect them. Municipalities are accountable to people who elect them. The private people and the panel which is contemplated under TILMA do not have that same level of accountability, so any initiative which would undermine the ability of this body or any other elected body to make decisions in the best interests of citizens is one that we approach with much caution.

As has already been mentioned but warrants restatement, this is

not an initiative that has been widely discussed with Albertans. That, to me, is a significant problem. We've had nowhere near the level of consultation or communication with Albertans about what this bill is intended to achieve nor about what the implementation of TILMA is intended to achieve, because obviously this bill is one part of the series of initiatives on the part of this government to operationalize the TILMA agreement. It is for that reason that the bill on its face may not seem too dramatic, but when you realize that it's a critical piece to the implementation of the TILMA agreement, it obviously invites the consideration of the full implications of that agreement.

That being said, then, we are very concerned about the lack of consultation with Albertans. We know that in British Columbia there was a great deal more consultation and discussion. There was also consultation in other jurisdictions which at this point have not signed on to it. We need to see more of that here before any thought of moving forward on this.

There's going to be an opportunity, of course, to speak more broadly on a lot of the concerns, but just in a very general way some of the concern that we have about TILMA, as far as we can see, is that, you know, TILMA is basically operating to limit government measures that might restrict or impair trade, investment, labour mobility, et cetera, et cetera. While that sounds all great in principle, we all know that there are a number of mechanisms that could be characterized as restricting or impairing trade, mobility, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. We know that municipalities – we hope, anyway – will ultimately be given a substantive land-use framework to administer and to use to protect all Albertans. We're not clear what TILMA at the end of the day would do to the ability of those municipalities or those committees which craft land-use frameworks to implement them. It's really not clear yet, and it's not clear what would happen if those things were challenged.

The other thing about TILMA is, of course, that it puts into place a dispute resolution mechanism that as its first remedy is not actually defined. Its first remedial option is to direct government to stop doing something, and I have a real concern with a privately appointed, nonaccountable, barely reviewable panel having the authority to direct a government to just stop doing something.

Typically, if the Legislature has made a decision to do something, they've done it as a result of some debate and some consideration and typically with a view to meeting the best interests of the public. So if after the fact some privately appointed, nontransparent, nonaccountable panel at the request of some international corporation which happened to have business in either Alberta or B.C. was to review an action taken by this body or by a municipality, I'm very concerned that that applicant would have access to a remedy which includes telling us to stop doing what we're doing. I think that is an indication of us giving away our own job and basically giving it away to people that, frankly, aren't voting for us in some cases.

10:10

**Ms Blakeman:** Abdicating it?

**Ms Notley:** Abdicating our role, indeed. As a result of that then I would say, you know, that's one ground that we have some concern over.

Ultimately TILMA is structured in a way, given its objectives, to limit the expansion and the delivery of public service regardless of the context within which that is given. I mean, the general objective set out in TILMA is to enhance private-sector trade, and measures that are taken by the government are invariably measures of public service. Not a big surprise to folks on the other side there, I'm a big supporter of the public service. I think public service is a good

thing. I think supporting communities is a good thing. I think having, you know, ABC daycare corporation out of Australia tell me that I can't give a competitive advantage to a nonprofit daycare: that's not a good thing. Giving them the opportunity to make that argument is not a good thing.

We know that TILMA, the agreement, exempts certain social services and, you know, a number of different programs which are currently administered by government, but we also know that TILMA contemplates that list being reduced on a regular basis. We don't know what that will look like because that's to be done not by the Legislature, so that is a concern. We know that in other cases similar rules applied in other settings, in other jurisdictions like with NAFTA, for instance, have resulted in rulings compelling government to restrict public service and to restrict the scope of public-sector delivery of certain services.

We also know that if ultimately TILMA is able to establish a higher level of, shall we say, investor entitlement between jurisdictions – and I'm not saying, for instance, if companies in B.C. are given a higher level of investor entitlement in Alberta – then as a result of that, under the national treatment guarantees in NAFTA we also end up opening the door to that standard being injected into the NAFTA agreement and opening the door to challenges through that mechanism as well. I know that we're already quite happy with the unprecedented levels of foreign investment in Alberta, or some people are. I'm not one of them. I think that instead we need to keep a handle on how much we can control as legislators.

The TILMA agreement also, unlike NAFTA even, in terms of its dispute resolution mechanism doesn't include a mechanism for screening vexatious or time-consuming but otherwise groundless claims. It also, as previously mentioned, doesn't include a mechanism to screen multiple claims. I think it might have already been pointed out that there's a maximum fine, but if that fine is imposed every day because the action continues, you can actually end up with a much bigger bill than \$5 million.

Another concern that we have is that TILMA purports to significantly limit the oversight of the TILMA panel by judicial bodies, by the courts. Frankly, any time you attempt to limit the court's review of a decision-making body that is not otherwise accountable, that raises significant concerns. We see a clear example of that here in this act.

Those are just a few of the concerns we have. I think we'll probably have an opportunity to go on about them in much, much greater length. But because this amendment would act to delay implementation or moving forward on this agreement, we clearly support it and urge all other members of the Assembly tonight to vote in favour of the amendment.

**Some Hon. Members:** Question.

[Motion on amendment A2 lost]

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

**Ms Pastoor:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Ms Blakeman:** If at first . . .

**Ms Pastoor:** Yeah. If at first you don't succeed, try a different one. Okay. That's what I'll do.

I would ask to have the second amendment that I'll bring forward tonight passed out by the pages. It is actually going to ask to have another section struck out, which is section 3.

**The Chair:** The pages are distributing amendment A3.

**Ms Pastoor:** Section 3, basically, states that a person may at any time file a certified copy of the TILMA award or of the compliance report issued under Article 29(6) of the Agreement that contains the TILMA award with the clerk of the Court of Queen's Bench, and on being filed with the clerk of the Court of Queen's Bench the TILMA award has the same force and effect as if it were a judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench.

It goes on to say in 3(2) that

for the purposes of subsection (1), a copy of a TILMA award or a compliance report must be certified by an administrator.

I'm not sure what the whole point of this is because how I'm looking at it is that all of a sudden we have a huge mix-up. We've got a terrible blurring of the lines between politics, legislation, and justice. I believe that there should be very clear lines between all three of those particular faculties. Particularly, if a TILMA award has been awarded by a panel that has not been elected that could well overrule an elected body and then actually gives it to the court, I'm not sure how the court could actually have it considered as having the same force when the court itself has not looked at the agreement or actually been a part of that awarding of whatever that decision would be.

It's not clear in my mind how the Court of Queen's Bench got involved with what should be a legislative decision, and under this it would then become the decision of an appeal panel. I would hope that the Court of Queen's Bench would not just accept something *carte blanche* like that. I'm just not sure that I understand that part of it. But in my not understanding it perhaps as clearly as I should, I still have a feeling that this actually should be pulled out and that if there's an award, it shouldn't go to any other person. No other jurisdiction should be responsible. It should only be the responsibility of that particular panel that then makes that award. It's their responsibility, and they are responsible to the people that they have made that decision and that award against.

With that, I would take my place and see if there's any other discussion on that amendment.

**The Chair:** On amendment A3 the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am standing to support the amendment that's been brought forward by my colleague. Happily, there are other lawyers in this House that I can consult with to see if my take on something is correct.

In fact, I think that there are two issues that bother me about the clause that's being amended, and that's why we're trying to remove it. One is that it strikes me that this is a bit of an end run. Earlier I was talking about how the court process will determine how this actually falls out. Part of that is starting at a lower level and working its way up through the various levels of appeals. This is sort of doing an end run. I guess that's not quite the right language. It's sort of picking the level of court and going: okay, this is where it's going to start. I think that one precludes quite a bit of review and discussion that can take place from the lower courts as it moves through that, which is unfortunate because I think some of this should clearly be reviewed. I'd like to see what the review and the discussion is from the levels of the court as it goes through that.

10:20

The second piece of that that's been pointed out by my colleague from Edmonton-Strathcona is that, actually, it's not uncommon that a quasi-judicial body would have its orders enforced by a particular level of government. Okay. So it's not that unusual, but this is very restrictive in the way that it goes to that court. That discussion I was talking about is not really allowed in the way this is set up. It's

referred, and it goes in there with a particular point of view, if you'll allow me to give it some human characteristics, and that's where it stays. It's not allowing for any other review or discussion around it. My colleague from Edmonton-Strathcona may want to augment that or not.

This underlines the number of concerns that I have with TILMA. We don't know what's going to happen. It is going to end up getting figured out as it works through the courts, and this is really limiting the ability of the court to review that and to comment on it, in my opinion. I'm not a lawyer. Okay. That's fair. But I do think that this is trying to put an end run on things and to stop that kind of often critical and brilliant analysis that we do get when the courts review something and are able to review the work of what the Legislatures actually do.

You know, a lot of us in here are not lawyers. Sometimes we make bad legislation. Sometimes we don't quite get it as we're doing it, and we make mistakes, and those mistakes are picked up as it goes through the court system in a challenge situation, and we get the opportunity to correct it. My concern with what we're seeing here in TILMA is that we won't get that opportunity necessarily.

I support the amendment from my colleague, and I hope that everyone else in the House can do the same.

**The Chair:** Does any other member want to speak on the amendment?

Are you ready for the question since no other member wishes to speak?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[Motion on amendment A3 lost]

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona on the bill.

**Ms Notley:** Yeah. I'd just like the opportunity to extrapolate a bit on a couple of the comments provided by the Member for Edmonton-Centre in general on the bill. I'll just limit my concerns to specific elements of it as opposed to the broader issue around TILMA.

There have been some concerns expressed that, in fact, Bill 1 ultimately will not be lawful in that it might run into some conflict with other legislation. Of course, I don't want to get into sort of a legal discussion, but in the most general of terms, there is a concern that I would have that this particular bill ultimately provides a vehicle through which this government is infringing on the federal authority over interprovincial trade and commerce. While we have other interprovincial trade and commerce bills out there, this one, by setting out this clear panel for dispute resolution, essentially enhances the effect of this agreement such that it could be construed as interfering with what would otherwise be federal authority under our Constitution Act.

There are also concerns that delegating so much authority to the panel, which I've already mentioned, to make decisions about the propriety of certain government measures – with that broad description there being “certain government measures” – in effect fetters the discretion of the Legislature in fulfilling its obligations. Indeed, in the B.C. Legislature the government acknowledged that there was, in fact, provision for financial awards, but they also went on to say that if a panel determines that it is the case that the province has breached the agreement, the province is then obliged to change the offending measure. So by doing that, you arguably run into a situation where you're fettering the discretion of the Legislature and the prerogative of the Legislature.

As I said before, while it's certainly arguable that there are other interprovincial agreements out there, most of those agreements don't contain this kind of binding enforcement procedure such that, as I say, might bring this agreement into some difficulty.

As was sort of alluded to by the Member for Edmonton-Centre, a big concern is around the role of the courts in relation to the decisions rendered by the panel. In particular, I believe it is in schedule 6.1 of the Government Organization Act that judicial reviews of the TILMA awards are significantly limited, and they are simply limited to subsections delineated by article 31. So we've significantly limited the scope of judicial oversight, and we've accepted the TILMA panel awards from the coverage that would otherwise be applied to other arbitration awards under the Arbitration Act. In essence, you are again significantly limiting the function of the courts, and in so doing, it's argued again that this bill might well come into conflict with the Constitution Act because, of course, the courts have certain functions, and this could be characterized as abrogating the core judicial review function of the courts.

An additional problem arises with respect to the element in Bill 1 that talks about the authority of the government to enact certain regulations which would limit the scope of a whole schwaack of different statutes that are referenced here. In effect, what you're saying here is that through this bill you are giving Executive Council the ability to then undercut other acts which came through this Legislature. That type of act has historically been referred to as the King Henry VIII clause in reference to an attempt on the part of King Henry VIII to basically legislate by proclamation.

While there have been exceptions to the rule that this is a bad thing – like, for instance, I believe, the War Measures Act, where ultimately the courts decided: well, there is an emergency there, so we'll let the Privy Council go around the Legislature and undo legislation that was previously in place – there are certain conditions that should be in place for that to happen. I would argue that the ongoing need to enhance labour mobility, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, is not the kind of emergency that would warrant this government giving itself the authority, by regulation, to undercut previously passed statutes. So that is a concern.

10:30

The final concern relates, in particular, to section 5(1) of the new schedule, which basically purports to in some cases override privacy rights vis-à-vis solicitor-client and other forms of privileged information.

**Ms Blakeman:** What section?

**Ms Notley:** This would be section 5(1) of the new schedule 6.1.

In a sense they're saying basically that the Lieutenant Governor in Council would "make regulations respecting the collection, use and disclosure of information, including personal information, to enable consultation under and compliance with the requirements of the Agreement." This section would fundamentally in some cases, depending on how it's enacted – again, we're just giving ourselves the authority to enact this, and we don't know exactly how it will look. But under the authority of this act we could be running into cases where governments are saying: well, we need to share what would otherwise be privileged information in the interest of enforcing compliance and otherwise engaging in consultation under TILMA. This is a very problematic section for us. It challenges two very fundamental values. One is, of course, the pre-eminence of our Constitution and of our Charter. Arguably these run up against section 7 and section 8 of the Charter, and it also goes against the fundamental value of privacy. I would think the folks over on the

other end are big supporters of privacy because it's all about supporting the rights of the individual.

Those are a series of concerns that we have specifically with this bill, and as I've said before, in third reading we'll have the opportunity to talk more broadly about some of the concerns we have around the implementation and pursuit of the overall objectives of TILMA. Nonetheless, in terms of some of the more detailed elements of this bill, those are some of the concerns that we in the third party have with respect to its continued consideration by this Assembly.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

**Ms Blakeman:** Thanks very much. Well, it's real handy having a lawyer sitting beside me these days because I hadn't paid enough attention to that particular section.

You know, Mr. Chair, I find it a bit rich that in this province we're pretty much precluded from getting any kind of information about the relationship between government and any private sector because FOIP is always involved. Every time we try to see a contract that the government has with a private provider, we're always told: oh, no, no, no; the third party kicks in. And you go and ask the third party, and they say: no, we won't allow that information to be released. That's a bit rich when you look at what's being developed here that is pretty much the opposite of that – sorry, I guess it's exactly the same – in that it's saying that the government can now disclose our personal information, the individual's personal information, if they feel they need to do that in the pursuit of the TILMA goals here. But when we the individuals try and find out what the corporations are doing, it's a big fat old roadblock called third party and protection of business interests, and we can't get the information.

One of the examples there is the P3s. I've had a long and feisty argument with the President of the Treasury Board about the concerns we have with the proliferation of P3 agreements that we never get to see the contracts of. Now, the President of the Treasury Board has assured me that, in fact, we will, but the track record we have in this government is that we don't. Every time we've tried, we've been told: no, it's third party, and you can't see that information. Yet here we have an agreement put out by this government and the government of B.C. that will allow for our personal information to be given out if it's deemed to be in the best interests of the TILMA agreement. I am so offended by that.

You know, there are so many ways right now that we have lost control of our personal information, our personal identity, our personal lives that we don't even know it. I guess we're in a sort of blissful state right now because we don't quite understand how much information is out there about us that other people are controlling the manipulation of. They're controlling how that information is being used, they're controlling who else gets to use it, and we don't even know that they're using that information about us.

One of the most obvious examples there is the use of television, you know, on-the-street cameras that are watching people. We get more and more of those here. Many businesses have them mounted on the outside of their business. Every ATM machine uses them, et cetera, et cetera. It's usually sold to us that, "Oh, this is security" and things like that. Yes, okay. That may well be true. But we have very little ability to find out how much of that information is being collected about us, where those cameras are located. Are they watching us half a block? The whole block? Both sides of the block? We don't know that information right now.

We don't know who looks at those tapes. We don't know if they

use that information. For what purpose do they use that information? If they're just looking for crimes to be committed, okay. Fine. They're probably not doing anything with the information for most of us who are just walking down the street or grocery shopping or taking our dogs out or whatever. But we don't know who else is looking at that or gets access to that information. We don't know how long they're keeping that information.

We have privacy laws in place, but in a lot of cases all my questions are not answered by our privacy laws either. I mean, we have laws that say: this is what the government should be collecting information to do, and these are the restrictions that we place on government. Then we also have restrictions that we will place on the public sector, the not-for-profit sector, and the business sector in Alberta. Then there is the federal legislation that's placed on that. But, frankly, there are a lot of loopholes about our information. This one, to me, is an overriding loophole that you could drive a Mack truck through, that I'm particularly unhappy to see because as we start to understand through things like identity theft how our lives can be manipulated by somebody we've never met and changed forever, we start to get more and more reluctant to give that information out.

I had an interesting experience just the other day. I was signing up for something pretty simple, and I gave them the information in response to their inquiries. I gave them the information that they had to know. Then they asked a question, and I thought: that has nothing to do with me signing up to do whatever I was doing. I think it was for a gym membership. I said: you don't need that information.

Well, oh, did they get huffy, pressure put on me, scowls and all of the palaver that goes along with it. You know, why was I being so unco-operative and wouldn't give this information? I said: "Because it's personal information, and you don't need it for the purposes of selling me a gym membership. You don't need to know that. You need to know how you can contact me, you need to know how you can charge me for this. If you were smart, you'd ask about some medical conditions. But the rest of it you don't need to know." "Well, I can't fill this form out. The computer won't let me unless you give me that information."

But you know what? I'm increasingly reluctant to give my information out now. On some websites I go onto where they won't even let you onto the site until you pass over your name and your address and your telephone number and all that stuff, I won't even go into the site anymore. I'm not going to give them that information anymore, and I'm not the only person that's starting to twig to this and to back off of situations where they're asking for personal information. We're seeing that increasingly with the use of cellphone phone numbers. You can't connect a cellphone phone number to a particular home address, for example, so that's why people like to give out their cellphone numbers. You don't know where they are. And yeah, the police can track you through the cellphone towers.

You know what, Mr. Chair? As a little tangent here, cellphone towers. The location and placement of cellphone towers is one of the things that municipalities are likely not able to control once TILMA goes through. I'm thinking that in Edmonton, certainly in Calgary, municipal bylaws have been put in place that have refused to allow cellphone towers to be built in a particular community. They would not be able to do that, I believe, under a TILMA agreement. That was just a little tangent. I'm sorry about that.

**10:40**

I think that the idea that the private sector gets a two-way street on our information – the private sector's information is cloaked like the death star, but our personal information they can come and go and pick through pretty much as they want. It's usually used for marketing purposes, and that is particularly invasive in our lives. Just an additional comment, then, in Committee of the Whole for Bill 1, the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement Implementation Statutes Amendment Act, 2008.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Any other member want to join the debate?

Seeing no other member wanting to join the debate, are you ready for the question?

**Hon. Members:** Question.

[The clauses of Bill 1 agreed to]

[Title and preamble agreed to]

**The Chair:** Shall the bill be reported? Are you agreed?

**Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Opposed? Carried.

The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Renner:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the committee now rise and report Bill 1.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would now like to recognize the hon. Member for Rocky Mountain House.

**Mr. Lund:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a bill. The committee reports the following: Bill 1. I wish to table copies of all amendments considered by the Committee of the Whole on this date for the official records of the Assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Does the Assembly concur in the report?

**Hon. Members:** Concur.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Opposed? So ordered.

I would like to recognize the hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

**Mr. Renner:** Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the fact that we've made considerable progress on a number of bills this evening, I move that we now stand adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[Motion carried; at 10:43 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.]





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