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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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Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Deputy Chair of Committees

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[Errata, if any, appear inside back cover]

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 6, 2008

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Good afternoon.

Let us pray. We give thanks for our abundant blessings to our province and ourselves. We ask for guidance and the will to follow it. Amen.

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Ellerslie.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is with pleasure that I introduce to you and through you two groups of grade 6 students from the Ellerslie campus school in my constituency of Edmonton-Ellerslie. I had the privilege of meeting them in the rotunda just moments ago and must say that they are a fantastic group of students. I hope that they enjoy their visit to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. At this time I would ask the students and two teachers, Mrs. Tina Valjak and Mrs. Frances Stead, to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise today to introduce to you and through you to members of this House a group of 19 grade 6 students accompanied by nine adults who are here from Hughenden school within my constituency. The parents that are accompanying them are Melanie Dewald, Denise Torpe, Craig Fountain, Wanda Carson, Shawn Shand, Gary Morrison, and Marian Johnson. They're accompanied by two fantastic teachers, Cathy Samson and Marilyn Hausser. They do a mock Legislature in the school every year, and usually I can attend. This year, however, they had to do it on their own, and the students passed a bill to condense the school week to four days, which I think is a fantastic idea. I'd ask them all to rise, please, and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Mr. Mitzel: Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to Members of this Legislative Assembly students from the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta who are enrolled in a course on legislative process and legislative planning taught by Senior Parliamentary Counsel, Rob Reynolds, and the Chief Legislative Counsel for the government, Peter Pagano. They are seated in the members' gallery, and I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm really pleased to be able to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a group of students from NorQuest College who are joining us today in the public gallery. As you know, NorQuest is located in the fabulous constituency of Edmonton-Centre, and I am always delighted when the students from the school come down and watch us do our work here in the Legislative Assembly. Please join me in welcoming them today.

Speaker's Ruling Dress Code in the Chamber

The Speaker: Hon. members, we govern ourselves by standing orders, which are written by the members. Included in those standing orders which are written by the members is a dress code. Periodically members come to me and say that they want to change things, and I have to repeat to them that hon. members have written the rules, the hon. members have advised me of the rules, and my job is to enforce the rules. Now, I know that it's rodeo week in Edmonton. It was rodeo week in Barrhead three weeks ago. It'll be rodeo week in Calgary the first and second week of July. Everybody will have a week sometime.

So with unanimous consent of the Assembly should I recognize the Member for Edmonton-Riverview?

[Unanimous consent granted]

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Taft: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all members of the Assembly. It's a privilege for me to rise today and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly Maeghan and Ken Menear of Bluffton, Alberta. Maeghan and Ken are the president and vice-president respectively of the Bluffton & District Chamber of Commerce, one of Alberta's chambers just recognized as the latest recipient of the chamber of the year award by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce. I visited Bluffton this spring to participate in the chamber's read and learn program, and I can testify that this award is well deserved. I would ask Maeghan and Ken, who are seated in the public gallery, to please rise and receive the warm welcome of all members of the Assembly.

Thank you.

Members' Statements

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

Tribute to the Canadian Forces

Mr. Johnston: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When Canadians pause for a moment of silence on November 11, they will be honouring more than 1,500,000 Canadians who have served Canada and more than 100,000 who have died in the name of freedom since the First World War. Canada has a proud military and peacekeeping history because every time war has broken out, Canadians have been quick to volunteer to serve their country. These men and women had and continue to have such a strong belief in a free and safe tomorrow that they went off to distant and dangerous lands to turn their vision into reality.

Mr. Speaker, not only will my thoughts be with the men and women who have served our country in the past; they will also be with those who are currently away from their loved ones in the name of liberty. Because we live in prosperous and relatively peaceful times, today's wars may seem as though they are being fought in a distant land, but as we witness in our communities, on TV, in the newspapers, and on the Internet, they are very real and have a deep impact on thousands of Canadians. During the coming days we will send our thoughts to Canadians who go to bed at night and wake up every day hoping that their loved ones will return home safely. We as Canadians honour the people who must live with worry or grief every day and are forever grateful for their sacrifice.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Norm McLeod Community Inclusion Awards

Mr. Dallas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A hero is typically defined as a person of distinguished courage or ability who is admired for their bravery and qualities. Today I'd like to tell you about some of Alberta's unsung heroes, specifically the individuals and organizations that received this year's Norm McLeod community inclusion awards. The awards honour a vision of an Alberta where people with developmental disabilities live, work, learn, and participate as full citizens in their communities.

On the evening of November 4, 19 deserving individuals and organizations from across the province were recognized for making a difference for Albertans with developmental disabilities in our communities. A special event celebrated nominees for their contributions, which ranged from volunteering at hospitals to ensuring that Albertans with developmental disabilities can participate in community sports. Awards were presented in three categories. The leadership award recognizes an Albertan with a developmental disability who inspires others through his or her achievements. Rosemary Calverley of Red Deer received this award as an active self-advocate who has been volunteering at several organizations in Red Deer for the past 20 years.

The Dreamweaver award recognizes an individual dedicated to improving the quality of life for Albertans with developmental disabilities. Conrad Jean received this award for helping to start floor hockey, track and field, bowling, equestrian, and baseball programs for Albertans with developmental disabilities in his community of St. Paul.

The third award, the community contribution award, was presented to the Camrose Kodiaks hockey team for their commitment to community inclusion. The Kodiaks offer free tickets to Albertans with developmental disabilities and the workers who assist them and include Albertans with developmental disabilities as volunteers.

Congratulations to all the nominees and award recipients of this year's Norm McLeod community inclusion awards.

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

1:40 Safe Communities Initiative

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am pleased to rise and acknowledge the first anniversary of the government's safe communities initiative. This strategy is addressing the impact crime is having on our communities and finding meaningful, long-term solutions. No other jurisdiction in the country is addressing crime reduction in this way and on this scale. We formed a partnership of nine government ministries, police, community groups, municipalities, businesses, and social agencies in a broad-based approach. In the first year we've added more police, prosecutors, probation officers but also added more treatment options for mental health and addictions issues. We're getting tough on crime by addressing repeat offenders and implementing legislation to target drugs, gangs, and prostitution.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that it's been a very busy year, and now we're looking for crime-fighting projects that bring together police and the communities they serve in a united front. This morning the Premier announced the \$60 million safe communities innovation fund to strengthen and develop community-based projects and community-police partnership projects across Alberta. We're empowering communities to launch projects that focus on specific crime issues in their own backyards. After all, no one knows a community better than the people who can call it home.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, we'll focus on the underlying and often very complex reasons why people find themselves in the

criminal justice system. Roots of crime often grow in early childhood and adolescence. We want to support families and reduce the risk of Alberta children getting caught up in gangs, drugs, and crime. As someone who has worked with at-risk individuals, I know the most effective crime prevention is done in our homes and in our schools long before any law is broken.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Leader of the Official Opposition

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. A little bit on the lighter side today. I must bring to your attention a concern which became apparent in this House over the last few weeks and which needs to be rectified. This concern relates to the application of *Beauchesne* section 38, which deals with the exclusion of strangers from this House. Namely, there is evidence to suggest that our Liberal opposition, although quietly searching for a new leader, has already picked a new leader and replaced the old Member for Edmonton-Riverview with a new one. He, although appearing much like the old one, is the person asking questions in Question Period.

Mr. Speaker, the old leader stood up in this House for the last few years demanding more funding for government programs. The old leader criticized this government for being fiscally prudent and not increasing our budgets. The old leader campaigned eight months ago with this plan promising Albertans more than \$7 billion in additional spending. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation assessed it at over \$7 billion. I will table these documents later.

However, Mr. Speaker, the new leader now stands up in the House every day and asks the following question: "This spendthrift government throws money at problems." "Spending more and taxing less is a formula for economic disaster that's looming." "Why is this government systematically dismantling legislative limits on spending?" "This government is addicted to spending." As such, there must be two members for Edmonton-Riverview, or is this the same leader who also feels that it is difficult to make priorities, the one who has a set of values, but if you don't like them, he has another one to offer?

What makes this situation more confusing, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the entire caucus at the same time supports both leaders. We must ask the real Member for Edmonton-Riverview to please stand up. As such, it is imperative to find out whether there is one Member for Edmonton-Riverview, or are there two? Because if we don't address this question, they may surprise us with a third one.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Rodeo As Alberta's Official Sport

Dr. Taft: Well, thank you. It is a pleasure to rise. I appreciate the indulgence of the members today.

Mr. Speaker, I am rising because later this session I will be introducing a motion asking this Assembly to urge the government to recognize rodeo as Alberta's official sport. I believe rodeo deserves that distinction. [applause] All right. Wow.

We have a deep connection to Alberta's land and wildlife, and that connection has played a huge role in Alberta's economic growth and cultural development. While other industries may have a bigger slice of the economic pie these days, ranching and farming remain a vital force and continue to greatly influence our society to this day. That influence is expressed most extravagantly through rodeo. It's a sport that celebrates our roots, showcases our artists, boosts our businesses, and draws countless tourists to Alberta every year.

What would Alberta be without the Calgary Stampede or Farmfair

or the CFR, not to mention the countless rodeos all over this province? Let's face it. Rodeo is a reflection of the heart, soul, and history of Alberta, and it's a heck of a lot of fun too. I'm a rodeo fan from way back, and I think it's well past time we gave rodeo its due. I hope I can count on the support of all members. I'm getting optimistic here.

I would like to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by noting that Edmonton-Riverview is the only urban constituency that has cattle living right in it, and I think they might have voted for me. Thank you.

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

Bitumen Export

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hate to be boring, but it's the same old one, the same old guy.

Mr. Speaker, the economic downturn and drop in oil prices has prompted oil companies to delay or cancel their Alberta upgraders. Instead, they pursue shipping the bitumen to an existing or converted refinery in the U.S. This government has failed to intervene to stop this from happening, and now Alberta will be faced with the imminent loss of as many as 10,000 construction jobs. In the early days of the Tory leadership race, the Premier said that shipping bitumen was like stripping the topsoil off your farm and selling it. It seems as though the tide has now turned and that he is now selling the farm. In fact, two pipelines to the U.S., the 1,600-kilometre Alberta Clipper and the Keystone, which alone will export 18,000 jobs to the United States, have been approved by the National Energy Board, and this government failed to intervene to oppose them.

While our bitumen is being shipped south for refining in places like Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Louisiana, we are also sending billions of investment dollars and thousands of value-added jobs down the pipeline with it. Meanwhile, the BA upgrader, Petro-Canada Fort Hills, Shell Scotford, and the Voyageur are all Alberta upgraders that have been shelved, leaving Alberta workers and their families facing unemployment in coming years. As the economy deteriorates, the labour shortage will be a thing of the past, yet this government is consciously and actively exporting Alberta jobs to the U.S., sitting on its hands while new pipelines are built to export an unupgraded Alberta product.

Shipping raw bitumen to the United States has to stop. It represents a loss of jobs and a loss of revenue to the province. Our energy resources will not last forever. We need to make the most of them now.

Oral Question Period

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

Climate Change

Dr. Taft: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. A unified Democratic government in the United States because of the election of Barack Obama to the office of the President has a very clear meaning for Alberta. We need to get better on climate change or our economic interests are threatened. Business as usual will not work for this new President and this new government. My question is to the Premier. The Prime Minister is proposing a joint climate change panel with the new President. What is this government's position on that proposal, and does the Premier expect this government to participate if invited?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, the member said: are we going to participate if invited. I sent a very clear message today to the Prime Minister not to follow the same behaviour as the former Prime Minister, Prime Minister Chretien, who signed an agreement that obligated all provinces to an agreement called Kyoto, and he didn't spend at least one minute discussing it with other provinces. I have tremendous confidence in the Prime Minister that we will be at the table. In fact, it's a precondition of the province of Alberta to make sure that we represent the best interests of every Albertan.

1:50

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Dr. Taft: Well, thanks again. To the Premier. It feels like this government is sitting around hoping for a race to the bottom when it comes to greenhouse gas standards, but it's clear that, in fact, this is a race to the top. The standards are just going to get higher and higher and higher. Why is this government not setting higher standards for greenhouse gas emissions for Alberta?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, we are the only jurisdiction in the world that has invested \$4 billion in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We're the only jurisdiction in Canada right now that has an actual reduction of 2.6 million tonnes. That's equal to taking about 550,000 cars off Alberta roads. That is true, real reduction.

The negativity is just unbelievable. This is the kind of messaging that we have to work against, a fellow Albertan not recognizing what we've accomplished in Alberta and then saying: "Oh, but what are you going to do? What are you going to do?"

The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is that there's something that every Albertan has to very clearly listen to. He recognized the President of the United States, who won a tremendous majority. You know why? Because he gave many impoverished Americans hope that their quality of life is going to improve over the next number of years. Affordable energy is what the President needs, and he's going to look to Alberta for that.

Dr. Taft: Well, Mr. Speaker, the facts speak louder than the rhetoric. Alberta's climate change plan calls for a 14 per cent emission reduction by 2050. The new President of the United States' energy plan calls for an 80 per cent emissions reduction in the same time frame. Will the Premier finally admit that this government's so-called made-in-Alberta plan does not do enough and is going to end up hurting Alberta's interests?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, our plan is extremely ambitious. Again, no one has actually come up with a plan. All of the rhetoric in other jurisdictions is: well, yeah, we're going to have 80 per cent and 70 per cent. Well, I attended the governors' meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. You know, all of these political pundits tell us: you've got to join the western climate change initiative because, boy, if you don't, you're going to get left in the dust. Then you sit down with the individual governors, and they say: well, you know, we'll join the western climate change initiative; by the way, if you could just exclude our domestic coal-fired generation, we're in for the team, but don't include us in terms of what we actually emit in our own state. That's not the way we do business in this province.

The Speaker: Second Official Opposition main question. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Dr. Taft: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. The way this government does business is going to have to shift because the world is shifting. Past

experience shows that this government has a poor record on U.S. climate change issues. Section 526 of the U.S. energy bill clearly targeted the oil sands in its intention to bar U.S. agencies from spending taxpayer dollars on unconventional fuel sources, yet this government, with an expensive Washington office, found out about this bill from a newspaper. To the Premier: how can Albertans trust this government to be acting effectively when it relied on the *Globe and Mail* to find out about U.S. legislation that affects this economy?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, you know, I've listened to nonsense in this House a few times, but this is absolute nonsense. We were in Washington in January, and we had a good meeting with decision-makers. But I asked a very simple question: when somebody is taking the nozzle and putting it into the car, you tell me where that gas is coming from, tell me where it's been refined, and tell me where the oil is coming from. How can you in a system try and say: oh, this, by the way, is coming from Alberta, so this will be a different production stream, and this is coming from Venezuela, which actually has a higher carbon footprint. All of this has all come together, meaning that the President and all other leaders have said: we need Alberta oil, and we're going to work with you to find a way of jointly reducing the carbon footprint, but we need the affordable energy. What the hon. member is talking about is really old, old news.

Dr. Taft: Well, Mr. Speaker, if it's such old news, then to the Premier: what steps is this government taking to protect Alberta's interests in Washington, given the victory of Barack Obama and the Democrats?

Mr. Stelmach: Working with whoever the President will appoint as cabinet, working with many of the governors that I've built a personal working relationship with, we'll continue to do something collectively as the continent of North America. We can't all have individual rules in trying to deal with the issue of climate change. This is a time when we have to come together, working with the federal government and our neighbours to the south. As I mentioned earlier today, former president of Mexico Vicente Fox said: you know, if we leaders don't get together on the North American continent, we're going to lose it to Asia, and we'll never get it back. I remember that to today.

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, we share those concerns. The Premier speaks about the need to come together and standardize expectations, standardize agreements, have the same goals and the same mechanisms for achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. To the Premier: is this government going to bring its greenhouse gas emissions plan in line with that of the federal government?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, we just went through a federal election. We couldn't quite figure out what the national plan was going into the campaign we just finished, but I can tell you very clearly, given that the Liberal popular vote in this country was the lowest since 1867, that carbon tax isn't one of the issues or at least one of the proponents of the federal government.

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

Third-party Advertising

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After the election and again this fall the Premier discussed bringing in

legislation to ban third-party advertising. Now, interestingly, the largest third-party advertising in the recent U.S. election was from members of the Mormon church and other faith-based coalitions who were campaigning for the adoption of Proposition 8 in California. My questions are to the Premier. In this government's zeal to bring in legislation banning unions and other third-party advertising, will it also capture religious and faith-based organizations?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, I don't know why this party is saying that I'm the one that wants to see this legislation. I don't. If somebody wants to go ahead and advertise, go ahead. I know one group that spent \$2.2 million. Well, I think they spent – first of all, you never know who is spending it. Then they did spend it, and quite frankly I see the results, 72 seats. Perfectly happy.

Ms Blakeman: You are quoted in the paper as saying that, Mr. Premier. [interjections] Well, you'll have to take that up with the newspaper.

Again to the Premier: has the government considered what legal justification the government can give to banning advertising by groups they don't like and allowing advertising by groups they do like?

Mr. Stelmach: I don't know where the member is coming from. Do you see something on the Order Paper that I'm missing? I don't see anything like that. I did want to see some proof that, you know, once we complete the Liberal leadership, which I think is going to be a week-long event sometime in December, not to give them additional advertising here in the Legislative Assembly – I'm sure that they will detail absolutely every dollar they receive from any Albertan and any national or international company because they said they'll do that if they get the chance, without rules. We'll see what happens sometime in the middle of December.

Ms Blakeman: Well, I'm wondering, then, if the Premier is reversing his particular point of view on this because he was certainly stating it publicly on September 18 when he said that he would introduce a campaign reform bill this fall that will ban or limit third-party advertising. Are you reversing that?

Mr. Stelmach: It's amazing. This issue came up as a result of some party members, not Conservative but opposition, getting really ticked off that an organization that they thought that they were very friendly with actually . . .

Mr. Mason: I heard you say it.

Mr. Stelmach: Well, I also heard you say a few things that I can't repeat in the House, quite frankly.

You know, this third party was supposed to be very close to the other third party in the House, and the third party surprised that third party with a \$2.2 million ad, and this party benefited.

The Speaker: That last answer will surely help the hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs understand.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, followed by the hon. Member for Strathcona.

2:00 Congenital Syphilis Outbreak

Mr. Mason: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Well, it's certainly leaving me perplexed.

Yesterday the minister of health sidestepped my questions,

ignoring the fact that five babies have died in this province from congenital syphilis. This is something that doesn't normally happen in developed countries. It's a preventable infection. Instead of talking about what really happened to these babies and the four public health officials who have been gagged since leaving their posts, the minister sweeps this issue under the rug. My question is to the minister. Albertans deserve to know what happened and why these doctors left. Why won't you let them speak?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear in this House that any death is a tragedy. We need to ensure that we do whatever we can to correct the situation, and that is exactly what we've been doing through our public health offices. There have been, as I said on a couple of occasions in this House, a number of initiatives that have been taken, some very significant initiatives, in this particular region. The most recent statistical data that we have is that the number of cases of syphilis this year is half of what it was last year.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, five babies have died, and we need to get to the bottom of it. Dr. Stan Houston, an infectious disease expert, knows at least part of the story. He said that doctors left because the ministry had created a toxic, difficult, and obstructive environment; there was political interference with the antisiphilis campaign. What happened to Dr. Houston? The minister's acting chief medical officer has filed a complaint against him. To the same minister. It looks like your ministry will go to all extremes to cover up the truth. What are you hiding? Why won't you let the doctors speak?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, this particular member can quote whatever person he wants to quote, but I've answered that question on several occasions in this House. He may not like the answer, but it is what it is. We had contracts with four particular individuals, as I said the other day. In any particular situation where you've got a contract, there's an end date. You attempt to negotiate a new contract. It was unsuccessful, and we moved on.

Mr. Mason: Mr. Speaker, we know that Dr. Singh lobbied for support in combatting the syphilis epidemic. We know that she met with resistance at every turn. We know that she didn't get her contract renewed, and we know that the minister will not let her speak because of a gag clause in her contract. To the minister: why will the minister not take off the gag and let these doctors tell their side of the story?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I've been very clear that there have been a number of initiatives that have taken place relative to our attempt to combat sexually transmitted diseases. I've been clear in this House about what they were. I would repeat them if necessary, but I don't think it is necessary.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East.

Workplace Health and Safety

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first question is to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Today we are recognizing initiatives intended to make our communities safer places in which to live, work, and play. Mr. Minister, my question is: over and above the crime reduction measures we've been talking about, doesn't a safe community also require safe working conditions?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Strathcona is

absolutely correct. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act employers are responsible for the safety of all of their workers on their work sites. To ensure that they are aware of safety requirements, my ministry conducts thousands of inspections every year and targets about 500 employers that have poor safety records. On the other end of the scale, to protect young workers, who are typically more subject to injuries, we launched our Bloody Lucky campaign, and we are receiving over 10,000 hits per day on that particular campaign.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is also to the same minister. In addition to the educational efforts that you mention, what type of enforcement does your ministry conduct to keep workplaces safe?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, the budget for occupational health and safety enforcement has increased from about \$7 million in 2001 to almost \$22 million this year. Employer fines for violation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act so far this year amount to \$4.6 million, which is over double last year's record of \$1.7 million. Furthermore, over \$4 million of these fines were alternative sentences, which the court allocates to workplace safety activities and not to government revenues.

Mr. Quest: My last question is also to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. What results have been achieved?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, the disabling injury rate is the main measure that we use to evaluate safety. This is the number of workers injured seriously enough that they either could not go back to work or could not immediately resume their previous job tasks. The most recent stats we have show that these rates have gone down from 4.14 injuries per 100 full-time jobs in 2006 to 3.88 per 100 jobs in 2007.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is currently no legislation and the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports has the mandate to license seniors lodges, as they should be. Today is the beginning of Seniors Safety Week. There's no better time than now for the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports to make an announcement regarding legislation. To the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports: can the minister answer why the government has not tabled the drafted legislation for the proposed supportive living accommodation licensing act that has been in the works since the MLA task force in 2005?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's an excellent question, and it's a good-news story. We are working on that legislation. We are working it through the process so that we can bring it forward. We need to ensure that it's excellent legislation, and that's what we're intending to do. I'm happy to say that it's coming soon.

Ms Pastoor: This legislation, in my mind, would complement Bill

24 in helping to further ensure the safety and security of seniors. Will the minister state if this legislation will be tabled this session?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good legislation, and it does complement Bill 24, the Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act. This legislation, once again, is still going through the process. It will not be tabled this session.

Ms Pastoor: Seniors move into seniors lodges with enhanced care and expect continued respect, health, and safety. What is the minister's response to Alberta's elders who feel that this isn't happening? There's no legislated recourse.

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, the safety and well-being of seniors is one of the first priorities of my department. These lodges are inspected annually. They do have to pass inspection, and when there is noncompliance, we work with them to ensure that they remove whatever the problem is or improve the situation. If there are complaints, we are there immediately to inspect the facilities where complaints occur. I believe that we are doing our best to ensure the safety and well-being of our seniors in lodges.

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

Pathways to Housing Program

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My constituents and many other people living in inner-city urban communities continue to be concerned with the increasing number of homeless in our province. I've heard a lot of good things about the comprehensive, integrated approach of the Pathways to Housing program. My first question is to the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs. Is this program working in addressing the needs of the homeless in Calgary?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Fritz: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know I've mentioned it in the Assembly before, but the Pathways to Housing program helps people that are chronically homeless. There are three components to the program that are very important. The first is rapid housing, the second is direct client support services, and the third, of course, is prevention. Once you provide permanent homes for chronically homeless individuals, then there is an assertive community team made up of physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, and employment counsellors who assist the homeless to stay in their home. We know that it's a very complex issue, as we've mentioned before.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: is there any plan to expand this program?

Mrs. Fritz: Mr. Speaker, the Pathways to Housing program is operated by the Alex community health centre, which this member does know as he attended when we did make an announcement of the program a year ago. In its first year I know that it's helped 40 chronically homeless individuals. Yes, it is working, and it is being expanded. We announced approximately a week ago, the Minister of Justice and I, that there was \$7 million allocated to a second

support team in Pathways, and that's to assist people that are in the remand centre and correctional institutions, the facilities. What that will do for people is assist them, as I said, not just being managed through homelessness but ending it.

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, that's certainly good news.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Justice and Attorney General: could the minister confirm with this House that the streets of Calgary are safer as a result of the Pathways to Housing program?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This program is exciting. What we have done in the past week as a government is expand the program, make it more innovative. We've done this in partnership with the chief of police in Calgary. The streets of Calgary are safer. They're safer for the people who are walking the streets of Calgary, and they're also safer for people who are now in this program and getting the help that they need.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre, followed by the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar.

Report on Financial and Investment Policies

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just this week we received a response to our FOIP request for the Jack Mintz report. Not surprisingly, it didn't include anything that couldn't have been read off the department website. Section 29 of the FOIP Act was used to exclude information because the information is public or will be public "within 60 days after the applicant's request." Well, we sent in our request on the first of October. So my question is to the minister of finance. Will the minister be complying with section 29 and releasing the report before November 30?

Ms Evans: I will comply with the letter of the FOIP Act, yes.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. To the same minister: why did this government choose to allocate \$200,000 toward commissioning this report and then hide it for almost a year?

Ms Evans: Mr. Speaker, if we review *Hansard* on this subject for the last several months, I think I've been consistent in my response that we wanted to have not only time to review the contents of the report but, with the brand new electorate, at least half of our members being new, not part of this caucus when the report was first commissioned, an opportunity to ascertain what their views are and an opportunity to listen to the views of Albertans. We will be coming forward with an investment savings policy, as our Premier asked in my mandate letter, and this is a part of it.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you. To the same minister. Well, is this report asking the government to go further in its savings plan than the government was willing to go? Is that accounting for the time delay?

Ms Evans: You know, I'm tempted to say, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre teases me. She knows that she wants to get information before I'm prepared to release it. I will release that response in due course.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar.

Safe Communities Initiative

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we heard earlier, today is the first anniversary of the safe communities initiative, and I commend the hon. Premier and the hon. ministers for taking very progressive action on this extremely important issue. I do however want to know how this initiative is making a difference in the daily lives of Albertans. To the Minister of Justice: what tangible difference has the safe communities initiative made in the lives of Albertans over the last year?

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

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an important day for this policy initiative, and I think that we can start by talking about what some of the tangible results are under the safe communities initiative. Albertans have seen more police on the streets. They've seen more beds for young people in treatment. They've seen co-operation between different levels of government, municipalities, law enforcement, and the courts. We're doing things differently, and that's one of the goals of our secretariat. It's allowing us to make a comprehensive approach to deal with crime, repeat offenders, treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention. Albertans can feel safer, knowing that this initiative will have a lasting and positive impact on their lives.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: what can Albertans expect to see from this initiative in the coming months?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have said in this House before, this initiative is a very long-term initiative. It's an initiative that will change the way government thinks about what we do around safe communities. In the coming months Albertans will see a focus on prevention and the underlying reasons why people get caught up in the justice system. Two of the biggest contributing factors to criminal activity are addiction and mental illness. As we move forward, we'll be offering families and individual Albertans the tools that they need to be strong and successful. This will include life-skills training for First Nations children, early drug and violence intervention programs for elementary and junior high school students, and more residential treatment beds. We'll also be expanding supports for Albertans in need of treatment for addiction and mental illness.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you. Finally, to the same minister: how can Albertans become involved with making the safe communities initiative a success?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The most important place where we can see people making a difference around safe communities is in our communities and in our homes. The Premier's announcement today of the \$60 million safe communities innovation fund is going to allow us to partner with communities to identify opportunities to deal with prevention and education that will keep people out of the justice system and make people safer in their communities.

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

Swan Hills Waste Treatment Facility Cleanup

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On December 31, 2000, the buildings and equipment of the Swan Hills waste treatment plant were acquired by the taxpayers for \$1 from a subsidiary of Bovar Inc. Environmental cleanup costs were also transferred from this waste treatment plant to the taxpayers in 2004. The total cleanup cost for this outfit was estimated for the year 2018 to be over \$25 million. My first question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Why have cleanup costs now doubled to over \$62 million?

The Speaker: The hon. minister. [interjection] The hon. minister has the floor.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Swan Hills treatment plant is in fact being used to make itself disappear in some ways. Some of the areas that were used for the treatment of waste are redundant, and we are using the plant itself to get rid of those in a safe and efficient manner. We are on track to bring back suggestions and recommendations to government on the future of that facility for those timelines.

Mr. MacDonald: Again to the Minister of Infrastructure: given that millions of taxpayers' dollars are disappearing very quickly, what additional pollution has been emitting from this plant to force cleanup costs to double in the next 10 years from about \$25 million to over \$60 million?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I'm not aware if those numbers are, in fact, accurate, but I can tell you that it's been a concerted effort to treat the facility and the wastes that go through it as best we can in order to safeguard the community, which we have, and the environment around Swan Hills. The air quality and environment and tests that we've done on the ground, in fact, have improved considerably, so we're very happy with that. Interestingly enough, we hope that all of the restrictions that were put on in the past will be lifted in the very near future.

Mr. MacDonald: Again to the same minister: given that these numbers are from page 73 of the 2007-08 annual report from your department, are you telling this House that these numbers are not accurate?

Mr. Hayden: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not suggesting that the numbers are not accurate. I'm suggesting that I wasn't aware of the numbers. What is accurate is that we'll take whatever steps are necessary to safeguard Albertans and to get rid of things like dioxins and PCBs, which is what people have asked us to do. We do what people ask us to do in this province.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Calder.

Young Worker Health and Safety

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As already mentioned earlier today, a week ago Employment and Immigration launched a series of gory Internet videos aimed at young workers. They don't, however, tell workers that they have a right to refuse unsafe work. They don't tell workers that they can ask their employer to establish a joint workplace health and safety committee at their discretion or that they can call an inspector if they have safety concerns. Instead, they show severed limbs, crushed bones, and acid burning the flesh. To the Minister of Employment and Immigration: how can you possibly say that this will inform workers of their rights when all it really does is blame these young workers, the very victims?

2:20

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, the campaign is meant to be what we call a pull campaign. It does identify a series of questions that young workers can ask of their employers. It's only one part of all of the work that we do with safety on the job site. As I indicated a little earlier today, the campaign has generated a tremendous amount of interest. Initially, after the first five days, we received over 50,000 hits. We're averaging over 10,000 hits per day.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, those hits are not actually giving them the information they need. The questions you talk about encouraging them to ask don't include things like the right to refuse unsafe work and health and safety committees. We're having 7,000 Alberta youth miss work every year. Your answer is an \$850,000 campaign aimed at scaring them. If you really cared, we'd have mandatory occupational health and safety committees and more inspectors. Why don't we?

Mr. Goudreau: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, it's only one portion of the safety campaigns that we do. While some people might consider that it's not enough, what's truly offensive is the fact that our young workers are getting hurt. We want them to take part and take an active role individually and start asking questions and recognize that they do have certain rights on the work site.

Ms Notley: Well, again, your campaign so far only teaches them to blame themselves. Instead of calling it Bloody Lucky, it should be called: Alberta health and safety is a bloody mess. We have mandatory health and safety committees in every other province in the country, but in this province we've chosen big employer interests over worker safety, and now we're papering that over with this advertising campaign. How many more workers have to die before you put in place mandatory health and safety committees?

Mr. Goudreau: Mr. Speaker, there are safety committees out there, and we encourage that to happen.

I want to say that there's really nothing pretty about work-site injuries. Really, as I indicated, this is one of our targets out of many, many activities that we're doing. We recognize that there's really nothing nice about work-site injuries. The campaign is not meant to sugar-coat it or put a tie around injuries. It's meant to bring a certain level of attention to our youth in the work that they do.

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

Safe Communities Initiative (continued)

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I commend the government on progress made with the safe communities initiative. I am concerned, however, that the program seems to focus on what happens after a crime has been committed rather than on prevention. My question is to the Minister of Justice. What is your department doing to address crime prevention?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government's approach to the safe communities task force report was to respond in the areas of education, prevention, treatment, and prosecution. This is a long-term strategy. We're addressing all pieces of that. What I will say is that we know and we understand that two of the biggest contributing factors to criminal activity are addiction and mental illness. Albertans struggling with substance abuse problems, mental illness, and homelessness take a tremendous toll on the criminal justice system, mostly with nonviolent and petty offences. By identifying the people who need treatment, not sending them to jail, helping them get their lives back on track, we'll be able to reduce pressure on the police and the courts, and when we do that, the police can focus on more serious crimes.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what does the safe communities initiative do for those with mental illness or addictions?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The work that we are doing in partnership with my colleagues the Solicitor General and the minister of housing is supporting programs like pathways in Calgary and rapid exit in Edmonton, that offer a wraparound approach to people who need to get help and not be treated solely as criminals. These are people that can be diverted out of the justice system. They can take pressure off the justice and the criminal law systems. We need to help Albertans in crisis to ensure that they have access to the treatment that they need.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to the same minister: what does the initiative do to address other root causes like family violence or gangs?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Again, Mr. Speaker, thank you. That question really does reflect the fact that we understand that there are many underlying causes. We think that through the safe communities initiative we will be able to offer families and individual Albertans many tools that they need to be strong and successful. Some of this work will include life skills training for First Nations children, early drug and violence intervention programs, and expanding provincial support for programs aimed at preventing domestic violence and providing support for families that are victims of domestic violence.

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

Wapiti Gravel Suppliers

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Infrastructure has an inventory of \$14 million worth of sand, salt, and gravel for the year ending March 31, 2008, on their books. That's \$3 million more than 2007. My first question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Who did you purchase your gravel inventory from, and how much did it cost?

The Speaker: The hon. minister. [interjections] The hon. minister does have the floor.

Mr. Hayden: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly will take a look and see what the information is behind that. I expect there's a possibility that it's a joint commodity that we have with Transportation, but I'll certainly have a look.

Mr. MacDonald: For the minister's information it's on page 68 of his annual report.

Now, again to the same minister: given that Wapiti Gravel Suppliers last year alone billed taxpayers \$45 million and that if you add that up over the last six years, they've billed the taxpayers \$130 million, how much gravel did the province buy from Wapiti Gravel Suppliers?

Mr. Hayden: Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we bought a great deal.

Mr. MacDonald: Interesting.

Again to the same minister: are the gravel contracts awarded through public tender or private negotiation?

Mr. Hayden: Mr. Speaker, I do know that for the gravel needs for my ministry – and I can't speak, obviously, for Transportation, who would obviously get more gravel than I do – we have a number of sources throughout the province, and in many cases the stockpiles that we have are government stockpiles. We have a great amount of gravel in the Edmonton area and the Calgary area that, of course, we have the private sector crush for us and that we use in our construction projects and our transportation projects.

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

Safe Communities Innovation Fund

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the anniversary of the safe communities initiative, as was alluded to earlier. I also commend the government for all the hard work that has gone into making Alberta communities safer and stronger. My first question is to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. Could the minister please give us some detail on the innovation fund that was announced this morning?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The safe communities innovation fund is a very important part of what this government wants to do around safe communities. We believe that the people that understand best how to make communities safer and how to find systems that will work and respond to what people in this province need are people in communities. We have tremendous community organizations in this province that are working in co-operation with each other and with the police. They're going to come to us with their ideas, and we're going to support them.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental to the same minister: how will the funds be disbursed throughout the province?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have decided that in order to ensure that we can foster co-operation between various people involved in this work, we will have two focuses in this fund. One will be supporting partnerships between community-based organizations and police, and the other will be to support community-based organizations alone. It will be equally distributed across the province, but that emphasis will be a 50-50 split.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhardwaj: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final supplemental, to the Solicitor General: how would individual Albertans and communities benefit from this fund?

Mr. Lindsay: Mr. Speaker, one of the keys to preventing and reducing crime is for communities and police to work in partnership. These kinds of partnerships have proven to be very effective. An example of that would be the neighbourhood empowerment teams, which take police officers in the community to engage that community in crime reduction strategies. These new initiatives encourage Albertans to think about new ways to work together with police to tackle the root causes of crime in their communities. I know we can count on Albertans to come up with many excellent and innovative ideas as we move forward to ensure the safety of our communities.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Bow.

Provincial Sheriffs Program

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently Alberta sheriffs are getting more and more powers that make them resemble police officers, and thus I'm concerned about the oversight practices regarding our sheriffs. To that end the director of sheriffs seems to have been given virtually unfettered discretion regarding the scope and nature of how complaints are disposed of. Can the Solicitor General explain why this is the case?

2:30

Mr. Lindsay: Mr. Speaker, what I will say is that I get the impression over the last few days here in the House that the hon. member appears to not think all that highly of our sheriffs program, and it's somewhat confusing because of the fact that I know his passion for crime prevention. Consider the great things that our sheriffs are doing. There are 105 of them on our highways making our highways safer. Approximately 150 of them work with organized crime and gangs, assisting our police officers there. The other 400 are working in our court security and prisoner transport systems, who, again, free up our police officers to do more front-line policing.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy with our sheriffs writing tickets. I'm just wondering if it's the wisest thing given the violence on our streets.

Anyway, if we could try that question again here. I think we got sidetracked. Mr. Speaker, the director of sheriffs seems to have been

given virtually unfettered discretion regarding the scope and nature of how complaints are disposed of. Can the Solicitor General explain why this is the case?

Mr. Lindsay: Again, Mr. Speaker, just to be clear, the director of sheriffs does not have the final say in discipline over the sheriffs. That role and responsibility goes to the assistant deputy minister and the director of law enforcement in the province.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Can the Solicitor General tell me if and when Albertans can expect independent and impartial civilian oversight of the approximately 700 sheriffs currently operating instead of by this individual you just referenced?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Lindsay: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's actually an excellent question. With the recent increase in the number of sheriffs, we're actually working on that right now.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Bow, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Buffalo.

Crime Legislation

Ms DeLong: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Crime affects all of us. As Albertans and Canadians we want our home, community, city, province, and country to be as safe and secure as possible. The federal government has said that they're going to pursue tougher penalties for young offenders and the reduced use of conditional sentences. My question is to the Minister of Justice. Given that much of our criminal legislation is federal legislation, is there anything that your ministry can do to improve federal legislation?

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

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. member for that question. It's very true that we need to work in partnership with the federal government. The short answer to this question is: I certainly hope so. We have spoken as a government in the last two months about some changes that we think need to be made to federal legislation that will allow us to do our jobs better and to advance the safe communities initiative in this province.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms DeLong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplemental to the same minister: what kinds of changes would you like to see?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are in the process right now of arranging a meeting with the federal Minister of Justice where we will specifically talk about changes that need to be made to the Criminal Code of Canada that would permit greater use of telewarrants, authorize providing disclosure to the defence electronically, level the playing field to ensure that defence counsel gives proper notice to the prosecution when they intend to call expert opinion evidence in criminal trials, legislation dealing with credit for time served on remand, reporting requirements for those whose services could be used to facilitate the commission of online child

pornography offences, a promise to end the requirement for long gun owners to register their hunting rifles and shotguns . . .

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms DeLong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same minister: what is the minister advocating in regard to changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, which was mentioned during the federal election?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There seems to be a national consensus that we need to undertake a review of the Youth Criminal Justice Act. Last year Alberta Justice urged the federal government to do this. It was agreed at the federal-provincial-territorial ministers' meeting that this had to happen. We require new legislation that will add deterrence and denunciation to the principles governing sentencing and proceedings under the act as well as provisions dealing with the pretrial detention of youths.

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

Smoking in Vehicles Carrying Children

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the Minister of Transportation said, "Mr. Speaker, I have to say that one of the most important things to this government is the safety of all Albertans and the most precious cargo, our children." Will the Minister of Transportation make good on these words by passing legislation to ban smoking in cars that are transporting children?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I'm not so sure that smoking in cars has absolutely anything to do with the Minister of Transportation. I believe that any parent who really cares about their children wouldn't be smoking in cars with children.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Exactly. That's why we need to legislate some common sense for these parents if they're not looking after their children. To that end will you legislate a ban on smoking in vehicles that are transporting children?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I have to tell this hon. member over there that there is no such thing as legislating common sense. Some people have it, and some people don't. I believe that everybody has some when it comes to their children, and we will try to educate them towards that goal.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is being done elsewhere.

Even though the member is responsible for Transportation, I won't ask him to reinvent the wheel, but how about just taking this Alberta-based solution province-wide to protect our children?

Mr. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I think we've gone a long way with our smoking regulations, which has nothing to do with the Minister of Transportation. I'm actually staying away from smoking bylaws.

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

Health Services in Calgary

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Wellness. The government has committed to increasing access to quality health care and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our health care service delivery. However, I received complaints that east Calgary is underserved in terms of health care relative to other portions of the city. Is this true?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, what is true is that there has been tremendous growth in both the northeast and east of the city and, actually, east of the city of Calgary. This government has responded. I can think of two things. I know that there's a new east Calgary health centre in Forest Lawn that is well under construction, and there is significant expansion taking place at the Peter Lougheed hospital.

Mr. Bhullar: Mr. Speaker, again to the same minister. It is important that all parts of Calgary receive the same level of health care service. Can the minister offer specifics about how many in-patient beds the expansion of the Peter Lougheed will bring to east Calgary?

Mr. Liepert: Well, I agree with the member that it is important that we not only offer equitable health services across the city of Calgary but across the province of Alberta, and that's exactly what we're doing. Specifically, relative to the expansion at Peter Lougheed, there is a new wing that is being developed, approximately 100 in-patient beds. There's a new intensive care unit that will be on stream, a new coronary care unit. In addition to that, there's going to be shelled-in space for future expansion. Those new phases will begin opening throughout 2009.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Lastly, to the same minister. The east Calgary health centre in Forest Lawn is something my constituents are very excited about. Can the minister update me on what is happening? What progress has been made on the completion of this project?

Mr. Liepert: The east Calgary health centre is about a \$15 million investment by this government, Mr. Speaker, as the member correctly points out, in the middle of Forest Lawn. As I said, construction is well under way for opening it in, I think, mid-2009. That particular facility is designed to provide not only treatment but health promotion and information programs for seniors and mental health as well as primary care. It'll be a full-service clinic in Forest Lawn.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that was 108 questions and responses today.

Momentarily we will continue with the Routine.

2:40

Statement by the Speaker

Oral Question Period Rules

The Speaker: I want to ask that all members over the break – the members will be absent from the Legislature for a number of days, and I know that they would want to maintain their sharpness associated with the Legislative Assembly. As with any hockey team that may take a couple of days off, the coach would probably request

all members to come back the following day for a little, you know, freshen up skate just to maintain your edge. So what I'd like you to do over the next 10 days is find *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms* and read the section dealing with oral questions and written questions and motions for returns and the like, specifically. It's not that much reading to do, actually. It's about page 120 to page 126 or so.

If you don't have an opportunity to do that, then get hold of the *Hansard* because before we get to Orders of the Day today, we're going to have a point of order which will probably be dealing with exactly what I've talked about. It'll be a little refresher so that when we come back here two Mondays from now, we'll be really, really sharp and precise.

In 30 seconds from now we'll continue.

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The hon. 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, November 17, 2008, written questions appearing on the Order Paper shall stand and retain their places.

I also wish to give notice that there being no motions for returns appearing on the Order Paper, there are none to stand and retain their places.

Introduction of Bills

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Airdrie-Chestermere.

Bill 46

Health Professions Amendment Act, 2008

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and introduce Bill 46, the Health Professions Amendment Act, 2008.

This proposed legislation better enables health professional colleges to monitor and enforce their members' compliance with professional standards of practice. The legislation also proposes that college members have plans to address care, custody, and access to patient records and that colleges be provided with tools to deal with abandoned patient records. In addition, pharmacy technicians will be incorporated into and regulated under the act, and a new schedule will be added for podiatrists. All of these changes will help to improve the quality and safety of Albertans' health care.

I move first reading of Bill 46. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 46 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move that we move Bill 46 to Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

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

Bill 47

Mines and Minerals (New Royalty Framework) Amendment Act, 2008

Mr. Webber: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request leave to introduce Bill 47, the Mines and Minerals (New Royalty Framework) Amendment Act, 2008.

Now, this act sets forth amendments to the Mines and Mineral Act

and will be followed by passage of seven regulations, the first one being the natural gas royalty regulation 2009, the second being the oil sands royalty regulation 2009, the third being the petroleum royalty regulation 2009, the fourth being the deep oil exploratory well regulation, the fifth being the natural gas deep drilling regulation, the sixth being the oil sands allowed costs ministerial regulation, and the seventh being the bitumen evaluation methodology ministerial regulation.

The passage of this act will enable implementation of regulations for new price-sensitive royalties. Also, the passage of this act will maintain Alberta's competitive advantage in attracting new investment, development, and jobs and will empower the province to pursue new opportunities for value-added developments.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 47 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 47 appear on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader on behalf of the hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise.

Bill 48

Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2008

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Minister of Finance and Enterprise I request leave to introduce the Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2008.

The bill legislates Alberta's new scientific research and development credit as announced in Budget 2008. It includes provisions to ensure that employment income and active small business income are ultimately taxed at the same rate. The bill also introduces other Alberta policy initiatives, parallels federal amendments as required, and implements technical and administrative changes to keep tax laws consistent for federal and provincial purposes.

This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of the bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

[Motion carried; Bill 48 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose on behalf of the hon. Member for Livingstone-Macleod.

Bill 49

Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008

Mr. Olson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 49, which is the Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008.

This bill will amend the Traffic Safety Act to authorize Alberta administrative licence suspension program suspensions to apply to drivers suspected of drug impaired driving. This would be consistent with Bill C-2, that the government of Canada proclaimed on July 2 of this year. For the first time in Canada the Criminal Code of Canada establishes parity between drug and alcohol impaired driving offences. This amendment will help improve traffic safety for Albertans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion carried; Bill 49 read a first time]

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Renner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 49 appear on the Order Paper under Government Bills and Orders.

[Motion carried]

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

Bill 50

Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2008

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, on the anniversary of the safe communities initiative, it is my distinct pleasure to rise to request leave to introduce Bill 50, the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2008.

This legislation will amend and extend the scope of the Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Act, which established the process through which property and profits gained through unlawful acts are seized through the civil courts and returned to the victims or used for programs that benefit victims of crime. The proposed amendments in Bill 50 extend the scope of the original act to all offences and will include the ability to seize property that has been used to commit crime, which includes items such as vehicles and weapons. The proceeds from the forfeited instruments of illegal activity will be used to repair losses and injuries suffered by its victims.

I would like today to give special recognition to the hon. Member for Strathcona, who has worked very hard on this bill. This legislation will enhance our ability to fight crime and compensate victims.

Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce this bill. This being a money bill, His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor, having been informed of the contents of this bill, recommends the same to the Assembly.

[Motion carried; Bill 50 read a first time]

2:50 Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to table the appropriate number of copies of letters from Fred Kodnar of Calgary and Joan Farkas of Calgary calling on the Premier to remove the minister of children's services from office.

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

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today. I'm tabling five copies of my letter and cheque dated August 1, 2008, to the Vulcan County Food Bank. As per my pledge to the Assembly on April 2, '07, half of my indexed pay raise is donated monthly to a food bank until AISH is similarly indexed.

The same occurred as of September 1, and my money went to the Medicine Hat and District Food Bank.

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two tablings today. They are charts from the Alberta wait-list registry. The first one is the general surgery average percentile wait time urgency 1 in the Peace Country health region.

The second tabling is also a chart from the Alberta wait-list

registry. It is the orthopaedic surgery average percentile wait time urgency 1 for the Peace Country health region. They're both startling in the fact that they're just going way up.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Castle Downs.

Mr. Lukaszuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As per my undertaking earlier, I'd like to table the required number of copies of A Real Action Plan for Alberta, depicting what appears to be a picture of the Leader of the Opposition, and also the requisite number of copies of 2008 Election Spending Promises: Liberal Party, put together by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Projected Government Business

The Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. If I could ask the Government House Leader to please share the projected government House business with us for the week commencing the 17th of November.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we do anticipate adjourning this afternoon pursuant to Standing Order 3.1(2) to allow for a constituency week and reconvening on November 17.

Under Government Bills and Orders on the 17th in the evening after 8:30 we anticipate proceeding, subject to progress this afternoon, with Bill 41, Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2); Bill 43, Emergency Health Services Act; Bill 44, Pharmacy and Drug Amendment Act, 2008; Bill 45, Statistics Bureau Amendment Act, 2008; Bill 46, Health Professions Amendment Act, 2008; Bill 47, Mines and Minerals (New Royalty Framework) Amendment Act, 2008; Bill 48, Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2008; Bill 49, Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008; and Bill 50, Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2008; in Committee of the Whole Bill 29, the Alberta Capital Finance Authority Amendment Act, 2008; and third reading of Bill 42, the Health Governance Transition Act.

On Tuesday, November 18, in the afternoon under Government Bills and Orders we anticipate receiving certain messages from His Honour the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor with respect to supplementary supply and then to deal with motions for supplementary supply which I anticipate will be on the Order Paper later today. Time permitting, we will proceed, subject to progress on the previous days, with Bill 46 in second reading and bills 47, 48, 49, and 50; in Committee of the Whole bills 41, 43, 44, 45; and third reading of Bill 29. In the evening after 7:30 under Government Bills and Orders for second reading bills 46, 47, 48, 49, and 50; and in committee bills 41, 43, 44, and 45; and third reading of Bill 29; and as per the Order Paper.

On Wednesday, November 19, in the afternoon we anticipate that the Legislature might request, pursuant to the motions passed Tuesday, hopefully, that we convene Committee of Supply to deal with supplementary estimates. In the evening under Government Bills and Orders at 7:30 second reading of bills 49 and 50; Committee of the Whole, bills 46, 47, 48; third reading of bills 41, 43, 44, and 45; and as per the Order Paper.

On Thursday the 20th, in the afternoon, under Government Bills and Orders, in Committee of the Whole bills 49 and 50; and third reading of bills 46, 47, 48; and as per the Order Paper.

Calendar of Special Events

The Speaker: Hon. members, before we go to the purported point of order, I periodically, at least once a month, update members as to what the theme of the month is or what the week is or the days are. We're now into the sixth day of November, and a number of members have already talked about some of these theme days or weeks, but I'd like to bring to the attention of all members what the whole list is so that very worthy ones will not be ignored.

November is National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Campaign month. It is National Health Food Month. It's Osteoporosis Month.

This week, November 1 to 7, is National Down Syndrome Awareness Week. November 2 to 8 is Canada Career Week. November 2 to 8 is also National Pain Awareness Week. It's also Remembrance Week in this country. November 3 to 7 is National Technology Week. November 5 was Skilled Trades Day. Today, November 6, is the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. November 6 to 12 is National Seniors Safety Week. November 9 to 15 is National Marfan Awareness Week. November 10 to 16 is Optimists' Youth Appreciation Week.

Of course, we all know the most solemn day of the year for us, November 11, is next week. November 14 is World Diabetes Day; November 15, International PEN Day of the Imprisoned Writer. November 15 is World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day. November 15 to 22 is YMCA World Peace Week. November 16 is the International Day of Tolerance. November 16 is also World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. November 16 to 22 is National Addiction Awareness Week. November 18 and 19 are both days set aside for emphasis on prostate cancer research breakfasts.

November 20 is Universal Children's Day. November 20 is also Africa Industrialization Day. November 21 is World Television Day, November 23 to December 7 is Opération Tendre la main, and November 24 to 30 is National Home Fire Safety Week. November 24 to December 1 is Canadian HIV/AIDS Awareness Week. November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Status of Women Canada. November 28 is Buy Nothing Day, and November 29 is International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Point of Order Questions about Detail

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader on a purported point of order.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier today in question period the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar raised certain questions to the hon. Minister of Infrastructure, which in my submission were out of order. I believe that we've seen this pattern develop a little bit in the last while, and so I thought it appropriate, although I tend to avoid points of order, to bring it to the attention of yourself and the House and ask for you to admonish the hon. member to respect the nature and purview of question period.

In essence, under *Marleau and Montpetit* page 424, Principles and Guidelines for Oral Questions, "The written rules state . . . that oral questions are to be based on 'matters of urgency.'" All the rules with respect to Oral Question Period clearly indicate that the purpose of question period is to raise matters that are current and matters that are urgent, to request information from the government on matters of policy but, clearly, things that are urgent.

Under *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules & Forms*, page 120, 408(1)(e): "[must] not be of a nature requiring a lengthy and detailed

answer.” Further down on that page under 409: “There must be some present value in seeking the information during the Question Period rather than through the Order Paper.” I might note, Mr. Speaker, that through the Order Paper there’s the opportunity for written questions, which can ask for specific or detailed issues and information. I think that’s the distinction. I would go on, I guess, to quote one more area, and that is on page 121: “Supplementary questions should flow from the answers of Ministers.” Now, that could be applied to a whole lot of the supplementary questions we hear.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar raised questions on a couple of occasions, actually, but the one I’m specifically referring to raised questions about a specific line item in an annual report of a ministry. Under our standing orders those annual reports stand referred to a committee called Public Accounts, which, amazingly enough, the hon. member chairs. So he does know the role and function of the Public Accounts Committee, and he does know that that Public Accounts Committee is where the minister or the department may be asked specific questions about their annual report and about the specific line items in that report.

It is absolutely unfathomable that the hon. member would think it would be appropriate to stand up and ask a question about a specific line item and expect that the minister would have memorized the annual report and the statements and know specifically what he’s referring to and have that kind of detailed information at hand to respond. In the supplementary questions, after that was pointed out to him rather politely by the Minister of Infrastructure, the hon. member then went on to ask about specific details about specific contracts and specific companies, clearly information which would not be at hand. It’s not a matter of policy. It is specific and detailed information, which violates the rule that it not be of a nature requiring a lengthy and detailed answer and certainly violates all of the tenets of question period with respect to what type of questions might be asked.

3:00

I would ask you to draw that to the attention of the hon. member and ask him not to repeat that kind of process. If he wants specific information, if he is, in effect, trying to set up the minister for some supplementary question, the least he could do is to make sure that the minister knows so that he can have the information at hand, although that in itself, in my view, would still be inappropriate. But that would be the least he could do. If that’s what he’s attempting to do, to set the stage for something by asking those detailed questions, he can do that in an appropriate way. But the way in which he asked the questions is clearly out of line in terms of *Marleau and Montpetit*, in terms of *Beauchesne’s*, and in terms of the parliamentary rules for question period as we know them.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar to participate on this point of order.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you. Yes, certainly. I don’t think there is a point of order here. We look at *Beauchesne* 410, item 5: “The primary purpose of the Question Period is the seeking of information and calling the Government to account.” That’s my job. Item 6: “The greatest possible freedom should be given to members consistent with the other rules and practices.” I believe the questions were appropriate. *Beauchesne* 416: “A Minister may decline to answer a question without stating the reason for refusing.”

Now, that being said, the hon. Government House Leader suggests we ask for this information through written questions or motions for return; however, there’s no guarantee that we’re going to be

provided that information. A lot of the time, I’m told 50 per cent of the time, if not more, these requests are rejected.

The minister goes on to say that I have been doing this all fall. This is the first question I have asked to the hon. Minister of Infrastructure since this session started. The minister, incredibly, signed off on his own report, and it’s his job, his duty, to read the report in detail if he’s to sign off on it. The minister signed off on this report on page 9. There’s even a column in here, Mr. Speaker, on “In the Rearview Mirror.”

If we’re looking at past government spending, we can certainly do it in this House. The hon. Government House Leader is correct that the annual report from 2007-08 may come before Public Accounts. I would remind him that the chair doesn’t routinely participate in the questions that are asked there. My job is to make sure that the meeting runs on time and the proceedings are conducted fairly. The minister doesn’t even have to come to the Public Accounts Committee meeting if he or she decides not to.

The whole issue of gravel. The hon. Government House Leader has suggested that this is not an urgent matter. Well, \$130 million over a six-year period is, in my opinion, an urgent matter. We consider that the total bill in the last six years to this one company, Wapiti Gravel Suppliers, is \$130 million, and \$45 million of that was in the last year alone, in the same fiscal year that we referred to in the annual report. In fact, in the annual report, Mr. Speaker, again, on page 68 there’s a \$14 million inventory of salt, sand, and gravel held by this department. This is only one supplier. They may be supplying other things besides gravel. We don’t know. In question period it is our duty to find out. If the hon. Government House Leader also does not consider it an urgent matter, gravel and the price of gravel, well, perhaps I would suggest to the hon. minister and other members of the House that you should look at page 355 of the Auditor General’s report, where there is significant interest in gravel and rock.

The Speaker: Hon. member, please. We’re on a point of order. Go with the point. You don’t have to argue policy or anything else. We’re on a point of order.

Mr. MacDonald: Exactly, Mr. Speaker. I’m arguing about the urgency of this matter. The hon. Government House Leader says that there’s no urgency to this. Well, I maintain there is. This is further proof that there is by the reference and the remarks of the Auditor General as to how this government maintains our gravel supplies, our gravel pits, the amount of royalties that are collected. This is relevant, and my questions were relevant.

With that, I will conclude by saying that I really don’t think there is a point of order here. I have a duty and an obligation as a member of the opposition, regardless of what other duties I have in this Assembly and Public Accounts or anywhere else, to hold accountable the ministers that I’ve been asked to.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood on this point of order.

Mr. Mason: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It would be my submission that the hon. Government House Leader does not have a valid point of order. If you review *Beauchesne’s* 410, on page 121 it says, “The primary purpose of the Question Period is the seeking of information,” which I think the hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar was trying to do, “and calling the Government to account,” which I think he was also attempting to do. The fact

that it was a detailed question that the minister may not have first-hand knowledge of is of no consequence as to whether or not it's in order or not.

Obviously, not every minister can know every detail of what's going on in their department. If they get a question they can't answer, they simply say, "I will undertake to get that information to the hon. member," and sit down. If the minister didn't have the information, that was the appropriate course of action. But to try and cast the entire question as being out of order is, in my view, completely unwarranted.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Anybody else?

Well, hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, that was a very wise ruling.

Mr. Mason: I'm running for Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member, I want to assure you that I do not feel threatened. However, is your job open? Works both ways, hon. member.

The hon. Government House Leader rose on a point of order this afternoon, I believe, in his belief that there was a very specific question raised. There's absolutely no doubt at all that there are many opportunities for members to seek information in this House. The hon. Government House Leader clearly pointed out that one option is the Motions for Returns and Written Questions segments, which I do believe the Order Paper is now cleared of. We have none.

However, I've been here long enough to understand that the current rule of questions and supplementaries that we've evolved to has not always been the case. There are a variety of different ways you could ask questions and how many supplements and what you could have. Our current rule is that a member raises a question; then he or she has two supplementaries.

I'm also very, very much aware, for having been in this House for a day or two, that there's always a strategy attached to what's going on. I can also appreciate and understand that an hon. member who would raise a question might already know the answer to the question. I'm also aware of the strategy in that the first question is a set-up, the second question is a set-up, and the third question is a zinger. That's a game. I'm serious. It's a game. It's a strategy. It may seek information. It may seek to embarrass someone. It may seek to harm someone politically. All those nasty things have been known to play out in a parliament.

3:10

Quite frankly, ministers don't have to answer questions, on the flip side of it. When the ego sets in for a member of the Executive Council and if a question is given to them but they don't know the answer, the immediate first thing that comes to those who are, I having been one, is a rejection in our mind that we would ever stand up and say that I don't know the answer. "I've got to give an answer. I'm the minister." Well, the fact of the matter is that there is an option not to reply if one does not know the answer. If one does not know the answer, one can say: I'm glad to take that question under advisement; I'll come back to it later. *Beauchesne* clearly points that out.

Beauchesne also points out – and the rules have been established for over hundreds and hundreds of years with respect to this, not months but hundreds and hundreds of years of evolution – that there would also be contradiction. One answer may be given one day because of the specifics of the words that were asked in that

particular question, and the other day they may be just a slight bit different, and then someone will stand up and basically say: well, you said this yesterday; now you're saying something different today. Well, you're not. The English language is very precise, and what it is that we must do with the question depends on how the question is asked and the context of it.

One thing is very, very clear to me, though, having been observing what's going on in this fall session. This is now day 45 of this Legislature. Since we have returned in the last few weeks – and this comment applies to all members of the House, all parties of the House – there seems to be a difficulty in understanding what the rules of question period are. That's why a little earlier I pointed out that I would really ask all members to read the sections dealing with this.

Essentially and very briefly, as has already been pointed out by the Government House Leader and pointed out by the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar and pointed out by the Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, there are certain parameters that one uses to try and find information. However, the following also seems to be coming through far too many times.

Question period deals with government policy issues. That's the purpose of it and essentially the urgency that goes with it. It is not a time to be motivated by asking a minister for their personal opinion about this or that matter. That's not government policy, personal opinion. This happens with opposition members. This happens with government members. "Does the minister think this is good?" That type of question is not to be part of the question period, yet all members do it.

Secondly, there's a fair degree of conjecture associated with the content of the questions. Some people call them puffballs. Again, they don't come from just one side, by the way.

There's a hypothetical nature to many of these questions. "Can the minister guarantee?" Well, who can guarantee anything? "What will the situation be three years from now?" Who could have told you six months ago that this would be what would be happening in the world today? "Will the minister pass legislation?" A minister doesn't pass legislation. Those questions could all have been ruled out of order. The Assembly passes legislation. The minister can only introduce legislation. The minister is not held accountable. It's not the minister's fault that the Legislature votes down the legislation.

Essentially, that 108 divided by 3 gives us the number of questions. Nearly half, I believe, hon. members, in the last number of days I could have interjected on and ruled out. This applies to everybody – applies to everybody.

When we have question period, if you're getting tired, don't ask the question. If you don't have time to write the question yourself, don't accept one from some researcher. It's the responsibility of the member for the question, not a researcher, and it's the member who must take responsibility for what they say, the same way that a minister must take responsibility for what they say.

We're dealing with government policy. We're dealing with urgency. We're dealing with accountability. Those are the basic principles that come into this. Know full well that a member of the opposition may very well have a series of questions laying, quote, the trap: baited on the first two, with the trap on the third. The ministers must be smart and wise enough to understand that. There were times in the past when I was a minister, and I just stood up and smiled and sat down. You know, nobody thinks less of you.

So a little homework, okay? A little focus on what it is. This is a good place. We do some great work in this place. But if we're getting tired of the questions, let's get the Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing. We don't have to have

a 50-minute question period. This is the longest question period found anywhere. In Great Britain the Prime Minister comes into the British House of Commons twice a week for 15 minutes, and he is given the question before he comes in. That's their tradition. We've got a committee to look at all these things. Think outside the box. Figure out some other, maybe better one if we've got too much time in 50 minutes.

Orders of the Day
Government Bills and Orders
Second Reading

Bill 41

Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)

[Adjourned debate November 5: Mr. Mason]

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Lethbridge-East has already participated in Bill 41.

Ms Pastoor: Oh. I'm sorry.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, you're finished?

Mr. Mason: Yes.

The Speaker: Okay. Hon. Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar, then we'll recognize you.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you. I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. Bill 41, the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2), certainly brings clarification to linear assessments by providing a set date on which records from the Alberta Utilities Commission and Energy Resources Conservation Board can be assessed. I've been told that this was not entirely clear under the Municipal Government Act before. Certainly, there was a discussion in the halls of the recent convention at the AUMA regarding this matter.

This bill also clarifies that for the purposes of machinery and equipment taxes this tax will be paid by the holder of the lease, licence, or permit from the owner of the land. Again, I'm told this clarifies in legislation a common practice, that industry will pay taxes on its equipment and machines while operating on a land-owner's property, and this was not clear prior.

This amendment also deals with surplus school sites being designated for municipal uses. It creates a new definition called community services reserve and details how land that falls under the new designation may be used. If a school board, whether it be a separate or public board, declares reserve land to be surplus, the interest in that land goes to the municipality for public infrastructure.

Now, there is interest in this last amendment I spoke about, but the first two amendments to this Municipal Government Act are dealing with the assessments and the M and E tax. Certainly, from what I understand from our critic, the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, this follows extensive consultation with various municipalities and municipal leaders. It's essentially a series of housekeeping amendments, and it's keeping the MGA current.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Certainly, we look at the third amendment and the creation of the community services reserve. Again, this allows land within a municipality that has been deemed as surplus by the school board to be transferred back to the municipality. Then that said municipality,

Mr. Speaker, can use the land for any variety of purposes, all public infrastructure, as detailed within the act. Some of these purposes are for affordable housing. It could be for a library. It could be for a daycare, for public infrastructure that needs to be built.

3:20

As land becomes scarce in large municipalities, using the city of Edmonton for instance, this allows for land deemed surplus to be used for other municipal purposes. Now, I followed with a great deal of interest, as did a lot of other taxpayers in the city of Edmonton, the allocation of land that was deemed surplus in the past, and there was considerable discussion among or between the citizens of this city regarding the merit of the proposal that this land be set aside, in some cases, for affordable housing units.

Now, larger municipalities are always facing land issues to build infrastructure. We're looking at a new fire hall in our community. Fortunately, there was land that was available beside a major roadway, a major thoroughfare, where regardless of the time of the day fire engines and their support vehicles can move quite quickly in any direction – north, south, east, or west – and get to the point of the fire or the accident.

We know already there are large amounts of land designated for schools that have not been built. What do we do with that land? Do we leave it as a green space, or do we turn it over to developers that are willing to work in partnership with the municipalities to see affordable housing units built? Mr. Speaker, providing the citizens . . . [A cellphone rang] Did I hear bagpipes, or was that a cellphone? I think it was a cellphone ringing with the bagpipe tone. It's interesting.

However, Mr. Speaker, when we consider surplus sites and we consider the interests of the local community and the fact that over the years one generation of taxpayers or another more than likely paid for that land that is now deemed surplus, they should have an opportunity to participate fully in any discussion as to what the future use of that land will be. If we have a process that's fair and allows these citizens to participate, then I see absolutely no reason in the world why one shouldn't support this bill. Amending the Municipal Government Act to allow for the transfer of land to the municipality would allow key infrastructure to be built.

Mr. Liepert: Good. Question.

Mr. MacDonald: The minister of health is over there. He's very anxious to call the question on this bill. You know, he's hasty. Certainly, he was very quick to erase the health boards. When he did that without a cost-benefit analysis to see how that would reduce wait times or improve public service or reduce or control costs, there's a pattern here. The hon. minister of health is urging me on, but I'm going to take my time and make sure that we do Bill 41 right, Mr. Speaker, because I don't want to be caught in the same circumstance as he's handling now with this Alberta Health Services Board. He went ahead and very quickly and without a cost-benefit analysis eliminated the regional health authorities, and now we've got problems. I know I should stay on Bill 41, so I'm not going to talk about the problems the poor minister has got, but he's got a lot of problems.

Regarding Bill 41, Mr. Speaker, these amendments are part, as I understand it, of recommendations of the task force on affordable housing. The availability of land within municipalities was seen as a barrier to constructing affordable housing, and making surplus land for schools available for this purpose was a recommendation of the task force. If it's done within the basis of full public consultations with the communities that are involved, I can certainly support this.

One of the other ways we could deal with this recommendation by the task force on affordable housing is just to take government land that is sitting empty and transfer that to organizations who want to build affordable housing units. In Edmonton-Gold Bar there is a lot of land just west of the Bissell Centre. We've talked about it in this Assembly before. I forget how big it is, but I think it's two-and-a-half acres or so west of the Bissell Centre. Perhaps the hon. members across the way would consider allowing that land to be transferred for affordable housing units. Or some of the land that they still have surplus to our needs from the ring road: I'm not going to get into great details about that.

There are parcels of land that we could trade or swap. I was told the federal government, Mr. Speaker, has a policy where they will transfer land that they own. They will even swap land with one party or another that is proposing public infrastructure for the public good and for the public interest.

Now, I certainly hope that all the land that would be deemed surplus over time is not put into other uses. I think some neighborhoods don't have enough green space as it is, and if they don't, that should be one of the first priorities.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, with those remarks I would be quite willing to support, as is the hon. Member for Lethbridge-East, Bill 41, the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2). Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments or questions.

The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak in second reading to Bill 41, the Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2). I was very interested to see this one come forward, partly because I've had a number of schools close in my riding, as you know, and it just creates a huge hole in the community. The school board is allowed to dispose of the school land following certain criteria if it deems it to be no longer needed. Now, really, what this bill is addressing is sort of the other end of that, the front end of it, in that this is land that has been set aside for school use in which it's determined that it's not likely going to be used or not fast enough to be useful for a given community. This is changing the MGA to allow the municipalities to do some things with that land that they wouldn't have been allowed to do with that land previously.

I think this is a good move, and I'm very glad to see it, actually, because I know that we had some sort of – I don't want to call it creative bookkeeping because that's really not fair. There was some very hard work put in by my municipality, the city of Edmonton, I believe working with some government members, in trying to take some surplus school land and allocate it for first-time homebuyers to be able to build houses on that land that the city could contribute at a reasonable rate. Builders could then build houses on it. Because the land was less expensive to begin with, the cost of the house itself was an entry-level cost for first-time homeowners, and that's in fact how it was designated. That was very innovative, but it was hard to do because the MGA did not give the municipalities the flexibility to do that. So we now have that possibility, and others, which I'll come back to, are enabled through this change in the MGA.

3:30

Let me just back up. What we have here is that delegation from the province. Really, the municipalities are entirely dependent upon the province for permission to do things because it's the provincial government that enables their legislation through the Municipal

Government Act. As we end up with larger municipalities – truly, metropolitan areas, when we look at the cities of Edmonton and Calgary – and including our other cities, more than 80 per cent of the population of Alberta is residing in one of those areas. So these are very important entities, and most of the people in Alberta live in them. We have to find better ways of allowing the cities to be creative and to serve their citizens, who are also our citizens. That counts in a bunch of different ways in other programming.

What we're talking about here today is the use of the land. There are two other things that are being brought out in this legislation, which I don't think anybody has any problem with. Nobody has raised any issue with me about it. One is the first section, which is amending section 292 of the original act, which is really clarifying and closing a loophole, that you can't use stale-dated information, that, basically, the Alberta Utilities Commission or the ERCB – why do they keep changing the initials? – those organizations, have to be providing more current information for the assessments. That's just closing a loophole.

The second one is amending section 304(1)(f). That's essentially putting into legislation what's already in practice; that is, that the M and E taxes should be paid by the holder or the controller of the land. I think I got that the right way around. Yeah. Those are fine as far as I know. As I say, no one has contacted me with any kind of a concern about it.

Where I'm concentrating my interest and my energy is on what's being amended in 616, 671, 672 and 674, et cetera, of the MGA. This is what is allowing for a new category to be created of community services reserve. Essentially, what we had before was reserve and nonreserve. Those two categories were all the school board and city could interact on. The reserve was land that if the school board indicated it wasn't going to use it or need it – in other words, it was surplus – it would be sold to the municipality for a dollar for the municipality to use for designated purposes. The nonreserve, with again the same provisos about being identified as surplus by the school boards, would be sold to the city at market assessment or market value. That makes a big difference for the municipalities.

In my reading of this, but perhaps the sponsor of the bill could clarify, I take it, then, that the community services reserve is designated as reserve land, which means that it should be able to be sold to the municipalities for a dollar, and I'm getting that by looking at 4(d). If I could get confirmation on that because that's a really important point for the municipalities. Whether they're paying a dollar for it or whether they're paying market value for it is, I'm sure, a major factor in their decision-making.

Okay. There's the way it has been designated and the money factor, and then the second piece of it is allowing for the uses of it. We have not in the past had a lot of leeway in how that land got used. Currently in Edmonton, anyway – I'm sorry; I don't know what it is in Calgary – we have some 40 school sites right now that are kind of up for grabs, if I can put it that way. Vacant and assembled reserve school sites in Edmonton: that's the official language on it. That's a lot of opportunity. In Edmonton and, I think, in a number of the other municipalities and, I'm hoping, increasingly in the province we recognize that we need to not keep building out in our cities. We need to start working with density. You can imagine that being able to use 40 sizable plots of land in a city the size of Edmonton, that's a lot of opportunity for denser – I'm not saying densest but denser – housing but also communities building because there are other possibilities for the use of that land that is being anticipated and allowed for in this bill.

There are two things that the government has done right here. One is that they have designated nonprofit. I think that's important because if we're talking an asset that is essentially either paid for or belongs to the citizens, or both, it should continue to be used in that

vein. I don't approve of having those assets made available to a for-profit at a deal. Let me clarify that. I have nothing against entrepreneurs. I need them downtown big time. We love our entrepreneurs. We love our small businesses. What is not right in my mind is giving a for-profit business a deal by somehow giving it access to special circumstances that should be reserved for public administration, public ownership.

I'm sorry if that wasn't very clear. Let me try that again. What this legislation has done is right. It's essentially saying that if you're going to use that reserve land as the new title, which is community services reserve land, it needs to be used for nonprofit activity, such as daycare, senior citizens, or special-needs facilities, and that the facility is owned or operated in a manner other than to make a profit. And that's exactly right. That's what we should be doing here.

Then it adds in that concept of community services reserve in the definition of reserve land, which also includes environmental reserve, municipal reserve, school reserve, or municipal and school reserve. Okay.

The bill also goes on to then name a number of possibilities for use of that land, and it's exactly the kind of thing we need to be doing. We need to be moving towards more of a village approach in the way we build our cities; in other words, somebody actually could walk around and get what they need to conduct their life for a week, let's say. They should be able to walk to a place of public transit so that they can get to work or to school. They should be able to shop for groceries or food and basic supplies, you know, have access to some ways of repairing or making minor repairs to their abode, to have access to recreational or even artistic venues and activities. They should be able to walk around their area and get most of that or access it without too long a trip on public transit.

3:40

When you look at those chunks of land, you say: wow, that's not bad. You could definitely get some spaces happening in there which are a community focus. That also allows and attracts, frankly, other for-profit businesses to cluster around it, and that's exactly what you want. The for-profit businesses can take advantage of the vitality and the drawing-in of people to that area for the public services, and then people can take advantage of the for-profit services that have clustered around them. It's exactly what you want.

They're allowing for things like public libraries, police stations, fire stations, ambulance facilities, not-for-profit daycares – yay – not-for-profit seniors' centres, which we're going to need more of, thank you, and special-needs facilities. Then, you know, this could also be, I'm thinking, not activity centres, but frankly it could be things like group homes or small long-term care centres as well – and I see no problem with that – a municipal facility that's providing service to the public, so that you could have, for example, some of the city FCSS delivery agencies housed there, and affordable housing. That was the idea that started off in Edmonton, and I think all credit to Mayor Mandel for pioneering this one.

It does allow us to look at that housing in those small areas and to use them for – I don't want to say special in the sense of needy – distinctive housing projects, let me put it that way. We need the three levels of government to step up and help on housing. We know that we don't get affordable or entry level or first-time buyer housing opportunities from the for-profit sector. And why should we expect them to do it? They are there to make a profit. Why on earth would we expect them to turn around and sell stuff for a lower price? They're entitled to make their profit out of that.

But given that reality, we have to have the public sector step up and work with groups like – oh, they've changed their name. Homeward Bound? Homeward Trust? Home Trust? Anybody from Edmonton?

An Hon. Member: It's Homeward Trust.

Ms Blakeman: Homeward Trust. Thank you. [Ms Blakeman's speaking time expired] Oh, Mr. Speaker, this is so exciting. Well, I look forward to Committee of the Whole. Shoot.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, there are five minutes for question and comment. The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to make a few comments on this particular legislation and maybe have the opportunity to help with some of the comments and questions that were raised by the Member for Edmonton-Centre. This particular piece of legislation is kind of special with me because during the year and a bit that I had the opportunity to be Minister of Education, it was through that time that I was consistently asked by the mayors of the two large cities, Edmonton and Calgary, if we could do something about this issue. We did manage to pull together the chairs of the four large school boards and the two mayors, and subsequent to putting together a working team over a few months, this is the culmination of that good work, and I think it is incredibly important.

It is a difficult issue, though, and one of the things that maybe the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre is unaware of is on this reserve/nonreserve issue. Prior to 1957 schools owned the property. Subsequent to 1957, as part of rezoning, developers were required by municipalities to set aside I think it's 10 per cent for reserve, which really nobody owns. The difficulty you have is that the property owned by the school boards, the nonreserve property prior to 1957, has a value because the school boards own it. So that gives you a little bit of a difficulty. I'm sure that applies in this member's case because her constituency is an inner-city constituency. Most of the property that school boards hold title to would be pre-1957. In many cases it was deeded to the school board, and legitimately they have an asset that is worth a fair bit of money.

What the majority of this bill deals with are the post-1957 properties, which, really, the school boards do not own. The problem they had, because they didn't own it, was that they had first claim on it for a school site and were reluctant to give it up, so they sat on it. The agreement that we reached with the school boards and the two municipalities has culminated in this particular legislation. It has a process in place now that moves it out of what I would call the holding pattern that the school boards were in and allows us to be able to bring forward the kinds of initiatives that are outlined in the particular legislation. I just wanted to make it clear to the member that there are two distinct kinds of property here, one before 1957 and one post-1957.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much. That was very helpful because I did know the difference between reserve and nonreserve. I just didn't know why, and that makes perfect sense. Therefore, being sold at market assessment is very fair because they own it. Okay. Fair enough.

Mr. Liepert: They bought it.

Ms Blakeman: They bought it. Right. My question, then, is: is this new category of community services reserve coming under the reserve category, which would mean that it would be available to the municipalities for a dollar?

Mr. Liepert: I would ask the member to actually clarify that in committee, but it's my understanding that that is the way. I haven't

actually been part of the drafting of the legislation; I was part of the negotiations leading up to this legislation. That is my understanding, but I would ask her to get clarity from the sponsor of the bill.

Ms Blakeman: That's excellent. Thank you.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be able to rise to join in debate on Bill 41 ever so briefly at second reading. I'm hoping to have further information and details as the bill proceeds, so I'll just be offering up a few statements in principle.

I want to start by thanking the Minister of Health and Wellness for that explanation because that does clarify it somewhat for me. Already I have more insight than I had, oh, five minutes ago, so that's helpful. Nonetheless, I think that, you know, in general the principle underlying this bill is a good one in that it appears to be an opportunity to enhance the public use of public lands for public purposes and to expand the headings under which that land can be used. So that's good.

I guess I would start out just with one brief observation, of course, that I am a little bit discouraged that there are so many surplus school sites, whether built or not built, because I believe that, ultimately, the number of surplus sites must arise to some extent from a departure from the community school model. We have development sort of going on where a school was anticipated within a community, and then for whatever reason it never happened. There seems to be a move to bigger specialty schools and away from the notion of the smaller community school. That's a concern because I'm a big advocate of the community school.

Having said that, though, in this particular case there's no question that the objectives that appear to be identified in this bill for the alternate use of land that's on reserve are all, you know, very laudable. Like the previous main speaker I'm pleased to see that there's specification that the land would be for use by various and sundry nonprofits in various and sundry ways and that the concept of the nonprofit is articulated in the legislation.

3:50

Thanks to the explanation by the minister, I appreciate that we're not actually dealing with the schools that I was going to talk about in my particular riding or adjacent to my particular riding because they wouldn't be dealt with here. But I suspect that we're still looking at the opportunity in some cases to increase density even a little bit since, of course, even in the last 40 years this city has sprawled uncontrollably to distances far and wide so that we're practically adjacent to Calgary these days. Any opportunity to limit that and to actually develop, as the previous member suggested, in areas that already have development around them is a good thing. Of course, the focus being on affordable housing and other community centres is a good one.

Now, the irony of that to some extent is that if we take even a surplus school site that was created, you know, 40 years ago, the odds are really good that if we build on that elements of affordable housing and increase the density, we may suddenly have a much greater need for a school in the area. So there is a bit of concern around how that issue would be addressed, certainly, if we were going to continue with the idea that there should be schools reasonably close to where people live. That's a bit of a concern.

Nonetheless, in general the ideas that have been identified by the government in this bill are good ones. The services that they're talking about expanding are ones, at least at first glance, that we can support.

The only other concern we have is about the change with respect to the ability of the Minister of Education, if there is a change there, around defining by way of – I'm not sure if it's ministerial order or regulation – what constitutes school authority use or school authority purpose. I'd like a little bit more information about that as the bill proceeds.

I also have had some concerns flagged for me – and I haven't had a chance to really analyze them in depth – about what the community consultation process looks like through this bill, whether it would be changed, whether it remains the same, whether there are the same triggers, or whether there's an opportunity for more triggers, to include community involvement and consultation in the ultimate dispensation or utilization of this reserve land.

Those are a couple of my questions. I will end my remarks at that point for now and look forward to the opportunity to receive more information on this bill as well as to participate further in debate as it progresses through the House.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Standing Order 29(2)(a) allows for five minutes of comments or questions.

Hon. Members: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 41 read a second time]

The Clerk Assistant: Under Government Bill and Orders for second reading, Bill 43, Emergency Health Services Act, adjourned debate: hon. Mr. Snelgrove.

Mr. Hancock: Mr. Speaker, with the consent of the other House leaders I wonder if we might move to Committee of the Whole next rather than proceeding with that bill and then call that bill later.

The Deputy Speaker: Having heard the motion by the hon. Government House Leader, does the Assembly concur?

Hon. Members: Concur.

Government Bills and Orders Committee of the Whole

[Mr. Cao in the chair]

The Chair: I'd like to call the committee to order.

Bill 42 Health Governance Transition Act

The Chair: Are there any comments, questions, or amendments to be offered with regard to this bill? The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Liepert: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you for allowing this committee to proceed. I was unable to be in the House on the occasion of second reading, but I did take a *Hansard* home for my bedtime reading. I dutifully made notes and would like to try and respond to some of the questions that were posed in second reading. I would be pleased to try and answer any other questions that might come up in committee this afternoon.

It was interesting reading the *Hansard*. I always kind of chuckle, Mr. Chairman, how when you have a bill like this, which is pretty much administrative in nature and is, I guess, repealing two pieces of legislation, the opposition use the opportunity to talk about

everything from syphilis to privatization of health care to what a mean guy I am. I won't let my children read *Hansard* because of what the Leader of the Opposition said about me. They just wouldn't agree at all.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to answer some of the questions that were posed relative to the bill. I understand that we did not have the opportunity to go through this bill with members of the opposition prior to it coming to the House. Repeated attempts to try to find time between my schedule and the Member for Edmonton-Gold Bar's just didn't work. I can understand why there are some questions and why there's possibly some misunderstanding about what this bill actually does and doesn't do. I will try and answer some of those questions. What I will not answer are a whole bunch of the other questions that were raised that are not relevant to this particular bill. We can have that discussion in our estimates next spring.

Mr. Chairman, there was clearly some confusion by members of the opposition in regard to the reasons why this particular bill only dealt with the Cancer Board and AADAC and did not deal with the Mental Health Board. The reason for that is very simple. AADAC and the Alberta Cancer Board are established by legislation passed in this Assembly. The Mental Health Board is a creation of regulation, and all that is required relative to winding up the operations of the Mental Health Board is the repeal of a regulation, which doesn't need to come before the Assembly. Hopefully, that answers that question.

There were some questions posed relative to – sorry; I don't have the bill in front of me – the clause relating to severance and termination of employees. Now, what was required is because the employees of Mental Health were not part of the union contracts whereas others that were impacted are part of the union. So what this provides in this bill is to treat the non-union employees in a similar manner that they would be treated if they were part of the union.

4:00

There is one exception to that, and I'll try to explain it this way. If an employee is offered a similar position, then that employee is not entitled to severance or termination pay. However, if an employee is offered another position that is not similar in terms of pay but comes to an agreement with the employer that he or she wants that position, this legislation allows the employer to make an arrangement with that employee for additional pay, let's say a lump-sum payment, to make up for the fact that it's not an equal position. You might very well have, you know, someone who still wants to be an employee of the Health Services Board taking a position that is less than they previously had. Rather than terminate, they would prefer to take that position, but they say: "You know what? It's not quite the same pay." The employer has the ability under this legislation to actually provide payment on agreement to make that up.

There were a number of questions relative to regulations, but let me just make a couple more comments. There were a couple of questions relative to what happens to the Alberta Mental Health Board. Well, as I said earlier, the regulation which sets up the Alberta Mental Health Board will be repealed, but it's a regulation. It's not legislation.

What will happen to the services provided and the programs provided by AADAC? Quite frankly, they won't change. It's just that they will now be part of the delivery model. Think about this for a moment. One of the things that we are attempting to do in health care is align what we do, whether it's a delivery function or whether it's a policy function. As we move forward, probably 90 per cent of what AADAC does is in the delivery model, so we want

to move it out of the Department of Health and Wellness, where it sits currently, into Alberta Health Services so that the delivery of services by AADAC can be integrated with the other delivery services, whether they're mental health, acute care, or whatever else is delivered by Alberta Health Services. The policy branch of AADAC will continue to stay in the Department of Health and Wellness.

I answered the one on severance and termination.

There were a couple of questions posed by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View relative to decision-making in rural areas. I've dealt with that in the past relative to the beefing up and the enhancement of our community health councils. Once we get our new board in place, the next job will be to ensure that these health councils are structured and are workable.

There was also a question by the Member for Calgary-Mountain View relative to the limited period of time for which regulations can be made retroactive. We have the two-year period in the legislation because we want to ensure that as we go through this process, if there's something that we missed, we want to be able to fix it through regulation and not have to wait till we can bring legislation back here. It may be a contract or something that was missed. This will give us the opportunity to correct it immediately and not have to wait to come back and amend the legislation.

There were a couple of other questions that didn't quite relate to the bill that I'll just pass on.

I must admit that I did not have the opportunity before coming here today to review *Hansard* from – is today Thursday? – I guess it would have been Wednesday. I'm here all afternoon, so you can ask all the questions you want.

I'll just stop there and let the members go.

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

Ms Blakeman: Well, thanks, and thanks very much for the minister's willingness to be here and do a back-and-forth in answering the questions.

A couple of things I want to follow up on from what he just raised. Thank you for the clarification on the Mental Health Board, that it wasn't created through legislation but through regs. One of the things I've noticed is that these regs sort of slide out. Is the minister able to give us any kind of notification so that we know it's coming?

For example, last night fairly late in the day there was an order in council that was changing the FOIP Act. It kind of slid out at around, I don't know, 4:30 in the afternoon – well, that's when it gets published – not the time that most people are alive to it and watching for it, admittedly. With the change in regulation that's going to need to happen around the Mental Health Board, could we get some kind of upfront notification from the minister to watch for it or to expect it that day? That's just a courtesy I'm asking for. He doesn't have to do it, clearly.

My biggest concerns around this bill were the effects of what's happening to cancer and research and the assets and a number of other things but, more specifically, what was happening to my constituents, who I've already heard from, and the uncertainty about their employment. I don't know what the minister's background is or if he's ever been in a situation where everything around him is changing in his job and nobody can tell you what's happening. Saying things like, "Don't worry" is not helpful to people. They don't know if the bad news is being held back to the last day and therefore they should make other decisions in their life right away or if, in fact, things are going to be different but basically equal. It causes enormous upheaval and stress, and of course that affects your productivity. We have lesser productivity, I would argue, out of employees that really don't know what's going to happen.

AADAC is one of those places where people – I mean, there are a million rumours, some of which I'm sure would enrage the minister and some which would amuse him, what I've heard so far on what's happening to AADAC. But the employment status is obviously a big one to employees. My question is: who decides that another job is substantially similar and that therefore the employee would not be entitled to either severance pay or termination pay or other compensation? If you could give us an understanding of who would actually make that determination.

If I'm a counsellor 4 for AADAC and I will now be shifted to Justice and delivering that same counselling on addictions but I'll be doing it under the Justice department but they call it an adviser 3 and there is a different pay range there, what happens? Who decides that that's actually the same job? Or is it going to be automatic that I'm going to get paid the same amount of money doing the other one as I was doing this one even though it's got a different classification? That's what's really worrying people here.

Okay. The next piece that the minister talked about was the concept of a line model and policy model. I'm going to take it that the minister was in some kind of management organizational behaviour in his previous life because this is the kind of stuff they entertain themselves with by thinking about. I take it that he is in favour of this particular model and is looking at putting all similar line systems together, which are the delivery systems he's talking about.

For AADAC in particular where is he expecting to house that line delivery of programs with other similar service delivery programs? In other words, can he tell me that those services, that all sort of addictions treatment, are going to go to Justice and that the alcohol is going to go to Solicitor General? Can you tell me where these sections are going? What I've heard is that AADAC is going to be essentially broken up into two or three pieces and that those pieces are going to be moved in their entirety under a different department. Well, he's shaking his head. That's okay. That's why we're here, to ask the questions so that we'll get the answer.

4:10

If it's not going to go somewhere else, what is going to happen with it? Who runs this? Does it stay in the same office building with the same phone number but is run by the superboard? It shouldn't be because the superboard should be the policy side of what he's talking about. Well, then, who's doing the policy? Is the department doing the policy, and the delivery system is being operated by the superboard? I'll look for him to clarify some of that.

I know that this minister believes in what he's doing, and he has a very strong ideology that supports that. He's just not sharing it with the rest of us, so I'm coaxing it out of him little bit by little bit. But it would help if other people had an understanding of where this was going. It would alleviate a lot of the fear that people have and the push back that they do when they don't understand what's happening to them and things are being manipulated above them by some omnipresent being, which in this case is the minister. So I'm going to try and pull that information out of him. Where exactly is AADAC going? Where will those services be delivered from?

You know, in walking around downtown, I'm lucky enough to have a number of AADAC delivery service outlets in my riding. Are they going to stay in the same place, or do they all get moved somewhere else? Do they get moved to the Capital health building, that has now been purchased through Capital health by this government, on 107th just off Jasper? So just some very straightforward questions there.

I also want to ask the minister about the interrelationship with Bill 31 because it was repealing section 82 of the Financial Administra-

tion Act. The sections that I was pointing out there and that I raised in that particular debate I believe pertain to this minister and what he's doing here in two sections. In 82(9)(b):

That any undistributed gifts, bequests or donations to the Provincial agency are to be administered by a successor organization or the Crown for the same purpose for which the Provincial agency was established.

I'd like confirmation that that is what will happen with the cancer-related gifts, bequests, and donations and anything with AADAC.

The other piece there was the liabilities. Sorry. I'm not going to be able to pull this out just from memory. There was a liability section, again in Bill 31, which is the Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008, which was talking about: any liabilities – in other words, like lawsuits – that were against a particular agency would be essentially suspended once the agency was under a sunset clause or was dissolved. Now, we're looking at two agencies being dissolved here. What happens to their liabilities?

The next question, related: what happens to their assets? For example, what happens to the assets from the Cancer Board? We have facilities in Edmonton and Calgary.

I've already asked the previous question related to the repealing of section 82, which was about bequests.

In this act, under section 3, winding-up orders. Well, I'm looking in particular under section 3(2), that an order may contain provisions the minister considers necessary to protect the interests of creditors. If you could expand on exactly what it is you anticipate there because I'm seeing that as also coming into play under the repeal of section 82. My concern with the repeal of 82 under the Financial Administration Act was that we lost those protections and the specifics of how that process was to work.

Now I see this coming into play. What I see from you, Mr. Minister, is a series of beads on a necklace that are all working along and adding up. That may be all right, but it also may not be. I see them as interrelating. I wouldn't normally ask one minister to comment on something that's happened in a different bill under a different ministry, but these are clearly interrelated because the one is talking about what happens when you dissolve an agency, and now we have two agencies being dissolved.

If I can start with that, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Minister, I'd appreciate a response if you're able to give it at this time.

The Chair: Hon. members, could we have unanimous consent to revert briefly to Introductions of Guests?

[Unanimous consent granted]

Introduction of Guests

(reversion)

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Seniors and Community Supports.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly Brenda Lee Doyle, who is in the members' gallery with her daughter Martina. Brenda Lee is with the office of the public guardian, and she's been dedicated to Bill 24, the Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act, for the last couple of years. She was present at all the stakeholder meetings around the province, at all the policy field committee meetings, and has worked faithfully to see that the Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act was developed for all Albertans. Brenda Lee has done an exceptional job, for which I am very grateful. Brenda Lee and Martina are accompanied by my exceptional executive assistant, Pam Livingston. I would ask all three of them to stand and receive the warm welcome of the House.

**Government Bills and Orders
Committee of the Whole**

**Bill 42
Health Governance Transition Act
(continued)**

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Liepert: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll try and answer the majority of the questions, but I will commit to have someone go through *Hansard* next week to ensure that if I haven't answered them, we'll get written responses to the opposition.

I need to be clear from the outset about what the model is going to look like going forward. The model today is not aligned. You've got the Alberta Health Services Board, which will be responsible for the delivery of health care across this province. You've got the Department of Health and Wellness, which today is delivering sort of scattered bits of some programs such as AADAC, which is housed in the department. You've got prevention and public health delivery programs, that in many ways are coming out of our department. The intent is to take all of the delivery programs and have them fall under the Alberta Health Services Board so that they can be integrated with one another. Policy setting will remain within the Department of Health and Wellness.

I'm trying to clarify for the Member for Edmonton-Centre exactly what the model will look like going forward. Again, there is no hidden agenda here. It's trying to align the delivery across the province. I've used the example before of how I believe health care has been unaligned. There's another bill before this House called the Emergency Health Services Act, relating to ambulances. You know, today the ambulance system in this province is municipally owned, yet it's a health care provision. We pay for it, and we use it as a transportation service. It should be part of treating and ensuring that it's part of the health care delivery system. I hope that's helpful.

I would commit to the member that wherever possible – I can't commit that it would never happen, but there is no intent by us to be sneaking things out at the eleventh hour. If there are changes to regulations that are substantive, I'm open to ensuring that they are released in a timely and transparent way. I will give that commitment. If there is something that happens that she sees doesn't follow my words, I would appreciate being notified of it so that we can ensure that it's done properly.

4:20

I understand the concern that many employees in the health system may have, the uncertainty around the future. It's probably one of the outflows of change. You know, it's my view and feeling that in the private sector change happens all the time, and employees are quite conditioned to things changing around them. That typically doesn't happen in the public sector. So when you do have significant change, I can understand where there's some discomfort and uncertainty, and we're attempting through the Alberta Health Services Board to try to mitigate that as much as possible.

One of the challenges that you have in changing the administrative structure of something so massive as the health care delivery system is that while you're changing the administrative structure, the absolute most important thing is that the delivery system is unimpeded. I am incredibly proud of those who work in the health care system in this province because while we have been going through this administrative change, the health delivery system, I would say, has been delivering unimpeded. Could it do better? Of course it could, and that's our whole objective, to make it better.

There have been very cautious moves made in a deliberate way to

change the administrative structure. As you change cautiously, people are concerned about: what's going to happen next, and what's going to happen to me? I'm going to defend the cautious and slow approach to changing the administrative structure because if we did it in a massive way, it would impact the front-line delivery. I can sympathize with people's uncertainty, but I believe that at the end of the day, yes, there will probably be some senior people in administration – we aren't going to need all of the senior people in administration.

I would venture to say that anyone who's involved in the delivery of programs in this province is going to have a job tomorrow as they did today, whether it's in addictions counselling, whether it's in our front-line emergency folks, because it's not like we've got excess people. I'm not anticipating and the chairman has said publicly that we're not anticipating that at that front-line delivery level there's going to be – in fact, I would suggest that anyone who's doing front-line work today is probably going to be doing essentially the same thing tomorrow. It's just that that administrative structure that's going to be over top of their delivery model is going to be streamlined and changed.

The Member for Edmonton-Centre asked about, you know, buildings where people are housed and offices. Again, if there is no good reason to change the delivery at the local level, I don't see wholesale closures of the addiction treatment centres, moving them somehow to larger buildings. I don't see that happening. I would suspect that there'll be a rationalization to say: is this particular location providing the service to the clientele where it's needed? If the answer is yes, then why would you be changing that? I don't think we should get too worked up about the interface with the public. I don't see that changing significantly at all.

There was a question relative to who decides on severance termination and who decides whether the job is the same or isn't. I'm not an HR person or an expert, but there are standards, there are benchmarks, there are things that say: well, this job is different than that. I know that there are appeal mechanisms in most organizations. I can only say that I would trust that employees are going to be treated fairly. I've said that if employees are seeing something that isn't fair, let us know, and I'll certainly discuss it with the chairman of the board.

I'm not suggesting that the member is doing this, but I want to be careful that we're not developing a culture of fear out there that's not necessarily got any substance to it. I want to try to ensure that we're working to get things streamlined. You know, there's some kind of a saying, something about: in the absence of information people will fill it with whatever they think it should be rather than whatever it is. I know that lots of that is happening.

I'm going to have to take a closer look at Bill 31. The question that the hon. member raised: I'm not certain on that, and I'll have to get an answer back. But relative to the foundations I've just got to say that I've made it very clear on several occasions now to the chairs of the foundations that I see nothing changing. I was delighted yesterday. There was an announcement at the Royal Alex relative to the foundation, the cardiac announcement. They're commencing a campaign to raise funds for the particular initiative there. So I think that we've allayed some of those fears around the foundations. I know that there's still a little bit of concern, but we've had a couple of meetings now with a group here in Edmonton that Mayor Mandel has pulled together at the Royal Glenora, and we've had a good discussion back and forth on many of the questions that came up around the foundations.

I mentioned to the group I think it was a week or two ago, when I was invited by the mayor, that as soon as I get a chance, I'd like to create I don't know if you'd call it a board or a committee of three

or four people who are prominent Albertans who have been involved in a philanthropic way to kind of sit on what I would call sort of an overseer board to ensure, give some comfort level to those who contribute to the foundations that, yes, their contribution is actually going where it's supposed to go. I've made that commitment to the group and will hold to it.

I guess the final question was around the transfer of assets and liabilities. I'd have to get further clarification on it, but the whole purpose of this particular legislation is not just to wind down the two organizations but to ensure that in legislation the transfer of assets and liabilities goes to the Alberta Health Services Board.

I'll sit down and take some more questions, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms Pastoor: Yes. Thank you. Actually, I think that my question was answered in your last two or three sentences. I was very concerned with where the assets, particularly of the AADAC group, were actually going to go, so you've answered that.

Then I guess just a very quick question, which again may have been answered in your comments prior to that. With AADAC, particularly the transition homes, a lot of it is private dollars that have been donated. So as long as they know that their private dollars are going where they intended them rather than into a public entity. But the public entity being the health board, they may or may not approve of that.

I think that my questions were answered, and I think that you answered them when you said that front-line people would not be affected. There's one part. A lot of these transition homes actually have volunteer boards. What will happen to those volunteer boards when they move into that delivery model? What will happen to those volunteer boards that actually raise the money? I can speak about the alcohol side. More often than not they actually are people that are recovering alcoholics and have so much to contribute. They sit on the board and actually then become involved with the people that are going through.

Those are my concerns. I think you've sort of answered them.

The Chair: The hon. Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mr. Liepert: Yeah. I'm sorry. I would ask for some clarity around the last question on volunteer boards. I don't understand the question.

4:30

Ms Pastoor: Some of the homes, like the transition homes, are run by volunteer boards. They're sort of the halfway house, for lack of a better word. Those have volunteer boards and usually some volunteers staff although they do have paid staff as well.

Mr. Liepert: Well, I guess I would term those providers to the system. If you're a provider to the system with a volunteer board, I don't know why that would change just because AADAC is moving from the department of health to the Alberta Health Services Board. If you're a home that is providing for addictions clients, I see no change in how that's structured, in the same way that you're not going to have any change if you're a long-term care provider to the health care system. If you were a nonprofit board that ran a long-term care centre and you provided services to Chinook health region, you're still going to have your same board. You're still going to have your same operation. You're just providing your services to the provincial region instead of to that region, so I don't see that changing at all.

There was a question about gifting to AADAC. I stand to be corrected, but I think that there has been in the past very little gifting to AADAC on the asset side of the business. There may very well have been some gifting towards, maybe, a particular room or a particular program or something like that. Again, I stand to be corrected, but I would suggest that 99 per cent of the assets of AADAC are government assets.

I move to adjourn debate, Mr. Chairman.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Chair: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would move that the committee rise and report progress on Bill 42.

[Motion carried]

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has had under consideration a certain bill. The committee reports progress on the following bill: Bill 42. 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 Third Reading

Bill 24

Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Seniors and Community Supports.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to move Bill 24, the Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act in third reading.

This act replaces the Dependent Adults Act, that has been with us for 30 years. Bill 24 is a historic and significant piece of legislation that will affect each one of us in some way, whether it be our parents, our spouses and partners, our children, or ourselves. This is the most comprehensive and up-to-date legislation in Canada regarding guardianship and trusteeship and may be a model for other provinces. It will serve to protect Albertans who are unable to make decisions for themselves through its four guiding principles.

The first principle is the presumption of capacity. This principle is that the adult is presumed to have capacity and be able to make decisions until the contrary is determined. This means that in Alberta even if the adult has a disability or illness, they cannot be labelled incapable unless their personal capacity has been assessed by a professional.

The second guiding principle is that the ability to communicate is not a determination of capacity. The adult is entitled to communicate by any means that enables them to be understood. Just because an Albertan speaks another language or uses technology to assist their communication, it does not mean they lack the ability to make a decision.

The third principle is to focus on autonomy with a less intrusive

and less restrictive approach. This principle emphasizes that people's independence is respected and that they can receive help according to their level of need.

The fourth principle provides for decision-making that focuses on the best interests of the adult and how the adult would have made the decision if capable. This principle provides guidance to a decision-maker when they need to make personal and financial decisions for the represented adult. Decisions should always be made the way they would have been made by the adult if they were still capable.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all members of the Legislature who participated in debates and discussions to help make this bill the best possible legislation. I would also like to thank Brenda Lee Doyle from the public guardian's office, who has helped guide this legislation from start to finish. I would urge everyone to support this truly extraordinary piece of legislation.

Thank you.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak on Bill 24 in third reading. As I said when I spoke previously, this is such an important bill to many of my constituents but also to that wider community of people who have battled with capacity issues in their life or will face questions about their capacity to make decisions about their life sometime in the future.

I've heard the biggest number of complaints from constituents who have been deemed to have diminished capacity and have been named as a dependent adult under the old legislation and then circumstances change. And they do change, Mr. Speaker. I've become somewhat of an expert about strokes and recovery from strokes, and I am surprised to watch how people do recover from strokes. You tend to think: "Well, that's it. They're just in that state where they were when the stroke happened, and that's how they will stay." They don't. The body heals itself. You do get better. So I'm not surprised when people approach me and say: "I had a stroke. I was deemed to be a dependent adult, but I have gotten better, and I want to be able to make choices about my life again."

It is currently a huge, uphill battle, aside from the fact that you essentially have to have the wherewithal somehow, seeing as you have no ability to do this, to hire a lawyer to go to court to fight for you, often against an appointed guardian who is a family member, which makes it all the much more difficult to now fight publicly inside of your own family. I mean, for some people things could not be worse. But the tests for determining restored capacity were very high. They were very onerous, and it was really difficult to try and get back an individual's decision-making ability.

The second thing that I've really experienced through my constituents is that you often have friendship bonds that are much stronger than family bonds and how frustrated people get when they are trying to help a friend who's been their friend for 45 years, who's been their neighbour for 25 years. They know this person. They talk to them every single day for decades in some examples. Frankly, that person's relationship with their family is nowhere near as strong, and they talk to them once a year.

4:40

It's very frustrating when you have individuals who are not family members, who are not named in any kind of guardianship order and are not what society would generally go to in that, sort of, ranking of next of kin, yet they are very close to the person. They can see that something is wrong. They are talking to the individual in the hospital, and the individual is telling them: this is not right. And

they can't do anything to help their friend because the friend is under a guardianship order. They can't change how they're being treated in the hospital, who their doctor is, what kind of food they're being fed, what they're wearing, who's allowed to come and visit them. They have no way to change that. That is really frustrating for people as well as being demeaning, and it just breaks people's hearts, to be honest with you.

What I wanted to see were two things: one, that the tests for someone to prove restored capacity were more accessible than they had been. I also wanted to see that there was an avenue for others who were not in that ranking of next of kin or that sort of automatic list that you go through in your head around guardianship, that these others would be able to get involved or share some responsibility or have some legal relationship made available to them. I think we've seen that. We've seen it with the differences in the tests to work your way back out of this system, and I think we've also seen it with the new designation of co decision-maker. That person can be anyone, and it's clear that it could be anyone. It could be that neighbour of 30 years. It could be that friend of 45 years. It doesn't automatically default to that, sort of, next-of-kin priority listing.

I just got an e-mail this morning from someone who is very irritated with me because I hadn't spoken against this bill. To be honest, I'm a little unclear about why they're still so unhappy about it because I think that a number of the things that we were seeking have in fact been captured in this bill.

I appreciate very much section 2, which is the principles. The principles are actually right in the front of the bill. The first thing you get in a bill is always the definitions. That's the first thing. You've got to know what you're talking about, so that's where the definitions always are, first thing.

The second thing in this bill are the principles. The sponsoring member has gone over the principles that everything else is based on. But the fact that you put it right up front in the bill shapes and colours everything else in the bill, and it should, which is to say, you know, that number one is that an adult is presumed to have the capacity until the contrary is determined. We start out by saying that we believe that you are able to make these decisions about your life, and it diminishes from there. So they continue to make as many decisions as possible, but maybe they can't make financial decisions anymore. The list is protective. The capacity is expected and respected in what we're seeing in this bill, and I think that's a great way to go at it.

The bill is not perfect. It has been a huge rewrite. Mistakes will have been made, no doubt. I would even argue that in some areas we should have pushed a little harder for more protections and in some cases for more freedoms. It's hard to get these bills right, especially with such a gigantic rewrite. But my constituents have told me what was important to them, which was primarily those two things: the ability to restore their capacity and the associate decision-making and, secondly, to have a friend or a long-time person in your life be able to have an official role and even be able to make inquiries.

The way it was before, it was just a lockdown. I mean, it reminded me of the Victorian times, where somebody was put in an institution and, you know, the doors closed. Clang. That was it. You never got any information about what happened to the person. You didn't know if they were alive or dead, what had happened to them – nothing – because you couldn't break through the barriers of that institution. What we had before was essentially like that. It was almost impossible to get information about what was happening to that individual and the choices that were being made around their life or even to talk to the people that were in the decision-making position.

I certainly think that this bill is a big improvement on what we had. Can we do some things better? Yep, and I bet you that I'll be telling you soon what they should be, but for now I am certainly willing to support the bill in the state that it's in. I think it's a big step forward, and it certainly achieved what my constituents were looking for.

My constituents, by the way, would like me to thank the minister and the department on their behalf for the opportunity to give input during the review process and the building of this change in legislation. I did circulate the information to a number of my seniors' residences and activity centres that the review was taking place and gave them the information about how to offer their input. I think they very much valued that opportunity to do that.

Having put all of that on the record, I'm very happy to support Bill 24 in third reading, and I will take my seat. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. member who wishes to speak on the bill?

Seeing none, then I will recognize the hon. Minister of Seniors and Community Supports to close the debate.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an extraordinary bill. A lot of people worked a long time to bring it to this point. A lot of our members worked together in the policy field committee to ensure that we had the best possible bill that we could bring forward. I can't thank them enough for this significant bill.

I'd just ask that everybody would support it here in third reading and express my gratitude and my thanks.

[Motion carried; Bill 24 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

(continued)

Bill 43

Emergency Health Services Act

[Adjourned debate November 5: Mr. Snelgrove]

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise in second reading and speak to Bill 43, the Emergency Health Services Act. Oh, this was a long time in coming, wasn't it? I'm thinking back to when I was critic for Health and Wellness, and we had that amazing turn of events where the government told all the municipalities that they were going to take over responsibility for ambulance delivery and that they should reallocate the money in their municipal budgets for ambulance provision immediately and that they were going to take it over on April 1, and I think 30 days before that it was announced that, well, literally, all bets were off and that it wasn't going to happen and that the municipalities were to continue to provide the service.

It was a bit of a shock to a lot of those municipalities. Frankly, it cost them quite a bit of money because most of them, being pinched for money, as I've raised many times in this Assembly, of course immediately reallocated the money when the province told them they could. Now it was reallocated. It was spent. It was gone. It was happening for other projects. Trying to scramble and find that money to put it back in there I'm sure was a huge headache to a lot of municipalities.

4:50

Time has gone on. We've had a lot of to-ing and fro-ing about

who's really responsible and who should really pay for it and who should be responsible for delivering it, and I gather that Bill 43 is the end of that. We now have the responsibility for delivering emergency health services taken from the municipalities and going to the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Now, based on what I heard the minister say earlier today, I'm assuming, then, that this service delivery will go in his line versus policy model under the line and will in fact fall under the superboard for managing that service delivery.

I know that most of the municipalities are very happy to have this happen because they're not going to have to pay for this anymore. Frankly, from what I've heard from both the front-line workers and people either serving as elected officials or staff working for the municipalities, they think that ambulances are a part of health care.

I think that where it gets confusing to everybody is where the ambulance transportation is not, strictly speaking, health care. It's transportation. Once again we start to wade into murky waters there. I am not sure that this bill clarifies that sufficiently for my purposes, but I'll need to go back and double-check the remarks of the sponsoring member to see if that's been covered satisfactorily.

I'm sure others have raised the issue, but it's an obvious one to me because there are a few locations in Alberta where we have integrated services for ambulance and fire. Yeah, it's mostly fire and ambulance, I think. The municipalities had paid to put all of that in place. So is there going to be some financial recognition back to the municipalities for their efforts? You know, even joint buildings where both services could be delivered from the same building: are those to be pulled apart now and housed separately if they're still housed together? Who pays for what? How do you decide that? If I could get some clarity around how it's anticipated that that will happen because I'm sure you've worked out that question.

There are lots of possibilities here for privatization, the question of whether it's appropriate for ambulances to be a private business and paid for with public dollars. Then there are the ambulance services that are paid for with auxiliary insurance dollars, which is your Blue Cross, for example. I'm not sure that all of those questions are answered in this bill either. I guess my question is: does the government care? Do they have a preference one way or another? If it's not the municipalities anymore, then there's nothing to say that it's going to be a public service delivery. So do they care if it's private? And how does that work?

Again, my concern is going to be where we've got assets – assets like buildings, the trucks, the ambulances themselves, the gurneys, and all of the other equipment that goes with it – that have been paid for by a municipality, and now that is taken over by the province and handed over to a private company. That's inappropriate. If you're going to play in that marketplace, play in that marketplace from scratch. So either those private providers should be compensating the municipalities or the government should. But what's the deal there? How is that going to work? I'd like that on the record, please.

I also want to know how this affects the unions that are involved here, how it affects their collective bargaining agreement, and how they are affected by the provision that we had in the spring that mandated that emergency medical service personnel were – what's the phrase I'm looking for?

Mr. MacDonald: Essential services.

Ms Blakeman: Essential services. Thank you.

I want to know how that's going to affect the ambulance operators. Are they considered part of that or not? Does that now roll them in there without any additional choice on their part? In other

words, does the passage of this legislation make that instantaneous? I'm sure that I'm not the only person that has asked these questions because they're the obvious ones to ask around this particular legislation. But I'm aware, for all of my cautions, that the municipalities have been looking for this one for a while. It's got to be three years, anyway. This has been up in the air that long.

I guess my last question is: who ends up being where the buck stops? Does the buck stop on ambulance service delivery with the superboard, or is it under the department with the minister? Who is ultimately responsible? Of course, with that my question always goes: who is monitoring the performance and delivery of this, and how is enforcement handled if things are not going right?

What are we worried about here? Okay. Let's say it gets privatized, and people are being, you know, asked for their credit card before they're picked up, something inappropriate or what the public would view as inappropriate. Who makes the decisions about that? Where does the buck stop? How much control do they have over it?

Mr. MacDonald: That's a good question.

Ms Blakeman: Yep.

Is there a transition period that's anticipated with this bill? You know, what sort of financial and administrative assistance will be given for the transition?

As I said, I'm essentially supportive of what is happening here if for no other reason than the fact that we got certainty out of something that hadn't been certain. I'm more or less happy to support it.

Mr. MacDonald: Oversight. Who is it going to be? Is it Alberta Health Services?

Ms Blakeman: Yes. Just to clarify, then. I'm looking for the oversight of the transition but also the oversight of the operation of this transfer to Alberta Health Services. Following this, I'm assuming that the oversight is the board, but where does the buck stop with the board? You know, who do you yell at if you've got a problem with them? Is somebody going to be able to find someone that will ultimately be responsible for saying yes or no, or does it sort of go around and around? I have to say that that's one of my long-range complaints about the government. They set up delegated administrative organizations, which frankly is what the superboard is, and then when you ask the government questions, they say: oh, it's not our problem; it's the superboard's. But you go to the superboard, and they say: well, we're set up with . . . I totally lost my train of thought. Sorry about that. I'll have to let that one go.

Those are the questions that I want to leave on the record in second reading. I'll be looking forward to the responses when we get into Committee of the Whole. Thank you very much for the opportunity. Oh, that's right; we had someone else who wanted to speak to this.

At this point I should move adjournment of debate for Bill 43.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

**5:00 Bill 44
Pharmacy and Drug Amendment Act, 2008**

[Adjourned debate November 5: Mr. MacDonald]

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have a huge

number of questions about this bill. For those of us that are interested in personal health information, protection of personal information, the increasing insecurity of electronic databases, our inability to control human interference, human will to misbehave, frankly, and having personal health information in the hands of organizations, companies, who can use that information other than for the reason it was collected: what does that mean? Here we have a situation where the College of Pharmacists is supposed to be inspecting, investigating, and auditing pharmacists and clarifying the information to be collected by pharmacists and who this information can be shared with.

Now, I was lucky enough, although at the time I would not have said this, to have been on the review for the Health Information Act. I'm glad I was because I understand how it's supposed to work and spent a lot of time looking at it clause by clause. I meant to grab that bill and bring it because I need it in this file. But I think the overall concern with what we're anticipating here is what safeguards are in place and how we control that the information is used for only what it was gathered for and not for marketing purposes.

Let me say: is there anything wrong with marketing? No. The world runs on marketing. That's the point in a lot of cases: to get consumers to help drive the economy by buying stuff. Well, how do you get people to buy stuff? You tell them that they need stuff so that they'll go and buy it. I mean, that's the whole point of advertising around Christmastime to children. They will go to their parents and say: "I must have this for Christmas. Please tell Santa to bring it."

Marketing has become very sophisticated. I mean, right now we're watching with some amusement a popular television show called *Mad Men*, which is centred around a group of advertising executives operating in the '50s, if I can judge by it the costumes they're wearing. That was sort of that big breakthrough in the way we advertise things, where you got into subliminal advertising and selling a lifestyle rather than selling an item. So there's nothing wrong with marketing.

My concern is where people approach the health system with a great deal of trepidation and fear. We have a society where people don't feel that they're in control and have all the facts to make decisions about their health, so they are trusting the health professionals around them to give them guidance. It's very difficult, even for well-educated, well-versed people, to figure out the difference between a health professional who is giving you health information because it's good for your health and a health professional who's giving you information because they're interested in marketing something.

Now, when was the last time I said those words? When was that? Well, that would have been around the Health Protection Act from 2000 because that's what that bill was all about. In the end, we were able to get the government to add in some protections to make sure that where a member of the medical profession, a doctor or physician specifically, was offering a medical procedure that was not, strictly speaking, medically necessary, they had to fess up and say that right up front. "Yes, you need eye surgery, sir, and here's the lens that you need to have and that will be covered by health care. But, you know, sir, I can sell you an additional product that you don't need, but you might like to chose to have it." That clarification had to go in that act at the time.

My concern around what we're contemplating here is: how far does the information sharing that is being set out in this act go? What are the safeguards that are in place and the clarity that's in place for the pharmacists, to make sure that they're well inside of the guidelines? Frankly, it's no fun for pharmacists either, to have their customers looking at them going, "You've changed because now

you can sell me stuff, and I'm not sure where that line is," and start to question the rest of the information their pharmacist is giving them. Everybody wants clarity here, and I'm not sure that we're getting it from this bill.

The Alberta College of Pharmacists has certainly done a lot of work over the last number of years. I must say that the pharmacists prescribing had everybody's knickers in a twist, and with good reason to start off with. I think they ended up making their way through those troubled waters quite well because what we ended up with was very, very specially trained pharmacists in very, very singular circumstances that got the ability to actually prescribe. Ninety-nine per cent of all the rest of the pharmacists are really able to extend a prescription that you've already got or modify it to a slightly different dosage. There is good consultation set up between the pharmacist and your regular doctor, who gave the prescription in the first place.

I think it was six pharmacists that were actually granted the ability to prescribe in Alberta, and that was mostly around people working in very specialized clinics like the AIDS hospice and one of the inner-city clinics, I think, where there was a high number of people who were sort of self-medicating and trying to work their way through straightening out that drug cocktail they were in.

That's the primary issue that I have around this bill. I think we want to be much more innovative in who is allowed to deliver what health service. We've already seen some of those changes. We're going to finally have midwives allowed here in Alberta, which is real nice. They've been allowed everywhere else in the world for a long period of time, and we finally agreed . . .

Mr. Liepert: They've always been allowed. They just weren't funded.

Ms Blakeman: No. Actually, they weren't allowed. When I first started into this, they weren't allowed. They weren't a recognized profession, and you could be taken to court for doing it.

To me the issue that's at hand here is the access to those databases of information. We've got pharmacists involved with electronic health records, and we wanted to do that. Certainly, I have constituents who want that information to be available when they turn up in the Banff hospital with some chest pains. They want access to their health records so that everybody knows what medication they're on and what surgeries they've had and what all is going on. But I have a concern about how we make it clear to the pharmacists and the public what kind of personal health information can be used for what purpose so that everybody knows it and there won't be any shenanigans. Having said shenanigans, there will be those people who will decide to break the rules that we set out. How do we catch those people? How do we monitor, and how do we enforce on those individuals who choose to break the rules that we set out there?

5:10

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, being a nonviolent soul, that enforcement must be swift and fierce – maybe I could throw in, possibly, medieval – in its certainty because as there is more and more

medical information available about individuals, that information can have very far-reaching effects on our lives. As we get into genome therapy and start to understand the most intricate parts of how our bodies work and whether we are more susceptible genetically to cancer or to MS or to any number of things, we have gates that exist, access points that exist in our society as to whether you can get travel insurance based on your health, whether you get coverage under government, whether you can live in this particular place, a lot of other decisions based on that. We have to be very careful.

To me this starts to move into a civil rights and human rights area very quickly. Frankly, I haven't been too happy with the protections that I've seen exist so far. We have a good Health Information Act here in Alberta, but I'm watching, and as I keep tabs on this around what's happening in the wider world about access to and protection of personal information in those databases, I'm not happy with it overall. We need to be very, very careful with what we're anticipating here.

I wanted to set out those concerns now. I'll be looking forward to reading more background on this bill and also listening to the sponsor, who is able to answer some of the questions that I've put on the record. If we're operating completely under the Health Information Act, fair enough. I know what that gig is. But I have the other issues that I've put on the record around wilful disregard and how we would catch them.

I think there are also still problems about Internet pharmacies and ordering prescription drugs over the Internet, which is a whole other world that's opening up to us now. I remember the joy when somebody e-mailed me that I could order my medication for my pet online, and I could have.

Mr. MacDonald: What kind of medication?

Ms Blakeman: I had a dog that needed anti-inflammatories. [interjections] Internet pharmacies and ordering drugs over the Internet: that's the connection, Mr. Minister. I think that's the other piece of this bill that I want to look into further.

Thank you for the opportunity to put some of those concerns on the record in second. I am kind of, sort of supporting it, but I'm reserving final judgment on that.

I would like to move to adjourn debate. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[Motion to adjourn debate carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In light of the hour, I move that we adjourn pursuant to Standing Order 3.1(2) until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, November 17.

[Motion carried; at 5:14 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 3.1(2) the Assembly adjourned to 1:30 p.m. on Monday, November 17]

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

Activity to November 06, 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.

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)
Third Reading -- 1445-49 (Oct. 21 aft.), 1451 (Oct. 21 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c25]

- 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.), 1412-17 (Oct. 20 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1451-53 (Oct. 21 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2008 c12]
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1496-99 (Oct. 22 eve.), 1607-09 (Oct. 28 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c21]
- 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), 1478 (Oct. 22 aft., reported to Assembly), 1600-03 (Oct. 28 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1637-46 (Oct. 29 aft.), 1655 (Oct. 29 eve.), 1752-56, 1763-69 (Nov. 4 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 1799-1800 (Nov. 5 aft., passed)
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1499-1502 (Oct. 22 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2008 c19]
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1454 (Oct. 21 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force November 4, 2008; SA 2008 c13]
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1455-56 (Oct. 21 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c15]
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1456-57 (Oct. 21 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2008 c24]

- 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), 1477 (Oct. 22 aft., reported to Assembly)
Second Reading -- 1572 (Oct. 27 eve.), 1593-1600 (Oct. 28 aft.), 1653-54 (Oct. 29 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1719-22 (Nov. 3 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1769-70 (Nov. 4 eve., passed)
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1465-66 (Oct. 21 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force November 4, 2008; SA 2008 c17]
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1502-03 (Oct. 22 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force November 4, 2008; SA 2008 c10]
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1453-54 (Oct. 21 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 cH-7.5]
- 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), 1478 (Oct. 22 aft., reported to Assembly)
Second Reading -- 1572 (Oct. 27 eve.), 1609-10 (Oct. 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1724-26 (Nov. 3 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 1770 (Nov. 4 eve., passed)
- 24* Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act (Jablonski)**
First Reading -- 1095 (Jun. 2 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Health), 1478 (Oct. 22 aft., reported to Assembly)
Second Reading -- 1569-71 (Oct. 27 eve.), 1589-93 (Oct. 28 aft.), 1610-11 (Oct. 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1793-99 (Nov. 5 aft.), 1805-10 (Nov. 5 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 1841-43 (Nov. 6 aft., passed)
- 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)
Third Reading -- (Oct. 21 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force November 4, 2008; SA 2008 c23]

- 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.), 1417 (Oct. 20 eve.), 1611-14 (Oct. 28 eve.), 1654-55 (Oct. 29 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1723-24 (Nov. 3 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1770-71 (Nov. 4 eve., passed)
- 28 Jury Amendment Act, 2008 (Redford)**
First Reading -- 1323 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1371 (Oct. 16 aft.), 1417-18 (Oct. 20 eve.), 1438-39 (Oct. 21 aft.), 1485-87 (Oct. 22 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1529-30 (Oct. 23 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 1574 (Oct. 27 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on proclamation; SA 2008 c20]
- 29 Alberta Capital Finance Authority Amendment Act, 2008 (\$) (Evans)**
First Reading -- 1323-24 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1371 (Oct. 16 aft.), 1433-38 (Oct. 21 aft.), 1487-92 (Oct. 22 aft., passed)
- 30 Alberta Evidence Amendment Act, 2008 (Bhullar)**
First Reading -- 1324 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1371-72 (Oct. 16 aft.), 1418-19 (Oct. 20 eve.), 1439-42 (Oct. 21 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1530-31 (Oct. 23 aft.), 1616-17 (Oct. 28 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1660-61 (Oct. 29 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force November 4, 2008; SA 2008 c11]
- 31 Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008 (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 1324 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1370 (Oct. 16 aft.), 1442-45 (Oct. 21 aft.), 1526-27 (Oct. 23 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1617-19 (Oct. 28 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1661 (Oct. 29 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force November 4, 2008; SA 2008 c16]
- 32* Meat Inspection Amendment Act, 2008 (Griffiths)**
First Reading -- 1361 (Oct. 16 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1419 (Oct. 20 eve.), 1457-59 (Oct. 21 eve.), 1481-85 (Oct. 22 aft.), 1527-29 (Oct. 23 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1620 (Oct. 28 eve.), 1756-57, 1759-60 (Nov. 4 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 1774 (Nov. 4 eve., passed)
- 33* Agriculture Financial Services Amendment Act, 2008 (\$) (Groeneveld)**
First Reading -- 1361 (Oct. 16 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1419-20 (Oct. 20 eve.), 1459-62 (Oct. 21 eve.), 1572-74 (Oct. 27 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1621-22 (Oct. 28 eve.), 1761-63 (Nov. 4 eve., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 1774 (Nov. 4 eve., passed)
- 34 Employment Pension Plans Amendment Act, 2008 (Brown)**
First Reading -- 1361 (Oct. 16 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1420 (Oct. 20 eve.), 1463-65 (Oct. 21 eve.), 1603-04 (Oct. 28 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1650 (Oct. 29 aft.), 1655-56 (Oct. 29 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1726-27 (Nov. 3 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2008 c14]
- 35 Government Organization Amendment Act, 2008 (Hayden)**
First Reading -- 1324 (Oct. 15 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1370 (Oct. 16 aft.), 1462-63 (Oct. 21 eve.), 1492-94 (Oct. 22 aft.), 1495-96 (Oct. 22 eve.), 1503-04 (Oct. 22 eve.), 1523-26 (Oct. 23 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1646-50 (Oct. 29 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 1729 (Nov. 3 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force November 4, 2008; SA 2008 c18]

- 36 Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008 (Brown)**
First Reading -- 1361 (Oct. 16 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1420 (Oct. 20 eve.), 1574-75 (Oct. 27 eve.), 1604-06 (Oct. 28 aft.), 1607 (Oct. 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1650-51 (Oct. 29 aft.), 1656 (Oct. 29 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1727-28 (Nov. 3 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2008 c22]
- 37 Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act (Zwozdesky)**
First Reading -- 1673-74 (Oct. 30 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1675-81 (Oct. 30 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1681 (Oct. 30 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 1682 (Oct. 30 aft., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force November 4, 2008; SA 2008 cU-0.5]
- 38 Securities Amendment Act, 2008 (Fawcett)**
First Reading -- 1388 (Oct. 20 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1479-80 (Oct. 22 aft.), 1614-16 (Oct. 28 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1656-60 (Oct. 29 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1728-29 (Nov. 3 eve., passed)
Royal Assent -- 1743 (Nov. 4 aft.) [Comes into force on various dates; SA 2008 c26]
- 39 Court Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 1389 (Oct. 20 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1480-81 (Oct. 22 aft.), 1575-76 (Oct. 27 eve.), 1726 (Nov. 3 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1760-61 (Nov. 4 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1800-01 (Nov. 5 aft., passed)
- 41 Municipal Government Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2) (Danyluk)**
First Reading -- 1634 (Oct. 29 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1801 (Nov. 5 aft.), 1812-13 (Nov. 5 eve.), 1834-37 (Nov. 6 aft., passed)
- 42 Health Governance Transition Act (Liepert)**
First Reading -- 1588 (Oct. 28 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1653 (Oct. 29 eve.), 1743-52 (Nov. 4 aft.), 1771-74 (Nov. 4 eve.), 1787-93 (Nov. 5 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1810-12 (Nov. 5 eve.), 1837-41 (Nov. 6 aft., adjourned)
- 43 Emergency Health Services Act (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 1694 (Nov. 3 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1801-02 (Nov. 5 aft.), 1813-16 (Nov. 5 eve.), 1843-44 (Nov. 6 aft., adjourned)
- 44 Pharmacy and Drug Amendment Act, 2008 (Denis)**
First Reading -- 1694 (Nov. 3 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1802-03 (Nov. 5 aft.), 1816 (Nov. 5 eve.), 1844-45 (Nov. 6 aft., adjourned)
- 45 Statistics Bureau Amendment Act, 2008 (Goudreau)**
First Reading -- 1694 (Nov. 3 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1803 (Nov. 5 aft.), 1816-17 (Nov. 5 eve., adjourned)
- 46 Health Professions Amendment Act, 2008 (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 1829 (Nov. 6 aft.)
- 47 Mines and Minerals (New Royalty Framework) Amendment Act, 2008 (Webber)**
First Reading -- 1829-30 (Nov. 6 aft.)
- 48 Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2008 (\$) (Evans)**
First Reading -- 1830 (Nov. 6 aft.)
- 49 Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008 (Berger)**
First Reading -- 1830 (Nov. 6 aft.)
- 50 Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2008 (\$) (Redford)**
First Reading -- 1830 (Nov. 6 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), 1478 (Oct. 22 aft., not proceeded with)
- 205 Traffic Safety (Used Vehicle Inspection) Amendment Act, 2008 (Bhardwaj)**
First Reading -- 401 (May 1 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1100-12 (Jun. 2 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1553 (Oct. 27 aft., defeated)
- 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.), 1396-1406 (Oct. 20 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1696-1707 (Nov. 3 aft., passed with amendments)
- 207 Young Albertans' Advisory Council Act (Fawcett)**
First Reading -- 1295 (Oct. 14 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1553-62 (Oct. 27 aft.), 1708-11 (Nov. 3 aft., six-month hoist amendment agreed to)
- 208 Alberta Affordable Mortgage Protection Act (Weadick)**
First Reading -- 1479 (Oct. 22 aft.)
- 209 Traffic Safety (Driver Disqualification and Seizure of Vehicles Arising From Drug Offences) Amendment Act, 2008 (Quest)**
First Reading -- 1479 (Oct. 22 aft.)
- 210 School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2008 (Forsyth)**
First Reading -- 1634 (Oct. 29 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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