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The 27th Legislature
First Session

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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

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 16, 2008

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. As we conclude for this week our work in this Assembly, we renew our energies with thanks so that we may continue our work with the people in the constituencies we represent. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Visitors

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm pleased and very proud to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly Linda Duncan, Member of Parliament-elect for Edmonton-Strathcona. Linda is no stranger to the federal government. She held a senior portfolio as the chief of enforcement for Environment Canada and also served as assistant deputy minister for renewable resources for the government of Yukon. Linda has been a national leader in developing and enforcing Alberta and Canadian environmental laws. She founded Alberta's Environmental Law Centre and has served on the executive of the environment section of the Canadian Bar Association.

On the international level as head of law and enforcement for the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation Linda spent four years working with Canadian, American, and Mexican officials.

As a private legal practitioner Linda has represented farmers, aboriginals, and environmental organizations, including cases before the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board. Linda is an active volunteer with numerous community boards, including Lake Wabamun Enhancement and Protection Association, Alberta's Clean Air Strategic Alliance Association, and the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, now Ecojustice.

Based on this exemplary record as a lawyer, as a defender of the environment, and as a community worker, I have no doubt that Linda will make an outstanding Member of Parliament from Alberta. I would now ask that Linda rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Ms Evans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm thrilled today because I have a number of people to introduce. First of all, from Woodbridge Farms school: 42 children and four adults, a very enthusiastic group, including teachers Sheila Busch, Judy Andrekson, and Heather Whittaker, along with parent helper Joanne Windiuk. I have a special hello to Lindsey in this group, whose mother, Barbra, will commence work with our Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs. It's a new position for a very special girl in Woodbridge Farms school. Would they please rise and enjoy the traditional welcome of the Assembly.

I also have another group of individuals that I'd like to introduce,

members of our team in Finance and Enterprise that I'm thrilled to have here with us today. They are Fumiko Kizaki, Jennifer Jurykovsky, Kasia Denham, Matthew Comin, and Melissa Manchak. I thank them for their good work and ask them to please rise to enjoy the welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. the Premier.

Mr. Stelmach: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Mr. George Charlebois, who is visiting Alberta from his home in Laval, Quebec. Mr. Charlebois tells me that he has fallen in love with Alberta. And why shouldn't he? He has been a guest at the University of Alberta, attending the Prime Ministers conversation series. I had the great pleasure of meeting George on my recent trip to Montreal, and I can tell you that his passion for the history of this country and for our Canadian Prime Ministers is unparalleled. I would now ask that he rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment.

Mr. Renner: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to introduce to you and through you to Members of the Legislative Assembly three sets of guests. First of all, I would like to introduce someone who is a very good friend of mine, a very good political adviser of mine, and my lawyer, probably in that order. His latest passion, however, is the one that I think expresses his personality the best because Lawrence has recently become very involved in the development of a theatrical arts facility in Medicine Hat. It's something that we're all very, very proud of. I plan to participate in the opening of that theatre very, very soon. I would ask Mr. Lawrence Gordon to rise and receive the recognition of the House.

We also have in the public gallery this afternoon representatives from Project Porchlight. This morning it was my pleasure to participate in an announcement, that members will hear a little bit more of shortly, whereby Project Porchlight, having been in operation across Alberta for some time now, has finally been launched in Edmonton and Calgary. I would like to acknowledge at this time three members of Project Porchlight who have joined us this afternoon: Mr. Scott Payne, the Project Porchlight Alberta campaign manager; Merna Schmidt, the Edmonton campaign manager; and Stuart Hickox, who is the person who really dreamt up the concept and is the executive director of One Change. I would ask all of them to stand and be recognized by the members.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce two representatives from Norway whom I had the pleasure of meeting with this morning. They are from StatoilHydro and have specific expertise in the areas of climate change and carbon capture and storage. I would take pleasure in introducing to the members of the House Mr. Michel Myhre-Nielsen, who is the director of climate change for StatoilHydro; and Per Markestad, who is the vice-president of technology and sustainability. We look forward to sharing a lot of good information and expertise that has been developed in Norway and applying it here in Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise today and introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a wonderful constituent of mine and her sister. Terry Hills lives in the wonderful constituency of Calgary-Montrose and

is in Edmonton today to provide her insight into the possible regulation of massage therapists. I've known Terry now for just under a couple of weeks. She said that this is the first time she has engaged in any sort of big public activity. Terry, this is the hall that can make a difference, and I welcome you here. With Terry is her sister Bobbi. I'd ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Dr. Taft: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real privilege to rise today and introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly several representatives of the Lubicon Lake First Nation and their supporters. They're visiting today to speak out for their rights as citizens of Alberta and of Canada, hoping to remind the government that vital issues surrounding their land rights and oil and gas development have yet to be resolved after many, many decades. I'll ask them to rise as I give their names. Visiting today are Lubicon councillors Dwight Gladue and Alphonse Ominayak; Ed Bianchi of Kairos, the Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives; Alex Neve, secretary-general of Amnesty International Canada; and Dietlind Bork and Craig Benjamin, also from Amnesty International Canada. I would ask all members to please give them a respectful and warm welcome.

Thank you.

1:40

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Danyluk: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today is the 10th anniversary of the municipal dispute resolution services offered by my department. Mediators work with municipalities to find co-operation and collaboration on issues like annexation and land-use disputes. The service is unique in North America, and we are seen as leaders and innovators in the mediation profession. I would like to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly, first of all, the members of the award-winning municipal dispute resolution team who won both the Premier's award of excellence and the Canada award of excellence for their work: Chinwe Okelu, Lisa Awid-Goltz, Lynn Parish, Sara Ahlstrom, Michael Scheidl, Shelley Bott, and also, from my communications department, Alison Gurnham. I'd also like to introduce to you the program's original mediators: Jeanne Byron and Barbara McNeil. If I could ask them to stand, please.

Also with us today, Mr. Speaker, we have officials from the first two municipalities to use the program in 1998. Here from the town of Beaumont are Gordon Stewart, the original administrative officer in 1998; Jacqueline Biollo, the deputy mayor; Marc Landry, the current chief administrative officer. From Leduc county I'm pleased to announce Bill Cowan, former reeve; Larry Majeski, former chief administrative officer; Mary-Ann McDonald, the mayor; and Doug Wright, the current chief administrative officer.

Two more municipalities were strong supporters of this program. From the town of Cochrane are Julian deCocq, chief administrative officer; JoAnn Churchill, the deputy mayor; and from the MD of Rocky View are Lorie Pesowski, director of planning and community service; and Greg Boehlke, the deputy reeve.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties have played a pioneering role, and I would like my final introduction to be the AUMA president, Lloyd Bertschi. If you would stand up, please.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for St. Albert, your guests will come at the conclusion?

Mr. Allred: At the conclusion, yes.

Members' Statements

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

Project Porchlight

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know that simple acts do make a big difference. For example, last year Albertans replaced half a million light bulbs with compact fluorescents through an initiative called Project Porchlight. Not only did this simple act result in more than 200,000 megawatts of electricity saved; it also resulted in more than \$17 million in savings. Earlier today the group behind this exciting initiative announced they will be back at it again this year. Volunteers and field representatives of the Project Porchlight team will be delivering 300,000 free compact bulbs at events and door to door in both Edmonton and Calgary. This very enthusiastic team is setting out to brighten our cities and to encourage Albertans to make simple actions matter.

We are proud to have three representatives joining us in the gallery today. Their message to Albertans is that everyone can get involved and make a meaningful difference by changing just one light bulb. As we learned last year, we all benefit. Not only do we cut back on energy use; we also save money.

Project Porchlight is supported by EnCana, the cities of Calgary and Edmonton, and the government of Alberta. I'm proud to say that the Alberta government provided \$1 million in support of this project.

In addition, this initiative complements the Alberta government's one simple act program, launched earlier in June. Both programs encourage Albertans to make small changes in their lives to help protect the environment. If Albertans will commit to one simple act, like changing a light bulb, using cold water more often to wash clothes, or planting a tree, then the cumulative effects of these small changes will be enormous. Albertans are leading the way, proving that simple actions matter and that they sincerely care about the environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Ron Macdonald

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to recognize Ron Macdonald. Mr. Macdonald is retiring after working since 1965 at the International Union of Operating Engineers local 955. Before going to work as a business manager for local 955 in 1990, he kept very busy working in the pipeline, crane rental, and industrial construction industries. This work experience helped him gain the trust and respect of both the union membership and their contractors.

During the past 18 years Mr. Macdonald has faithfully served his union as a member of the executive board, as an auditor, trustee, and president before becoming business manager and financial secretary. He also held an executive position with the Alberta Building Trades Council. Mr. Macdonald served on both the local advisory committee and the provincial advisory committee for crane and hoisting. He ably assisted both the government of Alberta and numerous apprentices in the trade, that depend on good courses and excellent tests. Many of these apprentices are now members of Mr. Macdon-

ald's union. His thoughtful and calm demeanor was very useful during collective bargaining. Fair wages and safe working conditions were always his first priorities. His service to others does not go unappreciated or unnoticed. I hope that in retirement he has time to enjoy his hobbies. He is an avid hunter, still a fine hockey player, and a golfer.

On behalf of all hon. members of this Assembly, I wish Ron and his wife, Myra, all the best in their retirement. Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

Livestock and Meat Strategy

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As many of my fellow members are aware, the Alberta livestock industry has been going through some challenging times in recent years. Persistent labour shortages, restricted access to foreign markets, and skyrocketing input costs are only a few of the challenges that have left Alberta's livestock industry in a state of crisis. Today the livestock industry is at a crossroads. As citizens of this great province we have the ability to refocus our efforts to achieve a profitable and competitive livestock industry.

The government of Alberta has proposed a new plan to capture new opportunities for our meat and livestock industries. On June 5 the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development announced the Alberta livestock and meat strategy. The strategy is a framework that enables industry to create and extract maximum value from the competitive environment while leaving production, processing, and marketing in the hands of the industry.

To assist in stabilizing the industry during its first phase of transformation, an immediate \$150 million was made available to producers. In January 2009 an additional \$150 million will be provided to producers to assist in creating an information network that will include age verification and premises identification data. At the heart of the strategy is the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency. Modelled after similar successful organizations in other countries, the agency will work with all of industry to align or redirect government funds, resources, and programs to revitalize the livestock sector and to act as a catalyst to help enhance industry competitiveness and profitability.

This government and the livestock and meat industry will maintain a close partnership throughout this transformation process. Together we can help improve and enhance an industry that is so vital to this province. Last year alone this industry generated more than \$3 billion in sales and provided employment for more than 30,000 Albertans.

Alberta's livestock and meat industry has a bright future. With our combined efforts Alberta will be able to regain its competitive advantage, compete globally, and ensure a sustainable and profitable industry for the future.

Conflict Resolution Day

Mr. Allred: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to recognize international Conflict Resolution Day. As a long-time member of the Alberta Arbitration and Medication Society I've become a strong supporter of alternative dispute resolution.

Conflict Resolution Day is an international celebration that promotes and raises awareness of the benefits of dispute resolution. Dispute resolution helps people resolve their issues before a neutral third party and come up with creative tailor-made solutions that meet their specific needs. Across the province today the Alberta dispute resolution network will host a number of activities, including 36

conflict resolution workshops with approximately 750 participants and 65 volunteers.

Dispute resolution offers a highly effective alternative for people to work out their disputes as opposed to going to court. Mediation is a private, confidential, and informal process that addresses the concerns and needs of all parties involved so that they can come to a mutually beneficial agreement. A mediator's role is to guide people through a collaborative, problem-solving process to resolve their disputes. It is up to the parties involved to work out a solution that meets their particular needs.

1:50

Mediation is extremely beneficial because it keeps people out of the courts. It also keeps them out of often financially and emotionally difficult processes. At the same time it frees up court staff and time. Mediation is a win-win situation where both parties agree on a solution rather than an arbitrated or litigated process, where there is a winner and a loser and sometimes two losers.

The Alberta government provides a number of dispute resolution programs and services to Albertans to address a wide range of issues. Alberta Justice offers mediation programs such as family justice services, civil mediation, and the Alberta aboriginal court worker program.

Oral Question Period

The Speaker: First Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Funding for Police Officers

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Judging from their response today, I'm not sure if the government of Alberta is aware of this, but the city of Calgary has seen a vast increase in gangs, guns, and violent crime on our city streets. Calgaryans as individuals and communities have asked this government for increased funding for desperately needed police officers. To the Premier. Calgary's Mayor Dave Bronconnier, Police Chief Hanson, and the Calgary Police Association all stand united in calling for more funding for police officers. I ask, Mr. Premier: are these individuals and organizations wrong in their assessment that more police officers are needed?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, a number of months ago we took on the initiative as one of our five major priorities for this government: the safe and secure communities task force. During that period of time we had together at the table police chiefs, we had victims of crime, we had those who perpetrated crime, and we had those that provide addiction and counselling services in the province of Alberta. Chaired by our Member for Calgary-Fish Creek, they put together a report, given then to the minister responsible. We built a plan on that consultation, which was an investment of \$453 million over the next three years to safe and secure communities.

Mr. Hehr: That sounds wonderful, and in fact it probably is, but the simple fact of the matter is that the mayor as well as Chief Hanson have said that we need 200 more police officers on our streets. Why are those police officers not being made available to keep Calgaryans safe on their city streets?

Mr. Stelmach: We did something quite new to this province and, I think, to others across Canada. We committed to hiring 300 more police officers as a result of this consultation that happened a number of months ago. That's 100 police officers funded by the

province for Calgary, 100 for Edmonton, and 100 for the rest of the province. That's supporting cities in hiring more police officers. It's not totally our responsibility, but here we are supplying municipalities with more resources over and above the municipal sustainability that we've put in: \$11.3 billion.

Mr. Hehr: Well, again, that's wonderful, but let's try it this way. The city of Calgary has asked for \$25 million over the next three years. That's it. Why are you not providing this funding right now for police officers to be available on our city streets?

Mr. Stelmach: The city of Calgary receives, I believe, just a bit more than \$400 million under the municipal sustainability initiative. That, they said, will go to infrastructure. Okay. That's fine. We did something else, Mr. Speaker; we eliminated all of the health care premiums starting January 1. There's a sizable amount of cash available for the city of Calgary to put towards what I think is their number one priority, and that's police officers. You know what? We're not going to stand in their way.

The Speaker: Second Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Provincial Savings Strategy

Dr. Taft: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Fourteen months ago this government commissioned a study by Jack Mintz and the Financial Investment and Planning Advisory Commission. The report was delivered to the government last winter. Mr. Mintz has hinted in the media about the report saying, quote, the Alberta government needs much more fiscal discipline. End quote. He said that government makes the case for savings, quote, in order to make sure that Alberta is prosperous for years to come. My question is to the minister. Why won't the minister release this report?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, that report will be released in due course. We have been using not only the material from that report but the discussions within our caucus. We've had a number of discussions with individuals with the interest of savings in mind.

This summer when we announced our first-quarter spending, we acknowledged that there would be a projected \$3 billion, roughly, available for savings. At that time the economy was beginning to show the signs of volatility that we've seen today. So in order that we are precise in whatever we define as a policy, I wanted to take a little bit more time so we can see where we're at . . .

The Speaker: I'm sorry.
The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In due course is a ridiculous answer. They've had it for many, many months.

Again to the same minister: is it a fact that this government is hiding the Mintz report because that report makes clear that as the economy slows down, this government's failure to save means that tax increases are inevitable?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I believe what I'm hearing: this government's failure to save. Let's talk about roughly \$17 billion in the heritage fund. Let's talk about almost the same amount in endowments for education, for medical research, for cancer, which we talked about yesterday. We are in the enviable position of having saved or placed money in endowments, in a fund now for AIMCo's investment, including the pension funds. We've got some

\$75 billion of cash and investments that are being invested. We have a track record of saving that's second to none . . .

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This minister needs a course in economics 100. That's pretty obvious.

Given that Mr. Mintz has said that if this government doesn't start saving – and I quote here – that taxes are going to have to go up to balance the budget, has this government put Alberta in a situation where the province will be running a deficit budget within three years?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, last March when we were working on the budget and we delivered this budget to this Legislature, that opposition with their wonderful economics sense said that I was ridiculous to budget \$78 per barrel for the price of oil. Let's talk about capacity to talk about money in this Legislature.

Mr. Mintz's report will be addressed in due course along with the investment and savings strategy that our Premier asked me to deliver. I'll be proud to deliver that, just not today.

The Speaker: Third Official Opposition main question. The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition.

Lubicon Lake Band Land Claim

Dr. Taft: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Today we have representatives from the Lubicon Lake First Nation in the gallery. They are here today voicing their concerns over oil and gas development on their lands. This development recently took a big step forward with the approval of a huge gas pipeline by the Alberta Utilities Commission over land that has been under dispute for decades. My questions are to the Minister of Aboriginal Relations. Will this minister make it an urgent priority to reach a fair and effective resolution to this decades-old dispute?

Mr. Zwodzesky: Mr. Speaker, let me speak to the issue of the land claim, which has been outstanding for decades, as has been pointed out. I indicated to Chief Ominayak that as soon as possible, as soon as we know who the new federal minister for INAC is going to be, I will do everything I can to bring that side of the group along with the chief's people to the table and act, if I can, as somewhat of a facilitator or catalyst.

The issue is really the responsibility of the federal government. Under the national resources transfer agreement we as the province of Alberta must and will set aside lands as requested by the government of Canada. We have not been requested to do so yet.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: is the minister, then, saying that he has no responsibility in solving this land dispute? Is that not what he is just saying?

2:00

Mr. Zwodzesky: No. I think if he checks *Hansard*, he'll find out that I said words like: I will act as a facilitator if I can, and I will act as a catalyst if I can. I promised Chief Ominayak I would do that. I just spoke with our two guests here, Dwight Gladue and Alphonse Ominayak, and I indicated the same thing, and I asked them to please pass along that reiterated sentiment to Chief Ominayak when they return. They said they would. As soon as we know who the new minister for INAC is, we will sit down and we will get the

serious talk going again. That's my intention, and I hope I can deliver on it.

Dr. Taft: Again to the same minister. The Lubicon people were not even allowed to participate in the regulatory hearings. What does this minister expect the Lubicon people to do in this matter when the provincial regulatory process simply ignores their concerns? What does he expect them to do?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, the issue of the Alberta Utilities Commission hearings and so on is really under the purview of the Minister of Energy, but I do know that the Lubicon were offered an opportunity to participate in some form of a meeting on this issue back in April with the AUC. I believe that they took up that opportunity, and the situation that has resulted, I'm sure, will in due course unfold and will be resolved. In the meantime, let's let the process take its proper course here, and let's hope it comes to a happy resolution for all involved.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

Government Information Network Security

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Auditor General has issued a scathing indictment of this government's failure to protect the private information of Albertans. He said that he had found footprints of sophisticated hackers, possibly from eastern Europe or Asia, inside the government's computer network. While the Auditor General has solid recommendations for preventing this sort of thing in the future, it begs the question as to what has already transpired. My question is to the Premier: what steps, if any, has the government taken to track down those criminals who have violated the personal information of Albertans, which was entrusted to this government?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, I don't recall reading in the Auditor General's report any reference to criminals that have accessed information, but if the leader of the third party has that information at hand, I think he should share that immediately with our Auditor General. Obviously, he has got information that we don't have nor, in fact, the Auditor because I don't think he called anybody criminals.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, that answer is an insult to all Albertans. It is this government's responsibility to track down the people who hacked into the computer banks containing Albertans' information, which was entrusted to your government, Mr. Premier. The Auditor General did say it's been hacked. What are you going to do about it, to track down the people who hacked it?

Mr. Stelmach: I know the member for the third party gets very excited sometimes after I respond to his question, but really the way he asked the question is quite ridiculous. Always I do give him an answer, but it's difficult to give a good answer to something that's so ridiculous.

I will say that the public's information is in good hands. It's secure. The minister is working with the Auditor General. In fact, she had already implemented before the report came out many of the recommendations.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, I think Albertans should be very, very concerned that the government has so little respect for their informa-

tion that a legitimate inquiry is simply dismissed. Clearly, this information was hacked. The Auditor General said it was hacked. There has been violation, perhaps, he said, from offshore, sophisticated people trying to get Albertans' information and the government's information. All of it is open. All of it was vulnerable. What have you done? What will you do to try and find out who did it and what exactly they have found?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the minister has all that information available, and maybe she can impart that information to the leader.

The Speaker: The hon. minister to supplement.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to indicate that Service Alberta worked very closely with the Auditor General during this whole process. When I became minister in March, the investigation had begun. They were looking at our system. All along we have worked with the Auditor General. As mentioned, many of the recommendations that we have all accepted are already in place, especially the chief security officer for the whole government of Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose, followed by hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Health Care Coverage for Midwifery

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta Health and Wellness just announced that expectant mothers will now be able to access midwife services and it will be publicly funded. My first question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Could the minister explain why this funding has been provided now?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Calgary-Montrose is correct that we did make that announcement today. It's something that I know he has been advocating since his election, and I must say it's also something that the Member for Edmonton-Centre has been advocating, probably since she was elected. So I think that it is an important announcement today. What it will do is that it will recognize the important role that midwives play in the delivery of health services. Access will now be whether it's in hospitals, community birthing centres, or at home. I think it's incredibly important at a time when there is difficulty finding family doctors and obstetricians.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the minister again. First of all, great thank you's from many of my constituents. Secondly, can the minister tell us what reassurances he can give expectant mothers that midwives are a safe alternative?

Mr. Liepert: Well, midwifery has been around for hundreds of years, so I think that it is a profession that is respected and is accepted. In fact, back in 1994 this Legislature approved midwifery as a regulated profession. Standards of practice were developed at that time, and midwives have been held to those standards of practice. I believe that no expectant mother should have concerns about delivery through midwives.

Mr. Bhullar: Again, Mr. Speaker, this is wonderful news. Again to the minister: how does this announcement fit into his overall health care action plan?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, our health care action plan is primarily about three things: accessibility, focus on patients, and future sustainability. I would say that if you look at today's announcement, it fits nicely into all three. What does need to be said, however, is that we have asked the Alberta Health Services Board to develop the framework around how midwifery services will be delivered because I think it's important to try and ensure that midwifery services become part of a clinical team environment and work within our desire to have more of a team approach to the delivery of health care.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Funding for Private Schools

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday in the House the Premier stood and called the public education system in Alberta "a very monolithic education system." Not only is this insulting, but it also contradicts the views of the Minister of Education, who in a letter to the *Edmonton Journal* on September 7, 2008, noted that public schools offer a broad range of choices for students, quite different from the Premier's description of monolithic. Why has the Premier shown such disrespect for public education, and does he have similar feelings about our public health care, our public support . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Premier. [interjections] The hon. the Premier has the floor.

Mr. Stelmach: Obviously, we hit a raw note with the Liberal Party yesterday, but I stand by what this government believes in, and that is that we look at all Albertans, treating them equally and equitably, within a public education system with independent schools. We have charter schools. We're still protecting, obviously, under our Charter separate education in this province. It's one of the reasons why our children achieve the best compared to many other countries in the world.

Mr. Chase: Funding for operations and maintenance for private schools increased from zero per cent to 70 per cent. Meanwhile, schools across the province in the public system are in need of support to tackle billion dollar deferred maintenance costs. How can the Premier justify this massive per capita increase for private schools at the expense of the public system?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the issue needs to be put in context. The total education budget is about \$6 billion. The cost of the funds which go to the private schools now totals about \$177 million. Private schools were never supported for operation and maintenance in the past. That was seen to be wrong. They educate Alberta students, and they needed to be supported for their operation and maintenance. It's a drop in the bucket of the overall school funding, but it's very important that every Alberta student have equitable access to a quality education.

2:10

Mr. Chase: This government believes in private, for-profit at public expense. Why do the Premier and his government continue to use public tax dollars to increasingly fund private access to schools, thereby excluding thousands and thousands of Alberta students who can't afford the tuitions and do not receive the support?

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, it's an absolute myth that private schools in this province are the purview of the rich and famous. It's a myth that's being perpetuated by people who don't understand that there's a variety of choice in education for Alberta students, and that variety of choice includes access to specialized means of instruction or religious instruction or other choices that are made by parents and students. It's a small group of students; it's less than 3.5 per cent of the student population. It's an important choice that's available to Albertans, and it's not just for the rich. Most of them are not-for-profit schools and are not just the purview of the rich.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Public Library Services

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta is attracting a large number of new immigrants and foreign workers every year. My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. What resources are Alberta libraries providing for those new Albertans?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Danyluk: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Libraries are the focal point for new Albertans. Libraries provide literacy programs and English as a Second Language programs. Libraries also facilitate access to tutors for after school programs. They also have programs for first-time Albertans to find employment through access to computers and websites and resumé writing and interview skills. They also provide reading material. In the end, they offer essential . . .

The Speaker: I'm sure we'll get it in the next question.
The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Alberta has a growing aboriginal population. In the near future we expect 1 in 5 Albertans to be of aboriginal heritage. My question is for the same minister. What are we doing to support Alberta's aboriginal population through the public library system?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, libraries recognize the important role in supporting the well-being and vitality of aboriginal communities. There are some excellent programs out there right now. We have hired new aboriginal librarians to help with the aboriginal communities. Some libraries offer aboriginal literacy programs, resource materials. Libraries continue to work to meet the needs of those communities.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They're valuable programs.

My final question to the same minister: what is the province doing to ensure that libraries will be able to meet the needs of all Albertans in the future?

Mr. Danyluk: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what happened this summer. An MLA committee did go out to meet with Albertans. They brought forward some of the pressures that they felt and this government feels, that to support a strong, province-wide library system is essential to promote collaboration and innovation and to capitalize on technology. We will take that feedback and incorporate it into our future support for libraries.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Hays.

Family Justice Issues

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Motion 511 calling for a unified family court process, which is the legal standard for most Canadian provinces, was unanimously passed almost a year ago. My questions are to the Minister of Justice. What changes or improvements since Motion 511 was passed have been made to reduce or eliminate Court of Queen's Bench and provincial court jurisdictional disputes that impede justice for children, youth, and their families?

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue that's important to this government. It's also an issue that, as we know, is quite complicated because of the mixed jurisdiction between the federal legislation and the provincial legislation. We in the Department of Justice believe that the work that we need to do around the *Rules of Court* and resolving jurisdictional issues with respect to parentage, maintenance, and support have to be accommodated within the process of mediation, arbitration, and further amendments to the *Rules of Court*. We're undertaking those and expect a report from the Rules of Court Committee within the next year.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Can the minister explain why more has not been done to reduce the hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees parents and supportive grandparents have had to pay to regain access to their children?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue which, of course, impacts families, parents, and grandparents. It's an issue that will truly impact children. It's an issue that the parents and the adults that are responsible for children care are an awful lot about. The reality is that we can put in place mediation as some of the hon. members have talked about today. We can put in place judicial arbitration. We can amend the rules so that we can ensure that these issues are dealt with outside of a litigation process. However, at the end of the day we cannot control whether or not adults who are responsible for children continually decide to go into the litigation process.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Unfortunately, the litigation process is the only avenue available to thousands of Alberta parents and grandparents on behalf of their children.

Given the large number of children who have been taken into custody and subsequently been injured or killed, what is the government doing to ensure that they receive the compensation that is due to them as well as prevent future abuse?

Ms Redford: Mr. Speaker, it is not true that the only avenue open to people is litigation. One of the objectives of Alberta Justice and of the court system in this province is to find other avenues for people so that the costs related to litigation are low, so that parties aren't impacted, and so that we can resolve situations on a win-win basis. That is what we do in Alberta Justice.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Hays, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Public Health

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently a number of changes were announced as to how public health policy and services will be managed in this province. My first question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Could the minister explain what these changes are and why they are needed?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, it is true that a couple of weeks ago we announced a new model for public health in this province. I was pleased to read in the opposition's number one research document, the *Edmonton Journal*, that the move was actually even applauded by the leader of the third party. What we have done is ensure that there's a clear delineation between the role of delivery of public health, which is now going to fall under the Alberta Health Services Board, and the policy side of public health, which will remain in the Department of Health and Wellness.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: can the minister outline the role of the chief medical officer of health in this new public health model?

Mr. Liepert: Well, the chief medical officer of health will have an expanded role in the delivery of public health to Albertans. Even though the chief medical officer of health will continue to reside within the Department of Health and Wellness, there will be a direct reporting line to the minister and to cabinet when necessary. The chief medical officer of health will advise on public health policy related to chronic diseases and communicable diseases and injury prevention, and I guess the final area is around public health programs and the delivery of those programs through the regions.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: will these changes help in Alberta's efforts to recruit a new chief medical officer of health?

Mr. Liepert: Well, the member is correct that currently it's an acting chief medical health officer. What has happened now with the clear definition of the role is that we can clearly begin or conclude our search, I guess is a better way to put it, for a chief medical officer of health. I'm hopeful that we can have something to announce in the next month or so.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

2:20 Government Pension Plans

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance firmly stated that the government pension plans are a defined benefit, and there will not be fewer dollars available to members when they retire. In the short term that may be true, but since the value of the fund has dropped, at some point taxpayers will have to make up the difference in the fund in order for people to get that defined benefit. My question is to the Minister of Finance. How can you ensure that the taxpayers won't be left with a bill to top up the fund?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, I explained that the pension boards themselves, not this government but the pension boards, define the level of risk and their tolerance for risk when they establish an agreement, a contractual arrangement with AIM, or now AIMCo, to invest their monies. AIMCo is accountable to those pension boards for that quantity of risk that they have undertaken on their behalf. Again, I think it's important to say that people get the benefits that they subscribe to, and that will not change.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. To the same minister. Well, I hope that AIMCo is responsible to all of us and to the minister. The second question: what plans does the minister have to deal with this upcoming unfunded pension liability?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, again, I think that this is assuming things that we should not. I indicated that on paper there were some losses like everybody else in international markets experienced over the last few weeks. Frankly, the local authority pension plans will be available for people when they go to draw down their pensions. It would be much too early to say that this would be an annualized problem. Let's look at the heritage fund, which has had an anticipated real rate of return of 4.5 per cent and over five years up until this year averaged 11.1 per cent. We have ups and downs in the market.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. Again to the same minister: given that this government got out of control on the unfunded liability for the teachers' pensions and Albertans will pay an unknown but vast amount of interest over time to make up for the shortfall, how quickly can the minister and the government move this time to avoid the same scenario?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, that's like comparing apples and oranges. Frankly, this government negotiated with the Minister of Education on the teachers' unfunded liability, an arrangement that was a shared responsibility in the first instance, and followed through with a satisfactory agreement. To compare either one is just not prudent or appropriate.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Fort.

Lubicon Lake Band Land Claim

(continued)

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday in a decision that came as no surprise to industry the AUC approved the application by TransCanada to build a pipeline through contested Lubicon lands. Two months before that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of the United Nations challenged the government of Alberta's authority to authorize a pipeline across Lubicon territory without their consent. By allowing this development to proceed, this government is callously breaching the human rights directives of the United Nations. My question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Relations. Why won't the minister act to comply with the directives of the United Nations and suspend the pipeline until these issues are properly resolved?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, that particular issue is really a matter for the government of Canada, which is a member of the United

Nations, as the member here likely knows. The unfortunate situation which I alluded to earlier in question period today is that technically speaking and legally speaking the Lubicon don't have a legally defined set of boundaries. Until that issue is resolved, I don't think we'll be able to make the kind of progress that is hoped for by all sides with respect to the issues being raised today.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to indicate that the letter says that

information received points to a lack of clarity with regard to the land rights over territory through which the Pipeline would be routed, and therefore to doubts as to whether the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Utilities Commission may legitimately authorise the construction of a pipeline.

Why won't you stop the pipeline until the land issues are resolved?

The Speaker: The hon. member will table whatever document he is quoting from.

Mr. Mason: Yes, I will.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, the issue here, again, is one of a legal nature. Unfortunately, in the late 1800s, when the government of Canada of the day travelled the area that we now know as Alberta, they could not reach every single place by any particular means of transportation available to them at the time. There was a recognition, however, that a group called the Lubicon existed, and ever since that time in the absence of a legally defined area the government of Canada and the Lubicons have been trying to get together and solve this matter. I have provided my comments and I will stick by them and I will do everything I can to help bring the two sides together as soon as possible.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Resolution of the Lubicon land claim is both a federal and a provincial responsibility, but given that the impoverished and unhealthy conditions of First Nations people residing on Crown land are your responsibility and given that further oil and gas development at the risk of Lubicon livelihood is the responsibility of the Alberta government, why won't you act immediately to compel your government to suspend the pipeline until they adhere to internationally recognized standards and honestly consult with the Lubicon?

Mr. Zwozdesky: Mr. Speaker, we have honestly consulted with the Lubicon. We've been doing it for many, many years, and we're going to do more of it, but we have to respect the Constitution of Canada. The national resources transfer agreement that I alluded to earlier is a schedule within the Constitution of Canada, and it must be abided by. When and if requested by the government of Canada to set aside unoccupied Crown lands to add them to a reservation or to create a new one, we the province must abide. We have not been asked to abide as yet, and I'm hoping that at some point soon we will be able to further the discussion.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Fort, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Oil Prices

Mr. Cao: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The current upheaval in the world market is causing concern around the globe and among our

constituents in Alberta. Dropping oil prices and their effect on our government budget are of particular concern. My first question is to the hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise. What kind of impact will falling oil prices have on our province's bottom line?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, fortunately because of the prediction of \$78 per barrel for the first few months, when we reported at the first quarter and amended that prediction, we already knew at the time, at the end of August, that it had averaged about \$121 a barrel over the first six months. Even if we have a decline, we're going to see some softening there, but we're continuing to monitor this very closely. I think, thanks to the export markets, to the robust nature of the economy in China and India, to the fact that there's not too much evidence of weaker consumer spending in the United States, I still expect the markets to exist, and I expect energy prices to level off and give me some assurance.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cao: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental question is to the same minister. What happens if oil prices continue to drop? Will our government be able to meet its budget commitment?

Ms Evans: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will be able to meet our budget commitment. We must remember what our Premier reminds us about and reminds Albertans about. In the event that there was a complete disaster either in the nonrenewable resource prices or any other trauma to befall Alberta, we have the sustainability fund, which is over \$7 billion and which will be our umbrella on a rainy day.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Cao: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is to the same minister. How are the oil prices forecast for budget purposes?

Ms Evans: National forecasting agencies such as the Conference Board of Canada and at least 11 other private agencies provide their estimates to the Ministry of Energy. Those prices are calculated. We look at the cautious end of the range. At the time we predicted \$78 per barrel, the range was between \$65 and \$115, so we try and always pick the cautious range. At the end of the second quarter, when once again it's necessary to amend those prices, we will again consult with the same bodies.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Support for Food Banks

Ms Blakeman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is World Food Day. This government likes to say that all Albertans have benefited from the boom, but the reality can be a little bit different story. It was recently reported that the Nanton and area food bank is struggling to keep food on its shelves, and they are helping people this year who don't normally require the service. My question is to the minister of finance. If there is a food bank in Nanton now, with a multibillion-dollar provincial surplus and the economy sliding downward, what is the government's plan to mitigate the effect on food banks like Nanton?

2:30

Ms Evans: Well, Mr. Speaker, normally the Minister of Employ-

ment and Immigration would answer this because the income support programs are within his ministry, but clearly if there is any kind of crisis in terms of the lack of supports for any population in any particular region, we would no doubt have those reports, bring them forward, and try and find ways to resolve the crisis. Perhaps the minister would . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. Then to the same minister: if, as the minister has stated repeatedly, all Albertans have benefited from the boom, why is it that almost 30 per cent of the Albertans who use the food bank and rely on it have jobs but are still having to go to a food bank?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member opposite would be well aware of my compassion as an individual for people who have needs either for children or family needs. That kind of compassion resonates within many ministries here where almost everybody seems to have a hand in trying to help those people that are underprivileged. The Minister of Children and Youth Services would no doubt find those areas in her budget that would help augment children's benefits. We have eyes and ears in communities with staff, social workers, and other counsellors that are available to evaluate what the needs are. The minister of agriculture keeps us apprised of what's happening in the rural communities.

The Speaker: The hon. member. [interjection] The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, then, my next question is to the minister of children's services. Why is the government allowing 64,000 children in Alberta to live in poverty? Most of those children have to rely on these very same food banks.

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, we're well aware of children that do live in poverty in this province, and I will take that under consideration and refer that to the minister of children's services.

The Speaker: The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

The hon. Member for Red Deer-South, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Gift Cards

Mr. Dallas: Mr. Speaker, gift card rules were announced in early September that will come into effect on November 1. Expiry dates won't be allowed on gift cards and neither will fees that erode the value of the card each month. I've heard positive comments, but there are questions about how the new rules will apply to existing cards. My questions are for the Minister of Service Alberta. Can you clarify how the rules will apply to gift cards bought before November 1?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This new regulation, as indicated, bans expiry dates and fees that erode the value of the card. With respect to valid gift cards bought, it applies to valid gift cards bought before November 1, and if the card is expired before November 1, it does not apply.

Mr. Dallas: Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: what should a consumer do if they buy a gift card after November 1 and discover that it has an expiry date or fees?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Klimchuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been working very closely with the Retail Council of Canada and many businesses on this initiative, and we are happy to take any questions or any concerns that people have when they come across a situation where they feel that their gift card is not being validated. We do have a toll-free line, 1-877-427-4088.

The Speaker: Hon. member, fine?

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake.

Health Services Board

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Why is the minister reorganizing the Alberta health system under the Government Organization Act and not under the Regional Health Authorities Act?

Mr. Liepert: I think it's being done under the health regions act. I'm not sure what the member is referring to.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you. That's very interesting. I always suspected you didn't know your own department, and now you've proven it, sir.

Given that the Alberta Health Services Board stated that it is, and I quote, not a regional health authority in that term as defined in the Regional Health Authorities Act or otherwise, end of quote, what legal status does the Alberta Health Services Board now have?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, under the Regional Health Authorities Act there's a provision to name a board, and because there was a board in East Central that no longer existed, the new interim board was made the board of the East Central health authority and subsequently made the board of all the other 11 entities. So I'm not quite sure what this hon. member is talking about. I would suggest he doesn't know what he's talking about.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm reading your own memorandum of understanding, which hopefully you had some control in writing.

Now, my third question is: why does the Alberta Health Services Board state that it is not a regional health authority?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't recall giving the hon. member a copy of the memorandum of agreement. So I'll have another look at it and see what he's got because he may not actually have the right document.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lesser Slave Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Economic Diversification

Ms Calahasen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know and understand, the economic crisis has hit, and oil prices have fallen drastically. In light of what is happening globally as well as Alberta's economy being based on oil, my question is to the Minister of Finance and Enterprise. What are you going to do and what do

you have in the plans to be able to address the issue of our energy resources?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, our ministry not only accounts for finance, but the enterprise division has been working very hard for the last number of years in maximizing the value of the Industrial Heartland and other value-added opportunities. The work that's been done in the Industrial Heartland and the subsequent enactment of the BRIK policy, or the bitumen royalty-in-kind policy, we believe will enable us for petrochemical development, which over the forthcoming years will be second to none in North America. It is, in fact, the best opportunity we present.

Ms Calahasen: Knowing that we are actually going to be doing that also, what are we doing, then, within the government of Alberta under your department to be able to develop other sectors that we rely upon?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, many of the ministers on the front bench could answer that. The minister of advanced education and research has been looking at so many ways that the technology sector can enhance its opportunity with the R and D tax credits, with Enterprise Corporation. We look at the minister of agriculture and the opportunities that he provides us for looking at some of the other new technologies affecting the livestock industry, the grain industry. Many other sectors, including the ministries of tourism and community spirit, are combining their forces to provide us, I think, a particularly sound economic picture for the future.

Ms Calahasen: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that we in Alberta have always relied upon diversification of all the sectors, could you tell me, then, Madam Minister, what it is that we are going to do to ensure that we can continue to diversify the resources that we do have?

Ms Evans: I think, Mr. Speaker, one of the best avenues is to listen to the people themselves. Alberta has the advantage of regional authorities. The regional authorities, the REDAs as they are called, are the local eyes and ears of the community, marrying people with various levels of expertise with various municipal leaders. They come up with a number of proposals that are so innovative, like the work that's done in Medicine Hat relative to the unmanned vehicle systems. With their local industries they provide opportunities for us to take a fresh look at some of the advantages in various parts of Alberta and help build that economy with . . .

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-West.

Health Services Board

(continued)

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have more questions for the Minister of Health and Wellness, but I also have questions for the hon. President of the Treasury Board. My first question to the hon. President of the Treasury Board is: under the government's proposal to centralize public health care, is the Alberta Health Services Board a provincial agency under the Financial Administration Act?

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, the health of Albertans is of the greatest concern to this government. We are not really hung up on definitions or regions or boundaries. As a matter of fact, what we're trying to do is remove the artificial impediments to delivering

accessible, affordable health care to Albertans. So while the opposition may want to talk about definitions or legalese, what we have clearly seen is a minister who's willing to tackle the issues that Albertans are concerned about, and that's their immediate health care needs.

Mr. MacDonald: Again to the same minister. In a letter that I have from the Minister of Health and Wellness dated August 29, 2008, he says, and this is the quote: as you are well aware, one of the major weaknesses of the previous health region structure was the lack of any formal accountability to the taxpayer. End of quote. Do you think there was a lack of accountability to the taxpayers when we had the regional health authorities?

2:40

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, we can accomplish a lot more in this province going forward. I've often told small children in classrooms I speak to that there's a big windshield in front of your car and a very small rear-view mirror, and there's a reason for that. We can look backwards at some of the mistakes in health care, and we can look back at some of things we may have done in our attempt to provide Albertans with quality health care, or we can look forward. We can go forward working together as Albertans, not in regions and not in silos but as one region that's trying to provide all Albertans with equitable, accessible, affordable health care. It's just that simple.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: do you agree with the Minister of Health and Wellness when he states that there was a lack of any formal accountability to the taxpayer? And if there's no accountability to the taxpayer, why did you for all these years allow there to be no accountability?

Mr. Snelgrove: Only because it's Thursday, Mr. Speaker, and I have been asked to play nice, I will play very nice. Anyone who suggests that there is a lack of accountability in this government probably didn't see the two binders of work that came from our Auditor General a few weeks ago and the ongoing work he has done over the years, nor have they been present during the budget submissions that happened in here on, I might add, sometimes quite a boring basis. However, any questions of accountability or lack of should be addressed to the Auditor General because I'm sure he would take very seriously some of your suggestions about accounting more as opposed to doing more.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that was 100 questions and responses today.

Speaker's Ruling

Oral Question Period Rules

The Speaker: I do want to draw to the attention of members, because it is the end of the first week and there was a great deal of leniency provided by the chair in the last several days, perhaps a little reading over the weekend with respect to oral questions and oral answers. I'll just highlight a couple here very quickly.

In response to oral questions *Beauchesne* 408 makes it very, very clear that questions should not require an answer involving a legal opinion. That's stressed throughout the documentation. It's always been a time-honoured tradition as well. Questions should relate to matters of some urgency. Questions might not be hypothetical. Questions should not provide an expression of an opinion, representation, argumentation, or debate. Clarity in answers is important as

well, but we'll come back to that when we have more violations of it.

Introduction of Guests

(continued)

The Speaker: I'm going to call on the hon. member for the Introduction of Guests. We alluded to it prior to the question period. The hon. member for St. Albert.

Mr. Allred: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to introduce to you and through you a group of residents of Foyer Lacombe in St. Albert. Foyer Lacombe is a bilingual 41-bed continuing care facility in St. Albert established for Oblate priests and brothers as well as diocesan priests and those from other religious orders who are retired or need assisted care.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to you nine members of the Order of Mary Immaculate – Brother Arthur VanHecke, Father Louis-Philippe Roy, Father Maynard Boomars, Father Jean-Paul Vantrois, Father Robert Kelly, Father Maurice McMahon, Father Louis Detillieux, Father André Brault, and Mr. Ed Chamney – and four volunteers: Miss Lenka Makarian, Mme Christine Lacrampe, Mme Marie-France Patriarche, and Mme Joan Mansell. I'd ask the members to join me in welcoming them to our Assembly.

Members' Statements

(continued)

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Red Deer-South.

Affordable Housing

Mr. Dallas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, Friday, October 17, is International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, when millions of people world-wide stand up to fight against poverty. We are all aware that poverty and destitution is found throughout the world, most widespread in developing countries. It is our collective duty as members of a global community to do our part to help other people meet the basic needs that so many of us take for granted.

We also know that Alberta's strong economy has created a shortage of safe, affordable housing and more people are homeless or are facing the risk of losing their place to live. These people often are the working poor. Individuals, many with families, who due to low-income or entry-level jobs are having difficulties affording a place to live and in many cases are finding themselves on the streets. Here in Alberta we are concentrating our fight against poverty by working to increase access to safe, affordable housing and to eradicate homelessness within the coming decade.

Mr. Speaker, in less than one year we have already increased access to safe and affordable housing. We have helped develop more than 3,400 new units, and we are well on our way to achieving our goal of 11,000 units by 2012. We are also assisting more Albertans in need to stay in their homes or establish a place to live through the homeless and eviction prevention fund and the rent supplement program. We are doing all of this through an investment of \$507 million, an increase of \$58.5 million, or 13 per cent, over last year. Soon we expect the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness to deliver their strategic plan to end homelessness in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of Albertans, our province, and our country for the compassion they continue to demonstrate in reaching out to help others. Together we will continue to work closely with our communities and our partners to act on initiatives that move us forward to the day when our most vulnerable members of society have an alternative to homelessness and an affordable place to call home.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Poverty Reduction

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the previous speaker has indicated, tomorrow is the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and on December 10 we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the universal declaration of human rights. While we often think about these issues as affecting the international community, we have only to look in our own backyard to see that 64,000 Alberta children are living below Canada's low-income family cut-off. This works out to 1 in 8 Alberta children, truly shameful and even more poignant because we live in Canada's richest province.

Last year more than 43 million people stood up and spoke out against poverty on October 17, setting a world record. It's expected that the turnout will be even greater tomorrow. Part of the Make Poverty History pledge reads, "We are asking not for charity but for justice. We are millions of voices standing in solidarity to say, no more excuses." Make poverty history now.

Yet Alberta has no comprehensive poverty reduction strategy. It's time that we follow other provinces like Quebec and Newfoundland, who have strong poverty reduction strategies, and Nova Scotia and Ontario, both committed to tackling this human rights embarrassment. Eradicating poverty is not simply an issue of adjusting our income supports for low-income families. Half of the children living in poverty in Alberta have at least one parent who works full-time. Increasing minimum wage, establishing a living wage policy for the human services sector, and investing in public services like child care, health care, and education are all important steps towards reducing poverty in Alberta. These goals are achievable. If all levels of government work together, we can move towards the eradication of poverty in Alberta.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Statement by the Speaker

Alberta-Hokkaido Twinning Relationship

The Speaker: Hon. members, I'm going to provide you with just a brief historical vignette today. The subject is Alberta and Hokkaido. Historically this province, this government of Alberta has had a relationship with other government jurisdictions throughout the world. A few days ago on October 8, 2008, Canada and Japan recognized their 80-year diplomatic relationship, and the Legislative Assembly of Alberta and the Legislative Assembly of Hokkaido recognized their 28 years of co-operation.

It was on October 17, 1980, that Alberta and Hokkaido were officially twinned. To date Alberta remains the only Canadian province that is twinned with a Japanese prefecture. Hokkaido is the largest of the 47 prefectures in Japan. The volunteer exchange agreement that was signed between Alberta and Hokkaido on March 18, 1992, was the first of its kind globally and became the model for such protocols, recognized by the world volunteer movement and the United Nations. Business, education, sports, human resources, social services, and other sectors have benefited from this relationship. Seventeen Alberta municipalities are twinned with Japanese counterparts, as are 15 schools throughout this province as well.

2:50

Just as an asterisk, the twin city, sister city movement concept was initiated by a former President of the United States, President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

On October 8, 2008, a Japanese garden was unveiled on the

Alberta Legislature Grounds to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Japan-Canada relations. As all members know, gardens in the Japanese tradition are designed as places of tranquility, recreation, and celebration. Attending the commemorative event were the Hon. Isao Tsurube, Speaker of the prefecture of Hokkaido; Minister Masataka Tarahara, embassy of Japan; Yasuo Minemura, consul general of Japan in the Canadian west; and the President of the Treasury Board of the government of Alberta.

In this month, the month of October 2008, Alberta is home to some 12,000 Canadians of Japanese descent, and in two years from now, in 2010, Alberta and Hokkaido will commemorate their 30-year special relationship. It will afford an opportunity, I believe, for increased relationships between Members of this Legislative Assembly and the governments of both Alberta and Hokkaido.

Presenting Petitions

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont.

Mr. Denis: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure that I rise today to present a petition regarding the recognition of marriage and family therapists under the Health Professions Act. There are approximately 3,263 signatures here from throughout Alberta although primarily from the city of Calgary. This petition was presented to me by Heather Macdonald, who is a resident of Acadia in my constituency, and reads:

We, the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government to introduce amendments to the Health Professions Act that would recognize marriage and family therapists as a regulated profession under that Act.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have another 36 signatures to add to the growing thousands of signatures calling upon the Legislative Assembly to "pass legislation that will prohibit emotional bullying and psychological harassment in the workplace." They are primarily from Calgary, throughout the city.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition to present this afternoon. The petition reads:

We the undersigned residents of Alberta, petition the Legislative Assembly to urge the Government of Alberta to commission an independent and public inquiry into the Alberta Government's administration of or involvement with the Local Authorities Pension Plan, the Public Service Pension Plan, and the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund.

This series of petitions is signed by people from Calgary, Vegreville, Edmonton, Lethbridge.

Thank you.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Environment and Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 34(3.1) to advise the House that on Monday, October 20, 2008, we will be accepting Written Question 20. Additional written questions shall stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

I also wish to give notice that on Monday, October 20, 2008,

motions for returns 9, 10, and 11 will be accepted, and motions for returns 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 will be dealt with that day. Additional motions for returns shall stand and retain their places on the Order Paper.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright.

Bill 32

Meat Inspection Amendment Act, 2008

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to request leave to introduce Bill 32, the Meat Inspection Amendment Act, 2008.

This act will enable the transfer of inspection responsibilities for the mobile butcher facilities to Agriculture and Rural Development from the regional health authorities under Health and Wellness. A mobile butcher facility exists where a mobile butcher is able to prepare, package, and store meat from an animal that has been slaughtered on the owner's premises, in a provincially licensed abattoir, or in a federally registered establishment.

It's worth noting that this bill was under development long before the recent listeria outbreak in federally inspected meat facilities in Ontario came to light. However, this issue reinforces the importance of Bill 32 and its focus on ensuring a consistent approach to food safety in Alberta. This bill will see the inspection responsibilities for mobile butcher facilities and provincially licensed abattoirs residing within the same provincial department, Mr. Speaker, ensuring consistent application of the meat facility standards and food safety practices.

[Motion carried; Bill 32 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move that Bill 32 be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Bill 33

Agriculture Financial Services Amendment Act, 2008

Mr. Groeneveld: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 33, the Agriculture Financial Services Amendment Act, 2008. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor has been informed of the contents of this bill and recommends the same to the Assembly.

The bill will provide authority for the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, also known as AFSC, to offer livestock insurance programs in addition to crop insurance programs. Currently there are limited options to manage major livestock risks. Livestock producers are seeking industry risk protection. As well, the bill proposes to move a financial limitation imposed by the Agriculture Financial Services Act to the agriculture financial services regulation. The financial limitation is the maximum amount for which loans or guarantees to any single borrower of AFSC may be outstanding at any time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 33 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Nose Hill.

Bill 34

Employment Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2008

Dr. Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 34, the Employment Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2008.

The legislation allows Alberta to enter into new agreements with other pension regulators for the regulation of pension plans with members in more than one province. The bill provides that some laws of another jurisdiction will apply to Albertans if they are members of a pension plan that is registered in another province. These laws do not affect entitlements to benefits. The new agreement would make pension plan administration easier for plan sponsors and will decrease the number of regulatory rules they have to follow in administering their pension plans.

[Motion carried; Bill 34 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd move that Bill 34 be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Bill 36

Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008

Dr. Brown: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce the Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008.

This proposed bill will address the difficulties faced by land titles clients due to long turnaround times at the land titles office by creating a searchable pending registration queue. Documents submitted to the land titles office that have not yet been examined and registered on title will be registered in this queue, and this will enable clients to see any documents affecting the same title that have been submitted and are pending registration and will allow clients to make an informed decision as to whether or not they wish to close their real estate or financial transaction. It will also clarify when someone may make a claim against the assurance fund.

[Motion carried; Bill 36 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd move that Bill 36 be moved onto the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

Tabling Returns and Reports

Mr. Groeneveld: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table today the annual report for the Farmers' Advocate office for the 2007-2008 year, which includes the financial statements of the Farm Implement Board. I also have the required copies here.

3:00

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Ms DeLong: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm tabling the appropriate number of copies of letters from 200 Calgary-Bow constituents. The letters express concern regarding labour laws in Alberta and list five areas for requested change: introduction of a

first contract arbitration process; full legal recognition of bargaining rights for public employees, including the right to strike; one labour law for all unionized workers; automatic certification of workplaces where more than half of the employees clearly indicate they want to be represented by a union; and a request for legislation outlawing the use of replacement workers to break strikes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have five tablings today on the theme of justice. The first two tablings are correspondence between myself and the hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and the second tabling is the minister's response to me.

My next set of responses has to deal with the Lubicon Nation's concerns. I would like to note that in 2005 the Official Opposition of Alberta held the government accountable for the abuse of the process regarding the Sawn Lake development and lack of consultation at that time.

My first tabling on behalf of the Lubicon comes from the United Nations. Canada has been the subject of several UN decisions regarding abuse of the human and aboriginal rights of the Lubicon Lake Indian Nation under two international human rights covenants to which Canada is a signatory.

My second set of Lubicon tablings has to do with human rights and church organizations who have sent messages to the Alberta government calling for the suspension of the pipeline until the Lubicon rights are respected. That's a joint release of Amnesty International and Kairos, who were introduced to the members of the House earlier.

My final tabling is Land and Way of Life under Threat: The Lubicon Cree of Canada. It details the problems they've had, especially with oil and gas extraction without permission.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one tabling. I would like to table five copies of an excerpt from an April 22, 2008, letter from Bernard Ominayak, chief of the Lubicon Lake Nation, and Mr. Arthur Cunningham, senior aboriginal policy adviser for TransCanada Pipelines Limited in which Chief Ominayak outlines conditions he would like TransCanada to meet regarding the use of Lubicon traditional lands.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood.

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of a letter that I referred to today from the chair of the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination dated August 15, 2008. The letter refers to the unresolved dispute of the construction of a pipeline through the Lubicon Cree territory and challenges the authority of the AUC and the government of Alberta to authorize the construction of a pipeline across Lubicon territory without Lubicon consent.

Tablings to the Clerk

The Clerk: I wish to advise the House that the following documents were deposited with the office of the Clerk. On behalf of the hon.

Mr. Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology, pursuant to the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research Act, the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research 2008 annual report; pursuant to the Apprentice and Industry Training Act, the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board annual report 2007-2008.

On behalf of the hon. Ms Evans, Minister of Finance and Enterprise, the ATB Financial 2008 annual report.

Projected Government Business

The Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Under Standing Order 7(6) I would like to request now that the House leader for the government please share with the Legislative Assembly the projected government business for the week commencing October 20, 2008.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the House will know, we are in the process of dealing with bills that were remaining on the Order Paper from the spring session. Depending on progress this afternoon, we'll continue to do that next week, but also new bills have been introduced. Projected government business is quite comprehensive, so bear with me, if you will.

On Monday evening at 8:30 second reading of bills 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 32, 33, 34, 36. Now, obviously, we won't deal with all of those, but it is subject to discussion with the opposition as to which ones will appropriately come up. In Committee of the Whole, depending on progress, Bill 11 and Bill 8, and third reading should be available on bills 21, 14, 15, 16, 25, 9, 19, and 27.

The same lineup, Mr. Speaker, for Tuesday, October 21, in the afternoon would be in order, and then depending on progress the same lineup in the evening on Tuesday.

Assuming progress, Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, the 22nd, for second reading we would presume that bills 36, 38, and 39 might be available and committee for bills 35, 32, 33, 34, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31, as per the Order Paper. The same lineup would be available for the evening and for Thursday afternoon.

Hopefully, in future weeks we'll be able to be more specific as to bills that would be dealt with by the House, but all of that is subject, of course, to discussion with the opposition.

Orders of the Day

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 11

Insurance 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-West.

Mr. Weadick: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise today to present a government amendment to Bill 11. It has been tabled with the Clerk, and I would ask that it be given out to the members today.

Thank you. While they're being handed out, I'll run through the changes. There are four amendments being requested. This will be tabled as amendment A1, an amendment to Bill 11, the Insurance Amendment Act, 2008.

On your sheet you'll notice that there are four amendments. Under A the following is added after section 18 under 18.1: sections 83 and 98 are amended by striking out "fire" wherever it occurs and substituting "property." The purpose of this change is to bring this portion of the bill into conformity with the balance of the bill. The change from "fire" to "property" brings us into line with recommendations by the Supreme Court that we broaden the definition, this definition within the insurance acts of the provinces, so this is accomplishing that within this section of the bill.

In B section 28 is amended in the proposed section 666(2) by striking out "execution or seizure under the Civil Enforcement Act or" and substituting "civil enforcement proceedings under the Civil Enforcement Act or execution or seizure under." This particular portion improves the rights of plaintiffs and exempts life insurance policies from civil enforcement proceedings as well as execution and seizure orders. This is very important and does broaden the rights of plaintiffs.

3:10

Part B(b). After section 712 we're going to add the following:

712.1 If the Court finds that the evidence furnished pursuant to Statutory Condition 5 set out in section 705 is not sufficient or that a presumption of death is not established, it may order that the matters in issue be decided in an action brought or to be brought, or make any other order it considers just respecting further evidence to be furnished by the claimant, publication of advertisements, further inquiry or any other matter, or respecting costs.

This has always been included in the life insurance portion of the bill, but now this will be also added into the section on accident and sickness insurance. This is a positive thing as well and brings the presumption of death portion into the accident and sickness portion of the insurance as well.

The final one, (c). In the proposed section 749(1), we're striking out "section 26" and substituting "section 28." This was just a mistake in the drafting of the bill. We missed that and put in the wrong section, so it's a housekeeping change.

I would ask that the House approve this amendment as presented. Thank you.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Citing *Beauchesne* . . .

The Chair: On amendment A1.

Ms Blakeman: Actually, this is a request, Mr. Chairman. Referencing *Beauchesne* 688 on page 205, I'd like to ask that this amendment be severed and voted on in four pieces, please, the first being that that is designated as A, the second being B(a), the third being B(b), and the fourth being B(c). Without being able to work my way through this, I don't want to vote against it all because of one little piece I don't like, so I'm asking that this be severed into the four sections. That request has always been honoured in the House.

Mr. Weadick: That's acceptable.

The Chair: That's acceptable.

Ms Blakeman: Great. Thanks very much. So we have these amendments in front of us now. I was curious about the striking out of the word "fire" wherever it occurred and substituting "property." This is specific to section 18. I have to admit that I'm a little curious about this. Essentially, section 18 was amending 82(1). Section 18 as I'm reading it appears on the bottom of page 6, so it's actually amending section 82(1) in the original act. What's being struck out there is "standard owner's policy referred to" in a different section or "standard garage policy" and substituting "motor vehicle liability policy, except the type of insurance provided in a standard excess automobile policy or standard non-owned automobile policy."

This doesn't look right to me. Am I looking at the right section 18? It's not talking about fire particularly. If I reference the explanatory notes that appear on the explanatory note page, it's referencing section 82(1): "No reciprocal insurance exchange may be licensed to undertake the type of automobile insurance that is evidenced by a standard owner's policy referred to in section 610(6) or a standard garage policy." I'm sort of wondering what this is referring to because I can't find the reference. You know, it's a thick act, and it's possible that there are two sections 18 in here. There could be a section 18 that appears as part of the whole section 5. No, that numbering starts in the 500 range. I'm not quite sure what's being amended here. So if I could get that question answered for starters.

The second part of that is that when we look at striking out "fire" and replacing it with "property," I'm wondering if this is actually expanding the coverage that people are getting or if it's taking something away from them. According to the notes that I saw from the sponsoring member, it was supposed to be expanding it. It should imply that damage to property, instead of that being caused exclusively by fire, would now be included under the insurance coverage, and that should expand the scope, but I need that – hang on. It's sections 83 and 98, not 82. Well, that's interesting because in the actual act it's referencing 82. What the heck is going on here?

An Hon. Member: Call the question.

Ms Blakeman: No. Now I'm really not going to call the question because in the act section 18 is referencing section 82(1), but in the amendment that the member has brought forward, it's referencing section 83.

Mr. Hancock: They're adding 18.1, which amends 83 and 98.

Ms Blakeman: I'm getting a little help here from the Government House Leader, who is suggesting that they're adding 18.1, which would now reference 83 and 98 as well as the original 18, which references 82(1).

Mr. MacDonald: Are they confused?

Ms Blakeman: Well, no. Okay. So I will take my seat and allow the sponsoring member to answer that first question while I double-check that what the Government House Leader has offered up is likely. I am looking for an answer from the sponsor on the expansion, whether this is an expansion or whether it could be interpreted by the courts to be a limiting of coverage.

The second thing is that at some point in his opening remarks he referenced a Supreme Court ruling, and I'm wondering which Supreme Court ruling that is because the only one I was aware of in connection with this particular Insurance Act was the one that came through in 2003. That was the appeal case on KP Pacific Holdings Ltd. versus Guardian Insurance Company, and this was about the

time frame. If I could get a reference or if he can make me a photocopy and send that, that would be great.

So that's my first question, and I've got more to come.

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps I can help the hon. member out with respect to her first piece. The A portion of the amendment references the addition of section 18.1. That section would say that sections 83 and 98 of the Insurance Act are amended by striking out "fire" wherever it occurs and substituting "property."

Section 83, for example, of the Insurance Act references fire insurance. In the context of that, it says, "the Minister must not issue a licence to a reciprocal insurance exchange that authorizes the exchange to undertake fire insurance unless the Minister is satisfied," et cetera. It's taking "fire insurance," which is a specific, and inserting the word "property" to make it "property insurance," which is broader. So the amendment broadens.

I'll let the hon. sponsor of the bill refer to what case it was that suggested that the reference should be broader, but fire insurance is one form of damage to property, so property insurance would be a broader, more inclusive reference. So these two sections are being amended to change "fire" to "property" to broaden the context about what kinds of damage to property might be covered.

Ms Blakeman: Okay. The reference to the Supreme Court: is that forthcoming?

Ms Evans: Could we go on to something else? I'm waiting for a response directly, and I'd like to make sure that we are accurate in delivering it.

Ms Blakeman: I appreciate the minister's attention to detail. Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

3:20

Mr. Hehr: Okay. Well, thank you for those explanations there on 18.1. I believe, actually, that if the amendment is broadening the scope – and it appears that "property" does in fact expand the scope from the word "fire" – it looks like it's generally a decent amendment. So it looks like the explanation by the Government House Leader was in fact a truism, and we're still waiting for that case reference.

I'm just looking at the other amendments here and looking at section 28, which is amended (a) in the proposed section 666(2) by striking out "execution or seizure under the Civil Enforcement Act or" and substituting "civil enforcement proceedings under the Civil Enforcement Act or execution or seizure under" and (b) by adding the following after the proposed section 712:

712.1 If the Court finds that the evidence furnished pursuant to Statutory Condition 5 set out in section 705 is not sufficient or that a presumption of death is not established, it may order that the matters in issue be decided in an action brought or to be brought, or make any other order it considers just respecting further evidence to be furnished by the claimant, publication of advertisements, further inquiry or any other matter, or respecting costs.

So in looking at that amendment, it looks like it's a fairly reasonably clear amendment.

Actually, if we could ask a couple of questions on this, primarily is this section 28 again referencing the same section? Was it just following after the property and fire section of the act, was this in a different section of the act, or is this right after the 18.1 that was just

referenced? I guess if I could ask that question to the amending sponsor.

The Chair: While waiting for the answers, would any other member like to speak? The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Either to the hon. sponsor of the bill or to the hon. Minister of Education and House leader: it would be helpful if you could provide a page number from the book to which these additions are being made. It would be somewhat easier to reference them because there would appear to be more than one 18 as the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre pointed out. In order to discuss these thoroughly, it would be a good idea to have that page reference as well as the 18.1 reference. So if you could give a page reference for sections 83 and 98 out of this enormous bill book, that would be most appreciated. I'll wait to see if that's possible, and then we can resume discussion.

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Chairman, on page 6 of Bill 11 there's a section 18. I don't know what other section 18 the hon. member might be referring to, but there's only one section 18 of the bill. If you follow, sections 1, 2, and 3 are on page 1, sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 are on page 2, and it goes down to page 6, and there's a section 18 at the bottom of page 6. Section 18 at the bottom of page 6 says that 82(1) is amended by striking out. So this amendment then says that in the bill following that section 18 there will be a section 18.1, and that section 18.1 refers to amendments to sections 83 and 98.

Now, what we're talking about is amending the Insurance Act. Sections 83 and 98 are in the Insurance Act, and I just referenced what they are. Section 83 is a reference with respect to fire insurance. For 98, if I recall correctly, the heading over it is Requirements for Fire Insurance. This is putting a section into the amendment bill which will change the word "fire" in those two sections of the Insurance Act to "property." So instead of reading "fire insurance," it'll read "property insurance," which is a more inclusive type of insurance but covers fire insurance to property.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much, Government House Leader, for those clarifications. With the extension of the inclusion from fire to include property in general, I'm wondering how that affects ongoing damages that are sometimes considered under acts of God. For example, if the water comes up from your sewer line and floods and it's a problem dealing with the sewer line – and the municipality is potentially on the hook for it if the water seeps in from outside, you know – and you end up with flooding and mould, as a number of Albertans have experienced over the last two years with high stream flows on a number of rivers, including the Highwood, then that extension to property damage is a very wide extension. I know insurance companies are very big on the fine print of the contract.

Just on that specific concern, would someone please address moving from the word "fire" to property in general. What liabilities does that remove from the insurance holder and place upon the insurer? Just a little bit of an explanation as to the intent.

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Chairman, with the permission of the sponsor of the bill this has absolutely nothing to do with that. In other words, this doesn't change anybody's fire insurance policy. There are two sections. Section 83 reads: "The Minister must not issue a licence to a reciprocal insurance exchange that authorizes the exchange to undertake fire insurance unless the Minister is satisfied that the

exchange has bona fide applications for reciprocal contracts.” In other words, it’s about the operation of the system, not the operation of an individual contract. It broadens it to make that requirement about reciprocal insurance exchange with respect to property insurance rather than just specifically to fire insurance. So it doesn’t affect the contents of a particular insurance policy.

Requirements for Fire Insurance is the heading for section 98, and it says: “A reciprocal insurance exchange that is authorized to undertake fire insurance must ensure that no subscriber has assumed on any single fire insurance risk an amount greater than 10% of the net worth of the subscriber.” Again, this is talking about the overarching piece, not about the individual policies.

I would caveat that to say to the hon. member that it wouldn’t be appropriate to ask for a legal interpretation in the House about the specific applicability of any fire insurance policy or property insurance policy. Floods, whether caused by act of God or caused by municipal backup: that’s a specific interpretation, a legal interpretation of a specific contract and not an appropriate issue for this particular discussion.

If you read the sections that are being amended, it’s basically the minister’s role in the application of reciprocal exchange with insurance providers, and it’s just broadening the definition of “fire” to “property.”

As to what court case there was, I’ll leave that to others to respond to, but I’m not sure that you really need to go to a specific court case to say that this is a good idea or not. Obviously, having that broader provision to property as opposed to the specific provision of fire makes sense.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I’m not being nitpicky here. Insurance, nor the law surrounding it, is not something I’m familiar with. But if we’re sort of recommending this under the names Bill 11 and Insurance Act, then the results of our legislation are going to determine how insurance companies, theoretically, in both Alberta and British Columbia act in a somewhat different manner given the amendments and the revised regulations to Bill 11. My question, trying to make it very generic and very encompassing, is: are we putting insurance companies under a circumstance where they have to accept considerably greater liability when we take the term “fire” and we extend it to “property” because there could be a whole variety of damages regardless of the individual insurer and the clauses within the plan? Are we not putting an awful lot of onus on our insurance companies to be considerably more responsible than they were just under the term “fire”? Considering the number of other things that happen to property, are we opening them up for greater liability than they are currently facing?

3:30

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader on behalf of the bill’s sponsor.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would commend the hon. member just to read the sections that I’ve referred to. The section specifically talks about issuing

a licence to a reciprocal insurance exchange that authorizes the exchange to undertake fire insurance,
now changed to property insurance,
unless the Minister is satisfied that the exchange has bona fide applications for reciprocal contracts for at least the prescribed number of separate [property] insurance risks in Alberta or elsewhere and for at least the prescribed aggregate amount.

Clearly, what this section is dealing with is the ability of an insurance company to meet its risks and whether it has spread its risks through the reciprocal exchange process. It’s not about the increased liability of an insurance company under a contract, but it does expand the category beyond fire to the full category of property in terms of the requirement put on a minister in terms of what she must look at before issuing a licence to a reciprocal insurance exchange.

Mr. Chase: At the risk of exposing myself as simple-minded, my question has to do with who the two reciprocal partners are that the minister has to pass judgment on or make a judgment call on. I’m sure that there are a number of Albertans who are not better informed than I am on the intricacies of insurance.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Ms Evans: Yeah. I think that the words of the House leader were quite wise in saying: let’s focus on the bill. You’re asking for an interpretation about the level of liability. I’m not sure that there was an intent for more liability. I think it’s relative to the responsibility of insurance companies. When we did extensive consultations on this bill, this bill was widely accepted in the industry as being a responsible form of amendment that really would lend clarity to some of the issues that the hon. member is raising.

Mr. Chairman, I am valiantly trying to get the information relative to the Supreme Court decision that has been referenced by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre. As I await that, I would just simply say: is it possible, since there has been a request to sever this bill, to just set aside? I don’t know procedurally if we’re able to set aside and move to the next section, or should we just continue forward? I’m having a hard time understanding exactly what your issues are here because I thought it was quite clear, but perhaps it could be rephrased by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, and I’d be glad to do so. Albertans outside the legal profession do not have the benefit of what I would refer to in quotations as legalese. Reciprocal we understand to mean that there are two. A reciprocation means: you do this; I do that. That’s the definition of reciprocal. I’m wondering – I’ve asked, and I think it’s a basic question – who the reciprocal partners are in the arrangement that is being discussed under section 18.1 of this particular amendment. Is it one company with a larger parent company? Is it an individual insurance company and the arrangement they have with their shareholders or those that are insured? Who are the two reciprocal parties that are being referred to in this amendment?

The Chair: Hon. member, may I call attention to the fact that we are now focusing on amendment A1? We already had a decision on splitting it into parts. We will just debate each part, then we’ll vote on each part, and then we will wrap it up.

Hon. Government House Leader, could you follow that outline?

Mr. Hancock: Certainly, Mr. Speaker. We are on section A, which I presume is the first part of the amendment; that is, this amendment with respect to adding section 18.1, which deals with sections 83 and 98, which amends those by striking out “fire” and substituting “property,” a relatively straightforward concept. I explained the concept, and I think it’s clear to people what the concept is now. I don’t mean this in a patronizing way.

You have to read these things with the act. I appreciate that there’s a lot of bills forward, but this one has been on the table for a long time. This amendment is new. There’s nothing untoward here.

A reciprocal insurance exchange is a defined term in the act, and it means “a group of subscribers exchanging reciprocal contracts of indemnity or inter-insurance with each other through a principal attorney.”

Now, that in itself probably doesn't help you much. Essentially, insurance is not always done by one entity alone; it's done by groups of entities working together. In order to sell insurance in a province, they have to satisfy the minister of finance that they're capable of backing up their contracts. So if they're doing it as a part of a group of insurers, then the group of insurers has to satisfy the minister that they're capable of backing up their contract. This is not changing any of that. Okay? The extent to which they have to go to satisfy the minister that they're capable of paying their contracts when called upon to do so is all in the act. Right?

Section 98 of the act outlines some of those requirements for fire insurance, which we now change to property insurance. It basically says: “A reciprocal insurance exchange,” one of these groups of companies, “that is authorized to undertake fire insurance” – now read: property insurance – “must ensure that no subscriber,” none of the members, “has assumed on any single fire insurance risk an amount greater than 10% of the net worth.” In other words, keep the risk low so that when somebody has a loss, the company is capable of paying it.

Then there are references to the principal attorney, which is the key person through whom all these insurance bodies operate, and that principal attorney “must file, when requested by the Minister, a statement under oath,” which provides certain things.

With respect, I'm not sure that it's necessary for us to get into the full meat of the Insurance Act in terms of all the requirements that insurers are required to post in order to be able to operate in the province. The nut of this is that the current section reads “fire insurance.” The new section as amended will read “property insurance,” which is broader than fire insurance. It's up to those insurance companies to satisfy the minister that they're capable of paying claims when they're made, or they ought not to be allowed to operate. These sections set out what it is that they need to do to provide satisfaction to the minister.

I don't think it's necessary for us, really, to go through in more detail a full explanation of how the whole insurance system operates in order to deal with that specific piece, as the chair has asked us to do, the simple question of changing “fire” to “property.” I understand and appreciate where you're coming from about people understanding this, but the bottom line here is that it's up to the minister through this act to make sure that before companies are allowed to sell insurance in the province, they have sufficient merit behind them to be able to satisfy their claims. This just simply broadens that particular section from fire to property.

3:40

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I know the hon. minister and House leader has a number of relatives that are teachers, and he would have done equally well in education as he's done in law. I very much appreciate his explanation and his patience. I think that explanation probably helped an awful lot of Albertans understand the relationship of the ministry in terms of its oversight stewardship role over the industry. I appreciate the explanation of reciprocal.

For example, my insurer is Dyck Insurance on Crowchild Trail, which, interestingly enough, suffered from fire. Possibly their own insurance would have been better covered if the new Bill 11 had been in place at the time. Fortunately for me and others who depend on Dyck Insurance as an agent for groups like Wawanesa and so on, the damage wasn't done.

Again, my overriding question is: does the change from fire to property affect the insurer's assets or capability to provide the compensation because of the inclusion of potentially a whole series of other difficulties beyond the specific agent of fire in damage or destruction to the home? I understand that, obviously, the insurance companies thought this was a good idea, so they must be supportive of it. But does it increase their liability and, therefore, draw on the assets the insurance company has collected on behalf of their stakeholders by broadening the terms of the compensation? I hope I'm not appearing cyclical or, worse, psycho, but if you could provide me with that answer, I'd appreciate it.

Ms Evans: Mr. Chairman, I am going to indicate that to the best of my knowledge it just clarifies it. It makes it clearer. Whether that in its impact broadens the responsibility of the liability – I think that we're here to protect those people that are protected by the Insurance Act, not necessarily to remove liability or curtail liability from the insurance company's perspective. I think it would finally take a challenge in the courts to determine whether or not that, in fact, was the case, whether there was a broader sense of responsibility or a broader mandate of responsibility because of the change in the act. Perhaps seeing all of the amendments in the whole, if I get any difference of opinion – I regret to delay the House on this matter – in short order I'll certainly let you know. At this point it was my understanding that it would be clearer and clarify it in the first instance. Yes, it's possible that the insurance company would have more accountability relative to any potential damage.

Mr. Chase: From the point of protecting Albertans and having sustainable business continuing, whether it be insurance or any other type of entrepreneurial endeavour in Alberta, I'm pleased that those clarifications are being made.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview in questions and in debate in the House talked about the global volatility that is affecting a number of companies. Insurance companies do not simply make their money by estimating the risk of paying out versus the risk of collecting. They have large investments in stocks as well. A number of the insurance companies, you know, have billions and billions of dollars in assets which the markets are continuing to eat away given this global downturn that we're currently experiencing. Within this bill it's talking about being able to cover at least 10 per cent payout at any particular time. Within the amendment is there any realization that by extending the definition of coverage from fire to property damage in general, this isn't going to place a financial burden on the insurance companies? Is there sort of a descending up and down scale based on the fortunes and some type of auditing of the companies within either this proposed amendment – or I can ask that question later – that allows insurance companies to continue to be able to pay out to the individual insured in the event of damage? Is this in the amendment? If it's not, I'll simply raise that concern.

We've broadened the scope of the definition. We've broadened the responsibility of the insurance companies. Do we know if they're able to accept this extra financial burden? How frequently would the minister be able to get audited financial updates to show that the companies were still in a financial position to operate successfully under Bill 11, an act that governs Alberta and is being proposed to also govern insurance in British Columbia?

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Ms Evans: Thank you. The intent of changing “fire” to “property” was in fact to correct a drafting oversight when this bill was put together and was in reference to the Supreme Court cases, the KP Pacific and Churchland cases. Now, I don't know if that's going to

make any clarity for you, but if you explore the intent of that Supreme Court decision on those cases, that would be the reason that provoked this change from fire to property. The intricacies of those cases I would undertake to provide the hon. member opposite at a later date, but clearly if you can take on faith that that is the information that I have received on those specific cases – perhaps the House leader would continue and give more clarity to that, please. If I could ask the House leader.

The Chair: Our hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Perhaps this will bring it into focus. The Insurance Act was put together at a time when insurance contracts were written for distinct classes of insurance; i.e., fire insurance, one class of insurance. It's been updated from time to time and now deals with the more general class of insurance, which includes all of those classes, including fire insurance. When those updates happened, these two references were not appropriately changed.

Two decisions in the Supreme Court of Canada in May 2003 held that part 5 of the British Columbia Insurance Act did not apply to multiperil policies and effectively struck it down. Those cases include KP Pacific Holdings Ltd. versus Guardian Insurance Company of Canada, 2003, and Churchland versus Gore Mutual Insurance Company, 2003, two cases which found a specific error in the B.C. act relative to this change from specific classes of insurance to general classes of insurance.

This is essentially a housekeeping piece to pick that up. It should have been picked up on the original review, but as you pointed out, this is a very thick act which covers a lot of sections. So in the ongoing review that we do, this piece was picked up. It's not a controversial piece. It's not expanding anybody's liability. It's simply correcting that change from the old form of insurance, which was with respect to specific classes, i.e. fire, to the current form of insurance, which is more generally property.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I'd like to thank the minister of finance and the Minister of Education in his role as House leader for providing that background. I don't expect you to go into detail. That's something that I can do in my spare time and with the help from the limited research that we have within the Liberal caucus.

I do appreciate the clarification, and I do also appreciate the government oversight in proposing this amendment which would have made us vulnerable to an inadequacy in the British Columbia insurance plan. That's the whole point of TILMA: strengthening our interprovincial relationships. This, had it not been caught, would have, I believe, caused a degree of liability. So thank you for finding so quickly the specific Supreme Court case rulings and also for your teamwork in providing clarification and explanation. It is very much appreciated.

3:50

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I would just like some clarification on this amendment. As I understand it, we're going to be calling it A1, or just A as it's listed here.

The Chair: A1, part A.

Mr. MacDonald: This is the amendment we were going to talk about last evening, but we could not, correct?

Now, I have one quick question for the hon. Government House Leader. I apologize. I've been in and out of the Assembly, and I've been listening to this exchange. The Supreme Court case was after July of 2003. Is that correct?

Ms Evans: The two decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada in May 2003 held that part 5 of the British Columbia Insurance Act did not apply to multiperil policies and effectively struck it down. The Alberta Court of Queen's Bench came to the same conclusion regarding the Alberta Insurance Act in Fenrich versus Wawanesa. That's essentially the background of it.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you. In the Wawanesa case in the Alberta judicial system: that was after July 2003. Correct?

Ms Evans: I'm not sure of the relevance of that particular date. I don't have that date in front of me, but I would assume that it is because it follows the May 2003, right? You said that it's July 2003. Perhaps the House leader can help me with that. [interjection] It's not footnoted. No. Did you want that information?

Mr. MacDonald: No. Perhaps we can just clarify this. I'm just looking at the statute as amended. I was the critic for that first part of the act, and I think the person carrying that bill for the government at that time was Marlene Graham. I'm just looking at the statute here, and the date, of course, is July 2003 where all this, I believe, would have been consolidated into this act.

Now, we're just simply changing "fire" to "property in sections 83 and 98, right? In section 98 there will be two changes, where the word "fire" is struck out and is substituted in two cases with "property." There is no difference whatsoever in the amount that's held in a reserve fund, as I understand it. That would also be applicable in section 83, which is titled Fire Insurance. Okay. You can still refer to this as fire insurance in section 83 – correct? – or will it be property insurance there as well?

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Chairman, this is really straightforward. Section 83 references fire insurance in two places, which would be changed to property insurance, which is the more current utilization and a more comprehensive utilization. That section, by the way, came from the 1999 act, so it has nothing to do with 2005. Section 98 has the term "fire insurance" by my count approximately 10 times. That section was also from the 1999 act.

I'm not sure where the hon. member is going with this. I can't give legal opinions, obviously, but it wouldn't change anybody's liability. It simply changes the process that the minister has to go through under section 83 before issuing a licence – that doesn't refer to any licences already issued; it's talking about before issuing a licence – and the requirements under section 98, "a reciprocal insurance exchange that is authorized to undertake [property] insurance," what their obligation is. This is not at all a controversial piece. It's simply modernizing the act, changing references to fire that ought to have been changed when the act was rewritten before. It has nothing to do with 2005. Those sections come from 1999.

Ms Evans: Added to that, the cases were a matter of whether the claim was presented within a legal limitation period. B.C. had two different limitation periods. The result of these cases was that the court recommended that the insurance acts across Canada be amended and cleaned up. I think we're spending quite a bit of time on this. I think we've got the information relative to the Supreme

Court decisions, and I think that, hopefully, makes it straightforward for this severed amendment.

The Chair: Any other hon. members want to join in the debate on A1, part A?

[Motion on amendment A1A carried]

The Chair: Now we go to part B(a).

Ms Blakeman: Yes. The second vote is on section B, the first part, which in the amendment as presented appears as (a). Essentially, this is dealing with life insurance. I understand that this is a wording change, and it's essentially administrative in nature. My research says that there's no alteration to the meaning and intent, and I'm fine with it. I don't think it changes substantially what we're attempting to do here, so I'm okay with it.

The Chair: Any other members?

[Motion on amendment A1B(a) carried]

The Chair: Now we go to part B(b).

Ms Blakeman: Okay. The third vote is on section B(b) in the original amendment. It is adding in a new section that talks about evidence. I think what we had before was that if they didn't have everything they needed, the court could not ask for it and proceed. They basically had to stop, and – who knows? – the whole thing got dropped or set back.

My understanding is that this is dealing with a notice or a proof of claim for an accident, sickness, or disability claim, and this new section, 712.1, would be giving the opportunity that if a presumption of death is not established, for example, it can ask that further evidence be furnished. It can seek out that evidence, and it didn't have the ability to do that in the past. I sense that this is a section that will enhance the service to the claimants and allow claims to proceed that otherwise would probably be held up. As such, because I see it as an enhancement to the claimants, who are ordinary human beings who are just trying to get on with their lives here, I'm okay with this section unless I'm not understanding it appropriately.

4:00

Mr. Weadick: No. That is exactly what's happened in this. It's a good move, and we should approve it.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much. Again, I earlier referred to legalese, and I think we should be grateful that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre is the finance critic and I'm not. Otherwise, these discussions might go on interminably.

Mr. Hancock: They already have.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Government House Leader, Minister of Education, for wanting to speed up the legal process here.

I read this particular clause, 712.1:

If the Court finds that the evidence furnished pursuant to Statutory Condition 5 set out in section 705 is not sufficient or that a presumption of death is not established, it may order that the matters in issue be decided in an action brought or to be brought, or make any other order it considers just respecting further evidence to be furnished by

the claimant, publication of advertisements, further inquiry or any other matter, or respecting costs.

That is very much sort of an omnibus-type corollary that's being added. Given some of the specific cases – for example, there's a rather famous case, and I can't recall the names of the two doctors. One doctor was accused of having killed the other doctor, but the body, I believe, has yet to be recovered. In the instance, although the individual was charged based on a series of evidences, I'm not sure that the widow ever received compensation, for example, for the life insurance policy that may have been taken out on behalf of her husband and for the family.

Therefore, the clarification and the requirement of the claimant to potentially prove that this individual is, in fact, dead as opposed to out of the country or disappeared. I can imagine what Jimmy Hoffa's wife, for example, would have done with this Alberta clarification in terms of trying to claim on behalf of a body that's never been found. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, if we look at the American adventurer, it took two years practically of searching before the body was found. So does this make it easier? By making it a broader circumstance, is there less onus placed on the claimant to provide evidence of the death as opposed to the disappearance? How many years have to intervene, for example, before the claimant can receive the insurance claim, basically?

Again, possibly I'm not understanding this, but I don't quite see how this makes it easier for an individual to claim a death benefit. So I look forward, as I always do, to the explanations.

Ms Blakeman: It allows the courts to get additional information.

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre was quite accurate in her explanation. I'll try and repeat it perhaps. Under section 712 of the act, unless the court orders otherwise, an application made under section 709 or 710 operates as a stay of any pending action with respect to insurance money. So the action is stayed. There's no resolution. There's no opportunity to go anywhere.

If you want to actually provide an opportunity for somebody to go somewhere, you should provide the court with an alternative. This amendment provides the court with an alternative to say: there needs to be a cause of action, and you can bring your evidence, and here's what you need to do. This is a process, not a substance, question. It's a process question, where the court can provide a process for a claimant to bring the substantive information, which will then allow the court to resolve the issue. That's really all we're talking about. It doesn't change anybody's substantive rights, although I would have to say that I think that if somebody was convicted of murdering Dr. Snider, probably the insurance company would be hard-pressed to say that he wasn't dead.

All of those references, quite frankly, are not really, with all respect, relevant to this because it's really just about process. It's about giving the court an option to provide another process to allow someone to have their claim concluded. The current section sort of requires, if I read it correctly, that the court's option is to stay it rather than to have it progress.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I appreciate that explanation. Just to summarize to make sure that I have the concept down right, this gives more tools to the court to provide justice than necessarily to the claimant because the court can stay the proceedings. Basically,

it means that it remains frozen in time. It's a tool for the court as opposed to the person claiming.

Thank you.

The Chair: Since there is no further discussion on part B(b), then I'll call for the question.

[Motion on amendment A1B(b) carried]

The Chair: Now we go to part B(c).

Ms Blakeman: This is strictly the fixing of an administrative typo. As much as I enjoy it when the government makes a mistake, it would be unseemly of me to tease them, so I think that at this point I would just suggest that we call the question.

The Chair: No further discussion on part B(c)? I'll call for the question.

[Motion on amendment A1B(c) carried]

The Chair: Is there any comment on the bill? The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Yes. There was a question asked by my colleague the Leader of the Official Opposition, MLA for Edmonton-Riverview, in connection with this debate earlier this week. His concern was around the section which appears in the original act as section 115 but was being adjusted through this amending act.

Essentially, his question was around section 115, which dictated that insurance companies could not have a certain percentage of debt. The concern was that if their assets or investments were downgraded because of the current economic times, their percentage would rise, and then what? We have had a response from the minister that does note the question. I'll just read a bit of this: it is important to read that the section is being amended to ensure that it also includes any subsidiary of the original insurer so that the government can regulate the business of the insurer as a whole.

4:10

It was trying to capture those subsidiaries, but we were more concerned about the percentage of debt that it was allowed to carry, and that's where our question came from. The response that we've essentially had from the minister is that if a company did end up with a higher than allowed percentage, the superintendent of insurance doesn't, sort of, immediately pull their licence. They do go through and try and work with the company to get a plan that will help them get back on track. They try not to immediately, you know, suspend their operations. They look at things like liquidation of assets or restructuring in order to keep them above the threshold that's mentioned in section 115. I'm happy to table a copy of this letter. I'll just have to get copies, and then I'll table it. Sorry.

The minister goes on to talk about, you know, solvencies based on many issues and that the superintendent of insurance tries to meet regularly with companies to make sure they have the resources to pay the claims. Ultimately, if they can't help or save a company, there is a provision in the legislation to take control of the company and institute an orderly windup. There are specific sections in the act that provide protection for policyholders ahead of other creditors, which is good news. I like to see that consumer protection out there. There is an industry-wide compensation plan to make sure that outstanding claims are covered. That was a very thorough answer. Thank you for that. We were glad to see it because it was a bit of a puzzle.

Now, I think that my questions and concerns have essentially been answered in the debate that I've had. We've just gone through the amendments that the government brought forward, which were mostly administrative. It's a big bill, and any time I can encourage the government to introduce or to evergreen legislation using plain language, it's a big help. Insurance is baffling to people, and the truth is that they really don't want to know about it because they hope they never have to read their insurance policy. They hope that things never go wrong. That is the bet that they have, that things will go wrong, and therefore they're going to pay an insurance premium so that if and when they go wrong, they will have their assets covered or automobile or life or property or whatever else is involved.

It is an important part of our society. There are certain parts of it that are closely regulated by the government, and I think the onus is on the government to be involved in consumer protection wherever possible because this is hard for a citizen to do on their own and to be aware of all of this and to be trying to fight it by themselves. So I think legislation like this can be very helpful to citizens. I'm happy enough with what I've seen here. My reservations are, as I said before, the aligning with B.C. under this TILMA agreement. Now, we did get to debate this in the Legislature, Bill 11, the Insurance Amendment Act, so thank you for that, but we didn't get to debate TILMA. I still question anything that's now falling under that TILMA agreement because we didn't get to actually debate the agreement here, so I'm very careful with things that are being brought in as part of that agreement, and this insurance act was one of those.

I have had my questions answered. I understand what the legislation is and what it's trying to do, so I'm fine. I will get that letter copied so you can table it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Just some short comments. I can't help but think that the numbering of this bill is causing us a degree of concern and almost a haunting feeling because Bill 11 was the number for a very controversial health bill and the privatization potentials associated with Bill 11. It seems like the ghosts of Bill 11 have come forward to haunt us.

It would be interesting – and I'm sure that B.C. has their equivalent of Bill 11 – to set the two documents down side by side and see what problems B.C. anticipated in our legislation, which they had to then correct. We still tend to be dealing with half of the homework assignment, and it's somewhat difficult to just talk about half an assignment without having the material. You've sort of got to the point of the first crisis, and you have no idea what the climax, or the denouement, is going to be because those acts are being carried far away from here.

I appreciate the fact that the government is attempting to secure Albertans through the insurance policy oversight and revisions, and I'm sure that insurance companies in Alberta are appreciative of the fact that a clear set of rules for playing on the field have been laid out before them. As I say, it seems that we're out there with half of the information we need to truly provide support and understanding for Albertans. Any sort of suggestions as to when we'll receive the other half of the homework assignment from B.C. or any schedules that the minister of finance, the proposer of the bill, has as to when B.C. will reciprocate and send over their half of the homework would be appreciated.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to reiterate a few things that my colleagues have already said and look at sort of how the Insurance Act has been made better here by government. I'd like to point out that the amendment today broadening the definition from fire to property appears to be a good one.

Also, let's look at other things. Awfully befuddling, I think, to consumers and practitioners of the law alike were the different time limitations for filing claims against insurance companies or filing claims under different sections of the act when you look at it compared to the general rule out there, that it was two years for all claims in Alberta. It's good that we've cleared out that discrepancy in this bill. I think it allows, like I said, both consumers and practitioners of the law to move along on safer footing, that you have to file claims within two years. Within Alberta it's just that clear. You don't have to check three different acts or four different acts as to what the heck the limitation period is. I think that's great that we've made those changes.

I am somewhat reticent, like the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, that only half the homework assignment is in. By that I reference our current obligations under the TILMA agreement, where we introduced this legislation at the same time as the B.C. Legislature did. I was assuming that we were going to bring it to a close at the same time as the B.C. Legislature did. However, as we know, the B.C. Legislature isn't sitting this fall, so here we are. We're left all by our lonesome, so to speak, proceeding with a bill and hoping that B.C. will pass a bill exactly as we have it here, or – guess what? – this is back in front of us with some sort of amendment, some sort of wrangling. Then we have to ask our questions again, and you guys have to present your amendments or whatever the deal is. It just didn't seem to be the most proficient use of time. I guess maybe this might be an example or a forewarning of some of the perils of being under the TILMA.

Nonetheless, those are my comments, Mr. Chair. We can go from there. Thank you very much.

4:20

Ms Blakeman: I have tablings if the chair would like the tablings to support my reading certain excerpts of that letter. If not, the fact that I've just read them into the record, I can provide a copy to *Hansard* so that they have less trouble translating me. Don't need to do it?

The Chair: We don't table things at committee.

Ms Blakeman: Oh, you won't let me table it. Well, then, that solves the problem. All right. Thank you.

The Chair: You can do it on Monday during the Routine tablings.

Ms Blakeman: I'll get right on that.

The Chair: Since there is no further discussion on the bill, the chair will put the question.

[The clauses of Bill 11 as amended 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. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd move that the committee rise and report Bill 11.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Drysdale: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports the following bill with some amendments: Bill 11. 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.

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 31

Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Mr. Snelgrove it is my pleasure to rise today to move second reading of Bill 31, the Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008.

Section 82 of the act deals with the discontinuation of provincial agencies within the specified timetable. This section was introduced in response to a report by the Financial Review Commission in 1993 to ensure that provincial agencies would continue to fill a role in achieving provincial goals. Under section 82 provincial agencies that are named in an act or administer public money are discontinued at the end of each successive five-year period. The intent of the section was to review provincial agencies regularly to ensure that they continued to serve the government's purposes; however, section 82 has not been an effective tool to achieve its intended purpose.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 35

Government Organization Amendment Act, 2008

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Ms Evans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill 35, the Government Organization Amendment Act, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, it is a challenge for lawmakers to foresee all circumstances when drafting legislation. This legislative amendment will provide the Minister of Infrastructure with some added flexibility in the sale of land so government can quickly adapt to unique circumstances that may evolve in the future. The amendment only provides the minister with a similar authority already held by the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. Transparency and accountability will be maintained, and cabinet oversight ensures that any use of this provision of the Government Organization Act must be well justified.

I urge all members to support second reading of the Government Organization Amendment Act, 2008.

With that, I would adjourn debate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 27**Funeral Services Amendment Act, 2008**

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 27, the Funeral Services Amendment Act, 2008.

Amendments have been proposed to update and clarify the legislation to enhance the protection it affords consumers. Some highlights of the proposed amendments include compelling funeral service businesses to cancel prepaid funeral contracts if requested to do so by persons named in the act; legislating that any income earned on trust deposits from prepaid contracts must be kept in trust until the funeral is performed or the contract is cancelled and the money refunded; authorizing the director of funeral services to designate trust corporations; prohibiting solicitation of consumers for the purpose of transferring prepaid contracts; permitting the director to sanction funeral service businesses by placing conditions on their licences; revamping the appeal provisions by specifying the conditions that must be met; adding a filing fee, requiring the appellant to pay charges for preparing documents in advance and setting up an appeal panel; clarifying, updating, and separating the inspection and investigation processes in the legislation; authorizing the director to publish information relating to disciplinary actions taken against funeral service businesses and allowing the same information to be disclosed to other jurisdictions; allowing the director to publish a list of persons licensed under the act; authorizing the director to levy administrative penalties for contraventions of the act or regulations; strengthening the liability protection given to the Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board and extending liability protection to members of the appeal board.

We're also adding some regulation-making ability to allow the minister to identify administrative penalties, the amounts, and when they'll be imposed; to set out a procedure for disbursing unclaimed trust funds; to establish fees for appeals; to specify items to be placed in a casket or with cremated remains; and to modify licensing requirements for funeral directors and embalmers in the event of a pandemic.

I'd also like to move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 28**Jury Amendment Act, 2008**

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 28, which I'd like to move for second reading, is a very simple and straightforward bill.

It has, I believe, one section to it. It essentially amends the Jury Act by excluding from jury duty those who have been convicted of a criminal offence but have not received a pardon and those who face criminal charges. This will improve the efficiency of court procedures, reduce delays, and, of course, reduce the questions about the role that people who have been convicted of criminal charges might play in that sort of circumstance.

4:30

So a very straightforward and simple bill. We wanted to put it on the table today so that you can examine it and be ready to debate it fully next week, but for the moment I would move that we adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 29**Alberta Capital Finance Authority
Amendment Act, 2008**

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Ms Evans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of the Alberta Capital Finance Authority Act, 2008, and would ask my colleague the enthusiastic proponent of this bill, the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, to speak to this bill, please.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Mr. Berger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, hon. members. The Alberta Capital Finance Authority has a mission to provide local entities with flexible financing for capital projects at the lowest possible cost consistent with the viability of the ACFA.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. member, could we postpone your speech? I'll call on the opposition if any want to speak first.

Mr. Hancock: You don't want to speak to this at the moment, do you?

Ms Blakeman: No, I wouldn't. I don't think you want me to speak to it at the moment. I'd adjourn it if I were you.

Mr. Hancock: Well, he just wants to get his comments on the record.

Ms Blakeman: Oh, yeah. He should put his own comments on the record.

The Deputy Speaker: All right. Hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod, continue, please.

Mr. Berger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll start from the top again. The Alberta Capital Finance Authority has a mission to provide local entities with flexible financing for capital projects at the lowest possible cost consistent with the viability of the ACFA. It operates on a break-even basis and is not subsidized by the province. The ACFA expects to exceed its legislated limit of \$7 billion in outstanding debt within the next year due to continuing high demand for loans from its shareholders. This amendment would move the limit on borrowing to regulation so that the limit can be changed via the Lieutenant Governor in Council rather than through a change in legislation. Setting the borrowing limit via regulation will provide greater flexibility for the ACFA should an increase be required.

Thank you. I move to adjourn debate.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Bill 30**Alberta Evidence Amendment Act, 2008**

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Montrose.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today and move second reading of Bill 30, the Alberta Evidence Amendment Act, 2008.

This legislation would amend the Alberta Evidence Act, allowing apologies to be made without fear of legal liability in the context of civil litigation. This means that Albertans, either citizens or organizations, can make an apology without worrying whether it will

be used against them in civil lawsuits. Through our consultation process we saw that Albertans are supportive of this legislation. This legislation will help keep communications open between health care workers and patients and families when errors occur. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta has indicated their support for this type of legislation, and Alberta Health and Wellness supports efforts to improve patient safety.

Mr. Speaker, the Alberta Evidence Amendment Act is intended to promote early and effective resolution in civil matters. Currently protection from being used in civil proceedings is afforded to apologies when they are made pursuant to without prejudice settlement negotiations or mediation. This amendment will extend this protection so that regardless of when it is made, the apology cannot be used against the one apologizing to prove civil liability.

The objective of Bill 30 is to encourage early and cost-effective resolution of disputes. Apologies can also prevent commencement of lawsuits where apologies are offered. There are times when an apology is very important and appropriate, but possible legal implications make people hesitate to make an apology. An apology is often the first step in restoring a positive relationship, allowing for discussions to take place and helping victims by acknowledging harm. Evidence suggests that many disputes could be resolved earlier, more effectively, and at a lesser cost if apologies were promoted within our legal system. In some cases an apology is all that a complainant is looking for, and disputes would be resolved more quickly, freeing up resources of the legal system.

Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions have also recognized the value of apologies in resolving civil disputes. The contributions that apologies can make to the resolution of disputes have been supported by research and in legislation. In Canada apology legislation was first adopted in B.C. in May of 2006 and was modelled after legislation from New South Wales. This was followed by Saskatchewan in May 2007 and Manitoba in November of 2007. Recently Ontario has also introduced similar legislation. Most Australian states and over 30 U.S. states have enacted some form of apology legislation.

The Alberta Evidence Amendment Act will encourage Albertans to apologize to one another and, in doing so, help facilitate the resolution of disputes. By removing the legal impact of apologies, civil disputes can be resolved earlier, more efficiently, and less expensively.

I urge all members to support this important legislation. I move to adjourn debate. Thank you.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

Government Bills and Orders
Committee of the Whole
(continued)

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the Committee of the Whole to order.

Bill 8
Climate Change and Emissions Management
Amendment Act, 2008

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 8, the Climate Change and Emissions Management Amendment Act, 2008, brought forward by the Minister of

Environment. If I'm correct, this bill was brought forward in the spring. My reading of this act, which, again, is not a long act, is that it's essentially setting up or fleshing out a delegated administrative organization to manage the fund that is taking in the carbon tax that the government has established and, you know, making it possible for that fund to operate.

4:40

For instance, after it says what the fund can do, what purposes it could be used for, it's adding in something that talks about "paying salaries, fees, expenses, liabilities" – that would be if it got sued – "or other costs [that are] incurred by a delegated authority in carrying out a duty." That just adds on to a long list of what the fund is allowed to do now, which is, you know, things like energy conservation, energy efficiency, demonstration of technologies emphasizing reductions, demonstration and use of specified gas capture, et cetera, et cetera. It's inserting that special section around the delegated authority.

Then the next section it's amending just says that the Minister can "make payments out of the Fund for the purposes of the Fund," which were just listed for you. This is adding "for the purposes of the Fund, or in accordance with the regulations," again adding in "to a delegated authority to enable the delegated authority to make payments for the purposes of the Fund." It's really giving legal context to the delegated administrative authority to carry on the work.

Then again, it repeals a section that's my least favourite section in everything that the government does, which is the one where they give themselves permission to do anything they want by way of regulations behind closed doors. They're modifying that. What a surprise. Could it be to have less behind closed doors? Well, no. It's repealing 60(1). It's taking out the "governing the maximum levels of emissions of specified gases per unit of energy output," and it's substituting that with "governing the maximum specified gas emissions intensity" – yes, that's a different word than it was using before – "for operations and undertakings in Alberta based on levels of emissions of specified gases per unit." The rest is pretty much the same: "of energy input or output." Oh, I'm sorry. Then it goes on for a whole whack of other things. Okay. Well, I'll come back to that, then.

It's taking out the clause which refers to establishing emission intensity targets and gives a new mechanism that allows the minister to change these limits, and, no surprise, this is the ability of the minister to change these limits out of regulation, through the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which of course is cabinet. So it comes out as an OC. It's allowing a director to specify an emission intensity limit.

Now, our critic on this, the Member for Calgary-Mountain View, was more or less supportive . . .

Mr. MacDonald: More than me.

Ms Blakeman: I'm sorry? I gather that the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar has his own comments to make, but my understanding was that our critic for the Official Opposition was in favour of this, more or less. He raised some objections.

What I'm interested in is that since this bill was introduced, now we've had the report from the Auditor General on Alberta's response to climate change. The purpose of their audit was to assess whether the government has adequate systems in place to achieve the goals that they set out and to change the goals and targets and requirements of this particular act and the Specified Gas Emitters Regulation.

This is the first of two reports. The AG didn't have time to look

at the gas emitters regulation, so they're just responding to the act that this is amending. They looked at it over a period from January of '01 to July of '08, and they examined the systems that the Minister of Environment used to report on both the 2002 plan but also the 2008 plan. We've had two climate change plans here in Alberta; one superseded the other. They have a number of recommendations and conclusions that they reached. But they were looking to see, you know: do the necessary systems exist? Are the systems well designed? Do they operate as they should? So they had a series of criteria.

For people following along at home on the Internet in *Hansard* on the live audiostreaming, I'm referring to the Auditor General's report from October 2008. This particular section that I'm on right now, is page 95 and onward where they set out the criteria of what they were looking for.

I'm more interested in the recommendations. When the Auditor General does his reports, he does his recommendations in sort of a tiered level. So if you're looking for the big stuff, what's really important, it's now highlighted in yellow, and it has a little key beside it to indicate that this one is really, really, really important. What we get out of their response to climate change that's really, really important is numbered recommendation 11 in which the Auditor General is recommending that "the Ministry of Environment improve the reliability, comparability and relevance of its public reporting on Alberta's success and costs incurred in meeting climate-change targets." I'm just going to flow back to what's happening here, because we're now setting up a delegated administrative organization that is going to carry out the work of this fund. That's what the government has done.

When I first started in '97, that was the thing of the day. Now we disband things, but back then the government was very keen on delegated administrative organizations and was setting them up left, right, and centre.

Mr. MacDonald: They still are. They love them.

Ms Blakeman: No. They're taking them apart.

Mr. MacDonald: No. We'll have to talk.

Ms Blakeman: We'll talk. Okay.

This recommendation plays right into the amending act that we have in front of us. What I'm looking to see is: are we strengthening or recognizing in this act what has been identified by the Auditor General; that is, reliability, comparability, and relevance of public reporting? This, of course, is going to impact this delegated administrative organization immensely, and it's not in here.

What we have in here is the ability for that DAO to spend money. We have the ability for it to make payments for the purposes of running the fund and then changes around allowing the cabinet to make changes around the gas emissions intensity: orders establishing those intensity limits, authorizing a director to specify all kinds of inputs and outputs, a mechanism for the director to reclassify an organization or to change the classes around, authorizing a director to issue orders requiring someone who is responsible for an operation to take measures to minimize or remedy the effects of the operation, and authorizing the management fund to be used to pay a number of expenses.

Nothing in here particularly addresses public reporting. This is what we're now doing; we're collecting money from people. I think it is \$15 a tonne. Yes. That money per tonne of emission, I guess, will now go into this fund, and it's supposed to be administered, but we have nothing in here that really is able to give us any kind of assurance around reliability of public reporting and the success in

meeting these targets. So we've got all this money that goes into this fund. It's now got permission to pay money out of the fund. What we're missing is: how do we know that it is actually meeting the targets that were supposed to be set? We don't. There's a lot of money that can go in and a lot of money that can go out, but we don't know if it's actually hitting the targets.

4:50

The second recommendation that was made is not highlighted, but it is a numbered recommendation, so it still carries some weight in the AG's report. That was recommending that

the Ministry of Environment improve Alberta's response to climate change by:

- establishing overall criteria for selecting climate-change actions;
- creating and maintaining a master implementation plan for the actions [that are required] to meet the emissions-intensity target for 2020 and . . . for 2050;
- corroborating – through modelling or other analysis – that the actions chosen by the Ministry result in Alberta being on track for achieving [those same targets.]

Again, not much. I can't go back to the AG with a clear heart and say that what we're doing in this bill is going to achieve that.

The problem around the delegated administrative organizations and what we've seen of them over time has always been about reporting. It's been about being able to get information. It's been about who's appointed to their boards. Again, the AG has noticed in the past that we tend to get fine Albertans, every one of them, appointed to these DAOs but that, interestingly enough, they all have very close affiliations with the government and with the government's political party. Very few Liberals turn up on these boards, almost no NDs turn up on these boards, never mind people from the Green Party. So it is an insider group, and that is becoming increasingly problematic as we have so many of these DAOs but also when we're looking at things like climate change and now having that fund run by a DAO. I'll put those concerns on the table and see if the sponsoring minister can give us some kind of a response to that because that's always my hesitation with the DAOs. It'll be interesting to see if the government tries this one again.

The other thing that happened when I was first elected was that every time we asked the government a question about something that was under the auspices of a DAO or about the DAO itself, we were told: "Well, we have no control over that. Go talk to the DAO." And you'd say, "Well, but it says in the Government Organization Act that it responds to you or that you're responsible for it in some way." "Oh, no, no, no, no, no. If you don't like that decision, you go and talk to the DAO."

Well, of course, the DAO wouldn't talk to us at all. They wouldn't give us any information; their annual report would be coming out in 18 months. It was very hard for us get any information on it, and we just had to keep coming back to the government and going: "Ultimately, you created this group. You have to be responsible for answering for it in the House." Eventually we stayed on the government long enough and brought up enough examples of their control of it – the very fact that they establish enabling legislation is one of the keys – that the government had to start answering for the decisions that the group was making.

I'll be very interested to see if we end up with some ducking that starts to happen around the DAO that is anticipated in this particular legislation and empowered in this legislation to take in a whole whack of money and pay out a whole whack of money. That transparency is going to be very, very important.

Those were the issues that had really come to mind for me. I haven't had an opportunity to speak on this bill before. I'm not objecting to the bill per se. I understand that my colleague has given it a tentative nod, but I have lived through this long enough now to

have serious reservations about delegated administrative organizations and serious questions about accountability, reporting, and accuracy. How can we measure as citizens how far they're getting towards achieving those particular targets that have been set? How reliable is the information? How can we compare it with other like-minded organizations?

Thank you very much for the opportunity to put that on the record. I look forward to the responses from the minister. I note that other colleagues are eager to speak and even have amendments, I think.

Thank you.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Certainly, it's a pleasure to rise and talk about Bill 8, the Climate Change and Emissions Management Amendment Act, 2008. I have been on the record on this before, but since we have had this bill before us, there have been significant changes to the financial statements of the province. I'm looking at the first-quarter fiscal update, and I see where now the climate change and emissions management fund has grown. It's now worth \$92 million with the revenue that's collected. I thought when we initially looked at the previous bill initiating the carbon tax that there were going to be significantly larger sums collected. I thought at that time that there was going to be enough money – I was naïve – collected to incent or enhance, whatever way you want to look at it, carbon capture and storage. I thought this carbon tax would pay for infrastructure, pay for the research and development that was needed before the infrastructure was built.

I even was naïve enough, Mr. Chairman, to think that perhaps the pipeline from Fort McMurray to some of the mature oil-producing basins that surround metro Edmonton would be built from Fort McMurray to those mature basins and that the captured CO₂ stream would be used for enhanced oil recovery. I thought it could all be paid for from this carbon tax, but obviously it's not. We have set aside \$2 billion outside the budget allocation for carbon capture and storage. Now it is expected that the funding for the carbon capture and storage projects will be used in 2009-10.

It is quite interesting to note that there was a lot of talk that there would certainly be in the period of time where we have been collecting this carbon tax a lot more than \$92 million collected. I would assume, then, that this money is set aside in the consolidated account and is gathering a modest amount of interest.

When we look at, specifically, the amendments here, Mr. Chairman, we have to be very careful when we look at these delegated administrative organizations. Now, in the past the government has had a lot of faith in these delegated administrative organizations. We look at what we're trying to achieve here with Bill 8. When we set up another delegated authority and we're looking at the salaries, the fees, the expenses, the director's liabilities or the board's liabilities, all these issues, we've got to be very careful because the government, to my surprise, has initiated a framework, a public agencies governance framework.

How much faith or how much stock do they put in this? Well, the public agencies governance framework has been adopted by the government of Alberta in response to At a Crossroads, the report of the Board Governance Review Task Force. The framework focuses on promoting good governance of the boards, agencies, commissions.

5:00

Now, agencies are established by this government to fulfill a range of services and functions that include health care, social services, services for children, regulatory oversight, advice to government. There are 250 distinct agencies, and this government allocates close

to half of its annual operating expenditures to these agencies. This public agencies governance framework outlines the government of Alberta's policy on agency governance. The purpose is to provide clear expectations on all elements of governance, including accountability and transparency.

We go on at length here with this framework. We look at this framework, and we have to consider that the following are not agencies for the purposes of this framework, with delegated administrative organizations at the top of the list. I would caution this Assembly when we put so much faith in this public agencies governance framework, but we exclude the delegated administrative organization that we're proposing to amend here this afternoon. How much faith or how much stock does the government put in this? Well, earlier today in question period I was asking about the memorandum of understanding on governance that's setting up this Alberta Health Services Board between the minister of health and Charlotte Robb, the CEO, and the board, in this case the Alberta Health Services Board, represented by Mr. Hughes, the interim chair.

You know, this deal was signed on May 29. The legislative authority for this deal includes a lot of statutes, but it also includes this public agencies governance framework. I don't know the legal status of that. It looks like nothing more than an internal document of discussion by the government on the governance of public agencies, yet it is considered to have the same status in this memorandum of understanding in that it has the legislative authority of various statutes of general application to provincial corporations. So I think we're getting a little out of hand here, Mr. Chairman.

When we look at these frameworks and we look at what we exclude, now with Bill 8 here we're going to set up an agency that is exempt from what the government obviously refers to as a statute. It has never been passed in this Assembly. As far as I'm concerned, there's been very little public discussion on this, and I'm surprised to find it referenced in the only document that is trying to legalize the new Alberta Health Services Board. We have to be very careful, as I said earlier, Mr. Chairman, in endorsing a delegated administrative organization that's going to be outside this framework. Whether I like the framework or not, this DAO will be outside this framework.

We do know what has been said in the past about the Climate Change and Emissions Management Act. There has been a lot happen in this world since we last had the opportunity to debate this. I'm not convinced that this is the right climate change policy for Alberta. If it was the right climate change policy for Alberta, I don't think it would be necessary to have this \$25 million propaganda campaign, this campaign to convince the rest of the world that Alberta is okay, that our oil sands development and our oil sands extraction processes are fine. I think we can develop the industry in a much more sustainable way. This greenwashing, or propaganda campaign, would not be necessary if this original bill was meeting the standard, and the \$25 million could be either saved – because we certainly have to increase our savings – or it could be spent in a prudent manner in another program that is looking at a shortfall.

We look at what has happened in the rest of the world, and we look at what's going to happen with our U.S. neighbour early in November. Now, regardless of which one of the individuals running for President is successful, Mr. Obama wants an 80 per cent reduction in U.S. emissions by 2015, and Mr. McCain prefers a 60 per cent reduction in U.S. emissions. Mr. Chairman, someone in the government bench has said, I believe, "God help us if Mr. Obama gets elected," but I certainly have confidence in the American people and their choice. It's up to them to decide who they want as their President, but both of these individuals have different views than we have in this province regarding climate change.

We, as I said earlier, export significant amounts of energy, subject

to the laws of Washington, and there are always comments coming from environmental groups. Some of those environmental groups I think are of interest, and their views should be listened to and heeded, but I think some of them are a little bit over the top in their antics, and they discredit the entire environmental movement with their actions.

Speaking of our oil and our export of oil, we had a former minister here – I believe he was at one point Minister of Environment – Mr. Gary Mar, who is down in Washington.

Mr. Mason: He's doing a bang-up job for us, too.

Mr. MacDonald: Well, I would take exception to that, hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood. If he was doing a good job, he would have been able to flag that legislation that was passed that took into consideration the amount of CO₂ emissions occurring in Alberta. There was some talk of even the U.S. military – I don't think it would ever happen because if the U.S. military needs to put some diesel in a tank, they're not going to be too concerned about where the diesel fuel came from. They're just going to put it in and rumble. Mr. Mar in this case failed to flag legislation that could have a significant impact on Alberta's energy exports.

Mr. Mason: I would like the irony in my voice to be noted in *Hansard*.

Mr. MacDonald: Yes. The hon. member would like the irony in his voice to be noted in *Hansard*, and I would certainly hope that it is noted. I don't know how to do that, but I hope it's done because I don't think Mr. Mar has been doing the job that we're paying him to do, and he's getting a handsome salary.

Anyway, I may be getting off the subject here of Bill 8, and I apologize to the House if I am. We need to have a good discussion on this amendment, and we need to be clear. We need to be specific about what we will use this money that's raised for. Is it going to go towards CO₂ reduction? Is it going to be used for further research and development?

5:10

I know there are a couple of projects going on. The Premier himself in this House told me the significance of the one in central Alberta and how it's working and how it's increasing oil production in a mature field. On a barrels per day basis it was quite impressive.

I have a lot of faith in CO₂ sequestration. I know other people don't. It's been going on in Norway for some time. It's also been used in Estevan, Saskatchewan, by EnCana. EnCana is purchasing pure CO₂ from a coal gasification plant in Beulah, North Dakota, piping it north, using it for enhanced oil recovery. As I said earlier in debate, I would remind all hon. members that that is one of the very few oil fields that EnCana has, at least in their annual report or their quarterly reports, that has seen a significant increase in production. The other ones seem to be on a slow decline, but that one, interestingly enough, is increasing its flow rates.

That is one of the positive things that could happen if we manage this money in an effective manner. We could use it for research and development and perhaps use it also for installation of a distribution system for CO₂ that has been captured to some of our mature oil fields.

This, Mr. Chairman, would get me to a different project than Fort McMurray. That is the proposal at Dodds-Round Hill, which if it does go ahead will see a significant production of pure CO₂, if I could call it that. I think we need the hydrogen for the upgraders that are going to go in the heartland or the Industrial Heartland or

whatever we're calling it these days. But we could certainly use a small portion of this money to ensure that we get it right with that facility at Dodds-Round Hill. We're not too far from a lot of mature oil basins there. Some of them have been producing for over 50 years.

I, for one, would have no objections or questions if part of this \$92 million fund from Bill 8 was to be used for that purpose. It may already be. I don't know. I don't have access to any cabinet documents or anything of that nature. You know, maybe I'll get some leaked to me. Maybe one of the hon. members across the way will get so frustrated and they'll leak me some of their documents. The hon. Member for Calgary-Egmont laughs, but you never know. A lot of people get frustrated.

An Hon. Member: Don't hold your breath.

Mr. MacDonald: I shouldn't hold my breath. Okay.

Now, before I conclude, Mr. Chairman, I would like to note that one thing the Minister of Environment is fond of saying is that Alberta has the strongest climate change plan of any jurisdiction in North America. Well, it's very difficult to support him on that. It is very difficult. If we have a stronger plan than California or Oregon or B.C. or even the government of Canada – the government of Canada now, after the election, may have a few more things to say about our climate change strategy, but we'll see.

I don't know how the Minister of Environment feels about the Auditor General's report. The Auditor General has pointed out clearly that Alberta has no way of knowing at the moment if it can achieve even its own modest targets. So we have to wonder if they have any plan for how the funds collected, the \$92 million that are in the fiscal update, will be used.

I'm disappointed I ran out of time.

The Chair: The hon. Member for Peace River.

Mr. Oberle: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time I would like to move that we adjourn debate on this bill.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would move that the committee rise and report progress, such as it was, on Bill 8.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Drysdale: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration certain bills. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 8.

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

Hon. Members: Concur.

The Deputy Speaker: Opposed? So ordered.
The Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd move that the Assembly adjourn until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, October 20.

[Motion carried; at 5:18 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

Bill Status Report for the 27th Legislature - 1st Session (2008)

Activity to October 16, 2008

The Bill sponsor's name is in brackets following the Bill title. If it is a money Bill, (\$) will appear between the title and the sponsor's name. Numbers following each Reading refer to Hansard pages where the text of debates is found; dates for each Reading are in brackets following the page numbers. Bills numbered 200 or higher are Private Members' Public Bills. Bills with lower numbers are Government Bills. Bills numbered Pr1, etc., are Private Bills.

* An asterisk beside a Bill number indicates an amendment was passed to that Bill; the committee line shows the precise date of the amendment.

The date a Bill comes into force is indicated in square brackets after the date of Royal Assent. If it comes into force "on proclamation," "with exceptions," or "on various dates," please contact Legislative Counsel for details at (780) 427-2217. The chapter number assigned to the Bill is entered immediately following the date the Bill comes into force. SA indicates Statutes of Alberta; this is followed by the year in which it is included in the statutes, and its chapter number. Please note, Private Bills are not assigned a chapter number until the conclusion of the fall sittings.

1 Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement Implementation Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (Stelmach)

First Reading -- 9 (Apr. 15 aft.)

Second Reading -- 47-48 (Apr. 16 eve.), 203-08 (Apr. 23 eve.), 464 (May 5 eve.), 517-18 (May 6 eve.), 572-73 (May 7 eve.), 653-54 (May 12 eve.), 702-03 (May 13 eve.), 833 (May 20 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 916-19 (May 22 aft.), 962-67 (May 26 eve.), 988-90 (May 27 aft.), 1005-11 (May 27 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 1025-30 (May 28 aft., passed on division)

Royal Assent -- (Jun. 3 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 3, 2008; SA 2008 c7]

2 Travel Alberta Act (Ady)

First Reading -- 215 (Apr. 24 aft.)

Second Reading -- 464-65 (May 5 eve.), 518-19 (May 6 eve.), 703 (May 13 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 754 (May 14 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 834-35 (May 20 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Jun. 3 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cT-6.5]

3 Fiscal Responsibility Amendment Act, 2008 (Snelgrove)

First Reading -- 216 (Apr. 24 aft.)

Second Reading -- 654 (May 12 eve.), 703-06 (May 13 eve.), 755 (May 14 eve.), 834 (May 20 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 912-16 (May 22 aft., passed)

Third Reading -- 960-62 (May 26 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Jun. 3 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 3, 2008; SA 2008 c5]

4 Alberta Enterprise Corporation Act (Horner)

First Reading -- 224 (Apr. 24 aft.)

Second Reading -- 654 (May 12 eve.), 834 (May 20 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 891 (May 21 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 959-60 (May 26 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (Jun. 3 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cA-17.5]

5 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (\$) (Snelgrove)

First Reading -- 125 (Apr. 21 eve.)

Second Reading -- 143 (Apr. 22 eve.), 158-60 (Apr. 22 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 208-10 (Apr. 23 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 386-87 (Apr. 30 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (May 15 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 15, 2008; SA 2008 c2]

6 Appropriation (Interim Supply) Act, 2008 (\$) (Snelgrove)

First Reading -- 165-66 (Apr. 23 aft.)

Second Reading -- 387 (Apr. 30 eve., passed)

Committee of the Whole -- 463 (May 5 eve., passed)

Third Reading -- 516 (May 6 eve., passed)

Royal Assent -- (May 15 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 15, 2008; SA 2008 c1]

- 7 Post-secondary Learning Amendment Act, 2008 (Bhullar)**
First Reading -- 348 (Apr. 30 aft.)
Second Reading -- 958 (May 26 eve.), 1037-40 (May 28 aft.), 1121-22 (Jun. 2 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1128-34 (Jun. 2 eve., passed)
- 8 Climate Change and Emissions Management Amendment Act, 2008 (Renner)**
First Reading -- 348 (Apr. 30 aft.)
Second Reading -- 958 (May 26 eve.), 1051-54 (May 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1134-39 (Jun. 2 eve.), 1344-47 (Oct. 15 eve.), 1372-75 (Oct. 16 aft., adjourned)
- 9 Land Agents Licensing Amendment Act, 2008 (Mitzel)**
First Reading -- 479 (May 6 aft.)
Second Reading -- 967 (May 26 eve.), 995-96 (May 27 eve.), 1042-44 (May 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1336-38, 1339-41 (Oct. 15 eve., passed)
- 10 Security Services and Investigators Act (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 586-87 (May 8 aft.)
Second Reading -- 889-90 (May 21 eve., referred to Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services)
- 11* Insurance Amendment Act, 2008 (Evans)**
First Reading -- 348 (Apr. 30 aft.)
Second Reading -- 990-91 (May 27 aft.), 1296-1302 (Oct. 14 aft.), 1325-29 (Oct. 15 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1341 (Oct. 15 eve.), 1362-70 (Oct. 16 aft., passed with amendments)
- 12 Teachers' Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2008 (Evans)**
First Reading -- 348 (Apr. 30 aft.)
Second Reading -- 834 (May 20 eve.), 886-87 (May 21 eve.), 909-11 (May 22 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 958-59 (May 26 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 986-87 (May 27 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Jun. 3 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force September 1, 2007, with exception; SA 2008 c6]
- 13 Financial Institutions Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (Fawcett)**
First Reading -- 533 (May 7 aft.)
Second Reading -- 834 (May 20 eve.), 887 (May 21 eve.), 911-12 (May 22 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 959 (May 26 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 987 (May 27 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Jun. 3 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 3, 2008; SA 2008 c4]
- 14 Court of Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2008 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 770 (May 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 992 (May 27 aft.), 1048-49 (May 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1341-43 (Oct. 15 eve., passed)
- 15 Family Law Amendment Act, 2008 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 770 (May 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 992 (May 27 aft.), 1049-50 (May 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1343-44 (Oct. 15 eve., passed)
- 16 Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2008 (Danyluk)**
First Reading -- 904 (May 22 aft.)
Second Reading -- 992 (May 27 aft.), 1050-51 (May 28 eve.), 1077-78 (May 29 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1329-33 (Oct. 15 eve., passed)
- 17 Alberta Personal Income Tax Amendment Act, 2008 (\$) (Evans)**
First Reading -- 904 (May 22 aft.)
Second Reading -- 958 (May 26 eve.), 993-95 (May 27 eve.), 1044-47 (May 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1079-81 (May 29 aft.), 1122-28, 1139 (Jun. 2 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1204-07 (Jun. 3 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Jun. 9 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2008 c8]
- 18 Film and Video Classification Act (Blackett)**
First Reading -- 848 (May 21 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Community Services)

- 19 First Nations Sacred Ceremonial Objects Repatriation Amendment Act, 2008 (Blackett)**
First Reading -- 848 (May 21 aft.)
Second Reading -- 967-68 (May 26 eve.), 1075-77 (May 29 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1302-08 (Oct. 14 aft., passed)
- 20 Agriculture Statutes Repeal Act, 2008 (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 848 (May 21 aft.)
Second Reading -- 968 (May 26 eve.), 996-97 (May 27 eve.), 1047 (May 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1308-09 (Oct. 14 aft., passed)
- 21 Heating Oil and Propane Rebate Act (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 848 (May 21 aft.)
Second Reading -- 968 (May 26 eve.), 1047-48 (May 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1333-36 (Oct. 15 eve., passed)
- 22 Appropriation Act, 2008 (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 932 (May 26 aft.)
Second Reading -- 981-86 (May 27 aft.), 997-1004 (May 27 eve., passed on division)
Committee of the Whole -- 1030-37 (May 28 aft.), 1041-42 (May 28 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1067-75 (May 29 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Jun. 3 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 3, 2008; SA 2008 c3]
- 23 Weed Control Act (Mitzel)**
First Reading -- 1095 (Jun. 2 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Resources and Environment)
- 24 Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act (Jablonski)**
First Reading -- 1095 (Jun. 2 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Health)
- 25 Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 1095 (Jun. 2 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1295-96 (Oct. 14 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1329 (Oct. 15 eve., passed)
- 26 Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2008 (Goudreau)**
First Reading -- 1096 (Jun. 2 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1154-70 (Jun. 3 aft.), 1171-1204 (Jun. 3 eve., passed on division)
Committee of the Whole -- 1207-08 (Jun. 3 eve.), 1224-35, 1237-66 (Jun. 4 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1268-81 (Jun. 4 eve., passed on division)
Royal Assent -- (Jun. 9 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c9]
- 27 Funeral Services Amendment Act, 2008 (Johnson)**
First Reading -- 1323 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1371 (Oct. 16 aft., adjourned)
- 28 Jury Amendment Act, 2008 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 1323 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1371 (Oct. 16 aft., adjourned)
- 29 Alberta Capital Finance Authority Amendment Act, 2008 (\$) (Evans)**
First Reading -- 1323-24 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1371 (Oct. 16 aft., adjourned)
- 30 Alberta Evidence Amendment Act, 2008 (Bhullar)**
First Reading -- 1324 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1371-72 (Oct. 16 aft., adjourned)
- 31 Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008 (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 1324 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1370 (Oct. 16 aft., adjourned)
- 32 Meat Inspection Amendment Act, 2008 (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 1361 (Oct. 16 aft.)

- 33 Agriculture Financial Services Amendment Act, 2008 (S) (Groeneveld)**
First Reading -- 1361 (Oct. 16 aft.)
- 34 Employment Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2008 (Brown)**
First Reading -- 1361 (Oct. 16 aft.)
- 35 Government Organization Amendment Act, 2008 (Hayden)**
First Reading -- 1324 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1370 (Oct. 16 aft., adjourned)
- 36 Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008 (Brown)**
First Reading -- 1361 (Oct. 16 aft.)
- 201 Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act (Mitzel)**
First Reading -- 59 (Apr. 17 aft.)
Second Reading -- 89-102 (Apr. 21 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 430-43 (May 5 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 625-31 (May 12 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- (May 15 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force May 15, 2008; SA 2008 cH-15.5]
- 202 Alberta Volunteer Service Medal Act (Cao)**
First Reading -- 59 (Apr. 17 aft.)
Second Reading -- 102-07 (Apr. 21 aft.), 258-64 (Apr. 28 aft., six-month hoist amendment agreed to)
- 203 Election Statutes (Fixed Election Dates) Amendment Act, 2008 (Allred)**
First Reading -- 224 (Apr. 24 aft.)
Second Reading -- 265-74 (Apr. 28 aft.), 443-44 (May 5 aft.), 631-34 (May 12 aft., six-month hoist amendment agreed to on division)
- 204 Traffic Safety (Hand-Held Communication Devices) Amendment Act, 2008 (Johnston)**
First Reading -- 224 (Apr. 24 aft.)
Second Reading -- 937-49 (May 26 aft., referred to Standing Committee on the Economy)
- 205 Traffic Safety (Used Vehicle Inspection) Amendment Act, 2008 (Bhardwaj)**
First Reading -- 401 (May 1 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1100-12 (Jun. 2 aft., passed)
- 206 Alberta Personal Income Tax (Physical Activity Credit) Amendment Act, 2008 (Rodney)**
First Reading -- 587 (May 8 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1112-13 (Jun. 2 aft., adjourned)
- 207 Young Albertans' Advisory Council Act (Fawcett)**
First Reading -- 1295 (Oct. 14 aft.)
- Pr1* Young Men's Christian Association of Edmonton Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (Lukaszuk)**
First Reading -- 719 (May 14 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1078 (May 29 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1122 (Jun. 2 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 1266-68 (Jun. 4 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- (Jun. 9 outside of House sitting) [Comes into force June 9, 2008]

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