



Province of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
First Session

Alberta Hansard

Thursday afternoon, November 27, 2008

Issue 54

The Honourable Kenneth R. Kowalski, Speaker

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature

First Session

Kowalski, Hon. Ken, Barrhead-Morinville-Westlock, Speaker
Cao, Wayne C.N., Calgary-Fort, Deputy Speaker and Chair of Committees
Mitzel, Len, Cypress-Medicine Hat, Deputy Chair of Committees

<p>Ady, Hon. Cindy, Calgary-Shaw (PC), Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation</p> <p>Allred, Ken, St. Albert (PC)</p> <p>Amery, Moe, Calgary-East (PC)</p> <p>Anderson, Rob, Airdrie-Chestermere (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Solicitor General and Public Security</p> <p>Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)</p> <p>Berger, Evan, Livingstone-Macleod (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Sustainable Resource Development</p> <p>Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)</p> <p>Bhullar, Manmeet Singh, Calgary-Montrose (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Advanced Education and Technology</p> <p>Blackett, Hon. Lindsay, Calgary-North West (PC), Minister of Culture and Community Spirit</p> <p>Blakeman, Laurie, Edmonton-Centre (L), Official Opposition House Leader</p> <p>Boutilier, Guy C., Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo (PC)</p> <p>Brown, Dr. Neil, QC, Calgary-Nose Hill (PC)</p> <p>Calahasen, Pearl, Lesser Slave Lake (PC)</p> <p>Campbell, Robin, West Yellowhead (PC), Deputy Government Whip</p> <p>Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (L), Official Opposition Whip</p> <p>Dallas, Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)</p> <p>Danyluk, Hon. Ray, Lac La Biche-St. Paul (PC), Minister of Municipal Affairs</p> <p>DeLong, Alana, Calgary-Bow (PC)</p> <p>Denis, Jonathan, Calgary-Egmont (PC)</p> <p>Doerksen, Arno, Strathmore-Brooks (PC)</p> <p>Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)</p> <p>Elniski, Doug, Edmonton-Calder (PC)</p> <p>Evans, Hon. Iris, Sherwood Park (PC), Minister of Finance and Enterprise</p> <p>Fawcett, Kyle, Calgary-North Hill (PC)</p> <p>Forsyth, Heather, Calgary-Fish Creek (PC)</p> <p>Fritz, Hon. Yvonne, Calgary-Cross (PC), Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs</p> <p>Goudreau, Hon. Hector G., Dunvegan-Central Peace (PC), Minister of Employment and Immigration</p> <p>Griffiths, Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Agriculture and Rural Development</p> <p>Groeneveld, Hon. George, Highwood (PC), Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development</p> <p>Hancock, Hon. Dave, QC, Edmonton-Whitemud (PC), Minister of Education, Government House Leader</p> <p>Hayden, Hon. Jack, Drumheller-Stettler (PC), Minister of Infrastructure</p> <p>Hehr, Kent, Calgary-Buffalo (L)</p> <p>Horne, Fred, Edmonton-Rutherford (PC)</p> <p>Horner, Hon. Doug, Spruce Grove-Sturgeon-St. Albert (PC), Minister of Advanced Education and Technology</p> <p>Jablonski, Hon. Mary Anne, Red Deer-North (PC), Minister of Seniors and Community Supports</p> <p>Jacobs, Broyce, Cardston-Taber-Warner (PC)</p> <p>Johnson, Jeff, Athabasca-Redwater (PC)</p> <p>Johnston, Art, Calgary-Hays (PC)</p> <p>Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (L)</p> <p>Klimchuk, Hon. Heather, Edmonton-Glenora (PC), Minister of Service Alberta</p> <p>Knight, Hon. Mel, Grande Prairie-Smoky (PC), Minister of Energy</p> <p>Leskiw, Genia, Bonnyville-Cold Lake (PC)</p>	<p>Liepert, Hon. Ron, Calgary-West (PC), Minister of Health and Wellness</p> <p>Lindsay, Hon. Fred, Stony Plain (PC), Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security</p> <p>Lukaszk, Thomas A., Edmonton-Castle Downs (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Municipal Affairs</p> <p>Lund, Ty, Rocky Mountain House (PC)</p> <p>MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (L)</p> <p>Marz, Richard, Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills (PC)</p> <p>Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP), Leader of the NDP Opposition</p> <p>McFarland, Barry, Little Bow (PC)</p> <p>McQueen, Diana, Drayton Valley-Calmar (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Environment</p> <p>Morton, Hon. F.L., Foothills-Rocky View (PC), Minister of Sustainable Resource Development</p> <p>Notley, Rachel, Edmonton-Strathcona (NDP), Deputy Leader of the NDP Opposition, NDP Opposition House Leader</p> <p>Oberle, Frank, Peace River (PC), Government Whip</p> <p>Olson, Verlyn, QC, Wetaskiwin-Camrose (PC)</p> <p>Ouellette, Hon. Luke, Innisfail-Sylvan Lake (PC), Minister of Transportation</p> <p>Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (L), Deputy Official Opposition Whip</p> <p>Prins, Ray, Lacombe-Ponoka (PC)</p> <p>Quest, Dave, Strathcona (PC)</p> <p>Redford, Hon. Alison M., Calgary-Elbow (PC), Minister of Justice and Attorney General</p> <p>Renner, Hon. Rob, Medicine Hat (PC), Minister of Environment, Deputy Government House Leader</p> <p>Rodney, Dave, Calgary-Lougheed (PC)</p> <p>Rogers, George, Leduc-Beaumont-Devon (PC)</p> <p>Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)</p> <p>Sarich, Janice, Edmonton-Decore (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Education</p> <p>Sherman, Dr. Raj, Edmonton-Meadowlark (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Health and Wellness</p> <p>Snelgrove, Hon. Lloyd, Vermilion-Lloydminster (PC), President of the Treasury Board</p> <p>Stelmach, Hon. Ed, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville (PC), Premier, President of Executive Council</p> <p>Stevens, Hon. Ron, QC, Calgary-Glenmore (PC), Deputy Premier, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations</p> <p>Swann, Dr. David, Calgary-Mountain View (L)</p> <p>Taft, Dr. Kevin, Edmonton-Riverview (L), Leader of the Official Opposition</p> <p>Tarchuk, Hon. Janis, Banff-Cochrane (PC), Minister of Children and Youth Services</p> <p>Taylor, Dave, Calgary-Currie (L), Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition</p> <p>VanderBurg, George, Whitecourt-St. Anne (PC)</p> <p>Vandermeer, Tony, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (PC)</p> <p>Weadick, Greg, Lethbridge-West (PC)</p> <p>Webber, Len, Calgary-Foothills (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Energy</p> <p>Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC)</p> <p>Xiao, David H., Edmonton-McClung (PC), Parliamentary Assistant, Employment and Immigration</p> <p>Zwozdesky, Hon. Gene, Edmonton-Mill Creek (PC), Minister of Aboriginal Relations, Deputy Government House Leader</p>
--	--

Officers and Officials of the Legislative Assembly

Clerk	W.J. David McNeil	Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Shannon Dean
Clerk Assistant/ Director of House Services	Louise J. Kamuchik	Sergeant-at-Arms	Brian G. Hodgson
Clerk of <i>Journals</i> /Table Research	Micheline S. Gravel	Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	J. Ed Richard
Senior Parliamentary Counsel	Robert H. Reynolds, QC	Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms	William C. Semple
		Managing Editor of <i>Alberta Hansard</i>	Liz Sim

[Errata, if any, appear inside back cover]

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

1:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2008

[The Speaker in the chair]

Prayers

The Speaker: Welcome. Good afternoon.

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

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Advanced Education and Technology.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleague the hon. Member for Drumheller-Stettler it is indeed my pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislature a group of 45 grade 9 students who have travelled some distance to visit us here in the Legislature and see how their government works. They are from the J.C. Charyk school in Hanna, and they are accompanied by teacher Ms Harty and parent helpers Mr. Doug Gutsche, Mr. Danny Povaschuk, Mr. Rick Haessel. I believe they are in the members' gallery. I would ask that they rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Legislature.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Athabasca-Redwater.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise and introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly a group of fantastic students, parents, and teachers visiting us from Redwater school. We have 30 grade 6 and seven grade 8 students led by their teachers, Mr. Kevin Hurford and Cheryl Tanouye, and by parent helpers Lori Lumsden, Tammy Cunningham, Joanna Fedoruk, and Liz Kammermayer. I believe they're in the members' gallery, and I'd ask them to please rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Liepert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great deal of pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly a number of hard-working Health and Wellness staff, and I can assure you that within the last nine months hard working has been exactly what these folks have been up to. I'd like to introduce them and then at the conclusion ask them to stand and be recognized. We have Aidan Hailes, John Paterson, Jimmy Chan, Karen Smilski, Katlan Holman, Katy Smali, Sheena Chand, Taryn Ready, Kierstin Kashuba, Nathan Cross, Pamela Felt, Annie Young, Kaya de Souza, Linda Malloy, Ron Fernandes, and Joe Lan. I believe they're in the gallery, and I would ask that they stand and receive the recognition of the House.

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

Ms Redford: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of this Assembly 32 dedicated members of Alberta Justice who are joining us from the claims and recoveries division. These staff members are joining us today as

part of a public service orientation tour, and they're seated in the members' gallery. I'd ask them to stand and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Cao: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly Calgary Alderman Joe Ceci. He is my alderman in ward 9. He is joined by 13 others who are attending the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta AGM and conference. Alderman Joe Ceci is joined by Susan Flowers, FCSS manager, and board member Hamish Kerfoot, both of Cochrane; Randy Ell, MD of Rocky View FCSS manager and chairperson Della Wise-Whelan; southeast Rocky View FCSS chairman Bob Thomson; Alison Gerrits, Banff FCSS supervisor; Naydene Lewis, councillor, the town of Okotoks; Luanne Whitmarsh, Kerby Centre CEO and board president Maureen Wills; FCSS manager Katie Black; and Calgary social planners Debra Hartley, Elizabeth Schnitzler, and Joel Christie.

Approximately 400 volunteers and staff from throughout Alberta will be gathering in Edmonton this weekend to learn about the impact of changing faces and diversity in the community in Calgary. Alderman Joe Ceci is in the public gallery with all the others. I would like to ask them to rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of the Assembly.

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

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly two very fine gentlemen. In fact, some of our members in this Legislature may recognize them as former members of our excellent security team for the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. Both are retired members of the Edmonton Police Service. Barney Stevens and Bob Baker now lend their expertise to administering the curb the danger program, a new and highly successful community-based initiative to intercept drunk drivers, about which I will tell you in just a few minutes. Mr. Stevens and Mr. Baker work out of the Edmonton Police Service community policing support branch in the traffic section. I will ask them both to rise in the members' gallery and accept the warm welcome and rewelcome to our Assembly.

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

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security I wish to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Marla Hennig, who is sitting in the members' gallery today. Mrs. Hennig is here to witness the presentation of a petition she organized, which I'll be presenting later this afternoon. I would ask her to rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Mr. Elniski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly some very special guests seated in the members' gallery. Miss Kaitlyn Young is a constituent of the Member for Edmonton-Meadowlark and served as a STEP student in his constituency office this past summer. Kaitlyn is a vibrant, intelligent young woman and was a great asset to the office this summer. With Kaitlyn today are Brittney Timperley, who served as a STEP student for our colleague the hon. Minister of Finance and Enterprise, and Kyle Miller, who

I understand is a very important man in Kaitlyn's life. Kaitlyn, Brittny, and Kyle are all political science students at the University of Alberta. I would ask them to rise to receive the traditional warm greeting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Cardston-Taber-Warner.

Mr. Jacobs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to rise today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly Dr. Clayne Steed. Dr. Steed is a practising physician from Raymond, Alberta, which is in my constituency. He's here today, has presented to the rural caucus on the rural physician action plan, and gave an excellent presentation, which was very well received. He's seated in the members' gallery. I would ask Dr. Steed to please rise and receive the warm welcome of this Assembly.

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

Dr. Taft: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions today. First of all, as always, it's a great privilege to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly a special guest who has driven in from Drayton Valley named Norma Block. Norma is seated in the public gallery. She was the Alberta Liberal candidate for the constituency of Drayton Valley-Calmar during the last election, and she remains a very active member of her community. Norma's work on Drayton Valley's crime prevention program helped dramatically reduce crystal meth abuse in her community. She's here today because she has concerns about this government's approach to crime reduction. I would ask Norma to please rise and all members of the Assembly to give her the traditional warm welcome.

My second introduction is of Mr. Len Skowronski, who is leader of the Alberta Social Credit Party. Len was the Socred candidate for Calgary-Varsity in the 2004 election and later served on that party's board of directors. He was elected leader of the party in November of 2007. Len has worked in leadership roles in a number of community organizations in his home city of Calgary. He's with us today because he has particular concerns about this government's handling of our agriculture industry. Mr. Skowronski, please rise. We welcome you.

Thank you.

1:40

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

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and introduce to you and through you to all hon. Members of the Legislative Assembly two constituents from Edmonton-Gold Bar. The first is Sylvia VanHaitsma. Sylvia has concerns about how we deliver long-term care not only in Edmonton but across the province, and she has many excellent ideas on how we can make that better. The second constituent is Ann Sobol. She follows the proceedings here with interest and is always able to point out ways where we can spend our money in this province more wisely. I appreciate her advice. They're both in the public gallery, and I would now ask them to please rise and receive the warm traditional welcome of this Assembly. Thank you for coming.

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

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I have as my guests members of the Congolese Community Association of Edmonton. Challenges for new Canadians are many and can be

exacerbated when there's civil war and strife in their country of origin. Since 1997 over 6 million people have been killed in Congo. The international community is largely ignoring this humanitarian crisis. It's our responsibility as Canadians to help Congo return to peace and stability.

The Congolese Community Association is a nonprofit organization that helps promote the Congolese culture through social and educational activities both in Edmonton and across Alberta. It also supports new Congolese immigrants who reside in Edmonton, helping them to adapt to Canadian society. The Congolese community of Edmonton has known significant growth during the last eight years, with an estimated population in Edmonton of over 4,000. The majority of Congolese people are francophone yet are fluent in other languages as well.

Mr. Speaker, I would now ask that my guests rise as I call their names and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly: Marcelle Milolo, Samy Mukadi, Gislain Lugoma, Bitupu Mufuta, and the president of the Congolese association of Alberta, Jean-Paul Lubamba Kalenga.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am pleased to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly three board members representing the Woodland Ranchers Association. The Woodland Ranchers Association has for the last 15 years been representing cow-calf operators in northeast-central Alberta. Their purpose is to be the voice for farmers and ranchers and to provide ongoing and up-to-date information to their members. They're here today as my guests to meet and to discuss issues facing their members and all cow-calf operators in the province. I would ask now that Jackie Littler and Stephen and Lorraine Shwetz rise and receive the traditional warm welcome of this Assembly.

Members' Statements

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

Edmonton Police Service Curb the Danger Program

Mr. Lukaszuk: Well, thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this year the Edmonton Police Service submitted its curb the danger program to compete against other international police agencies for a prestigious Webber Seavey award. This award is jointly sponsored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and Motorola to recognize the promotion of a standard of excellence that exemplifies law enforcement's contribution and dedication to the quality of life of local communities. The award is named after Webber S. Seavey, who was the IACP's first president. The Edmonton Police Service has been advised that curb the danger was selected as a semifinalist in this year's competition. The efforts of the EPS were recognized at the IACP convention in San Diego on the 10th of November 2008. The award was accepted by Deputy Chief Norm Lipinski of the Edmonton Police Service.

Mr. Speaker, curb the danger is a community-based initiative that requests motorists to call 911 when they observe a vehicle being driven in a manner that would lead them to believe that the driver is impaired. The program celebrated its second anniversary on the 26th of October 2008. The success of the program is a resounding message from the community that they are fed up with impaired drivers on Edmonton's roadways. Since its inception the program has received 18,228 curb the danger calls, resulting in an astounding 1,799 impaired driving charges and 486 twenty-four-hour licence suspensions.

Mr. Speaker, curb the danger is administered by two retired EPS members, Barney Stevens and Bob Baker. In addition to community-minded citizens who report these dangerous drivers, the success of the program is also attributed to the dedication of the EPS.

Thank you.

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

World AIDS Day

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. World AIDS Day arrives on December 1. By now most people are well aware of the grave threat posed by HIV infection. Thus far AIDS has killed more than 25 million people, including hundreds of thousands of innocent children, and another 33 million people are living with HIV.

It's true that great progress has been made since the stark days of the early '80s when HIV and AIDS first entered the public consciousness. There is greater awareness and understanding of the disease and greater compassion for its victims. New treatments have greatly extended the lives and well-being of people with AIDS, but we still have a long way to go. Although AIDS affects all Albertans regardless of sexual orientation, it is true that Alberta's gay and lesbian community, a great source of prosperity, creativity, and cultural expression, has been hard hit by the pandemic.

It also is true that prejudice still lingers. As a Calgarian with gay and lesbian friends I have seen it myself, and I hope that education will continue to break down whatever barriers of fear and intolerance still exist. Writing protection for GLBT Albertans into our human rights legislation would be a big step forward toward that goal.

In closing, I salute the courage of our brothers and sisters fighting AIDS, the compassion of those individuals and organizations like AIDS Calgary who are offering comfort to those who are suffering from the disease, and the dedication of the doctors and scientists around the world who are tirelessly searching for a cure.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Good Samaritan Society Southgate Care Centre

Mr. Horne: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to bring to the attention of the Assembly the 35th anniversary of the Good Samaritan Society's Southgate Care Centre, located in my constituency of Edmonton-Rutherford. Southgate Centre was constructed in 1973, with the first resident admitted on August 3 of that year.

Southgate's team of dedicated and caring staff and volunteers offer continuing care services to 226 residents in semiprivate and private accommodation. The centre, Mr. Speaker, employs approximately 300 staff, supported by a contingent of no less than 200 volunteers, who greatly enhance the lives of residents by providing social visits, worship services, community outings, and other recreational activities.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand before you today to celebrate the 35 years of service these exceptional Albertans have provided to so many families in southwest Edmonton. It is not uncommon to meet both employees and volunteers who have been with the centre half or more of that time. It is my hope that not far into the next 35 years we might see a new facility at Southgate to further enhance the centre's tradition of providing care that is second to none.

Thank you.

Oral Question Period

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

Fiscal Restraints

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In toughening financial times this government needs to lead by example, like its federal cousins, and start cutting government perks. Government spending on expensive treats for itself while hospitals are being delayed, pensioners are losing money, and the usage of food banks is soaring is just plain wrong. To the Premier. This government allows every cabinet minister and senior official an executive vehicle assignment of 43 and a half thousand dollars, and it pays all expenses. Right now there are 62 cars for top government officials being paid for by tax dollars. Will the Premier show leadership . . .

The Speaker: We have to recognize the Premier now.

Mr. Stelmach: I believe the same is offered to the Leader of the Opposition.

Dr. Taft: And we don't take it.

Mr. Stelmach: Neither do a lot of the ministers, actually. The offer is there. Some do accept the car; others drive their own vehicle.

I do want to say for the purpose of the record that in this province, in Alberta, the MLA remuneration is tied to the average weekly earnings, which is quite unique in the country. If the weekly earnings go down, so do the salaries.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Well, thanks, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it was tied to inflation earlier this spring, was it?

Another area where there is waste in this government is the bloated size of cabinet. The Premier, a former Deep Six fiscal hawk, has expanded his government to include 24 ministries plus, for the first time in Alberta's history, 10 parliamentary assistants. Again to the Premier: will the Premier show the necessary leadership in these economic times, reduce the size of his cabinet, and eliminate parliamentary assistant positions?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, you would know these figures better than I do, but I believe the total operation of this whole Legislative Assembly, including all the MLAs, the offices, is about 0.01 per cent of the total budget. I can assure this Assembly that we'll be looking at every area, every line in the budget as we proceed into next year's budget, and we'll look at every opportunity to reduce, but we're going to ensure that the programs of health, education, and infrastructure are the priorities of this government.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Well, thank you. I agree with the Premier on those last priorities, and we're trying to find the money so that we can stay focused on them.

Given that the President of the Treasury Board reported an increase of more than 300 per cent on accommodation costs for third parties last year, and that's several hundred thousand dollars, will the Premier show leadership and freeze those expenses at the 2007 level? Surely, the President of the Treasury Board can tighten his belt.

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, something that we've done as a government is that all ministerial expenses and office expenses are posted on the web for the public to monitor. There's no need to go through any kind of freedom of information process to access that information. As I said before, we'll keep monitoring all expenses to make sure that we do deliver budgets that reflect the priorities of Albertans.

1:50 Alberta Health Services Board

Dr. Taft: Well, Mr. Speaker, all Alberta is becoming aware that there are obvious conflict-of-interest concerns with the Alberta Health Services Board. A member of the board is the CEO and president of Stantec, and as such he has a legal obligation to maximize shareholder value for Stantec. Now as a member of the AHS Board he has an obligation to maximize taxpayer value in the health care system. On top of that, he personally owns well over 300,000 shares in Stantec. To the minister of health: why didn't the minister exercise better judgment and avoid putting someone on the AHS Board who has such obvious conflicts?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, you would think that a member that represents a constituency in the capital region might have a little more respect for the business community of this city. This particular individual clearly does not need this role but is prepared to serve Albertans as a member of the Alberta Health Services Board. It's about time this member stood up for his city, not run it down as he's been doing for the last two weeks.

Dr. Taft: Mr. Speaker, the issue isn't the CEO of Stantec so much as it is the judgment of this minister of health. Everyone else seems to understand the perception of a conflict of interest here. Taxpayer dollars must be spent in a way that is as clear and accountable as possible, not with the ethical indifference this minister seems to show. Again to the same minister: why doesn't he just end this controversy and suspend this appointment?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, this hon. member has never held a real job in his life. He's always been on the public payroll.

Dr. Taft: Point of order.

Mr. Liepert: I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker. I will stand here any day and suggest that the individual that we're talking about has the judgment to determine whether or not he is potentially in any conflict of interest. I hope that when the time comes, this member will apologize, but he won't be here.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'll go to his boss, the Premier. The Premier has sat by while his health minister has impulsively shaken up Alberta's health care system. It's now, frankly, in a mess, and people across the province are beginning to recognize that. Will this Premier take responsibility and suspend these AHS appointments until there is proper conflict-of-interest policy in place?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, there is a policy in place. The Ethics Commissioner will review the background of all of the names that have been put forward and will report to the Assembly, not to the Premier, not to the minister. His responsibility is to report to the Assembly.

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

Bitumen Exports

Dr. Taft: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government promised that Alberta's Industrial Heartland would keep Alberta's economy strong for decades to come. A few months ago the heartland went into arrhythmia as one project after another was cancelled. Now, with Petro-Canada's decision to upgrade bitumen in the U.S., it's in full cardiac arrest. My question is to the Premier: what is this government doing to keep thousands of upgrading jobs from flowing to the U.S.?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, first of all, just to clarify. The opposition keeps saying that projects have been cancelled. In speaking to the proponents of the projects, all of the applications for regulatory processes, permits, are proceeding, but they are realizing that the world has changed dramatically, and there is some opportunity to reduce substantially the cost of building upgraders in the area. The other very important area is to work with the federal government and to agree on a long-term greenhouse gas policy. These companies are prepared to invest billions, but they have to know what the policy is going to be with the federal government.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: Well, thank you. Senior people in the oil sands industry have quietly told me that this government should simply make it a requirement of regulatory approval that 75 per cent of bitumen extracted in Alberta should stay here. To the Premier: why hasn't this government simply made a standard like that a condition of regulatory approval?

Mr. Stelmach: Mr. Speaker, our policy is to reach that, you know, 72 to 75 per cent amount of the bitumen produced to be upgraded in the province of Alberta. There are a lot of contributing factors to reaching that goal. One of them is the cost of building the upgraders; another, of course, is to ensure that the upgraders are built in a manner that falls in line with the regulatory environmental approvals, the airshed in the area. That is all proceeding as we speak. There is a lot more than just imposing some sort of arbitrary amount, that the Liberals are proposing.

Dr. Taft: The thing is, Mr. Speaker, that these upgraders are being built as we speak in a number of locations in the United States, and once they're built, the bitumen is going to be gone forever. This government has stood by while one pipeline after another has been approved to carry bitumen to the U.S. To the Premier: why is this government allowing jobs, wealth, and stability to flow from Alberta to U.S. centres while Alberta's Industrial Heartland staggers on the brink of collapse?

Mr. Stelmach: I seem to recall during the recent election campaign that the Leader of the Opposition made some comments about upgraders should be built in the province of Manitoba. I'm not quite sure what his position is today, but perhaps tomorrow there'll be a different one.

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

Beaverlodge Hospital

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'll be tabling 3,500 signatures from the people of Beaverlodge, who want to keep their hospital. There are about 12,000 people in the catchment area, and they're very concerned about the future of their local hospital. This Tory government is acting as though they're not accountable to those voters. My question is to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Will you assure the people of Beaverlodge that you will not close their hospital, and if not, why not?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't give that assurance because that would mean that forever that would be the situation of the government. What I can tell you is that there are no plans currently to close any hospitals in Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Mason: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. This hospital has a huge catchment area. Rural communities deserve access to full health services. The current hospital is 50 years old and crumbling, but Grande Prairie says that they can't support Beaverlodge's patients. To the same minister: won't you do the right thing and build a new hospital for the people in Beaverlodge?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of requests throughout the province for capital in health care. We are currently considering which ones have the highest priority, and that will be taken into account.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

2:00

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, this town believed that they were getting a new hospital, but after the election they learned the bitter truth. A health centre instead of a hospital means there is no in-patient care, and if you're sick after 8 p.m., you're out of luck. They don't need a health centre with reduced services as has been proposed. They need a full-service hospital. To the same minister: why won't you commit to replacing the Beaverlodge hospital and provide the people in that town and that area with the medical services that they desperately need?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, this government did not promise a new hospital in the community. The leader of the third party probably did, but unfortunately that party did not get elected.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Bonnyville-Cold Lake, followed by the hon. Member for Edmonton-Riverview.

Registered Disability Savings Plans

Mrs. Leskiw: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has announced it will offer a registered disability savings plan, or RDSP, for individuals to save for future needs of their children and grandchildren with severe disabilities. My question is to the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. What is the Alberta government doing to ensure that these RDSPs best meet the needs of Albertans with disabilities?

Mrs. Jablonski: The registered disability savings plan is a federal government program that allows families and friends to save for the future of Canadians with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to tell you today, to tell the members of this Assembly, especially

the Member for Lethbridge-East, and all Albertans that the government of Alberta will exempt the RDSP from any of our financial support programs.

Mrs. Leskiw: Mr. Speaker, last Friday I had a senior whose daughter is disabled come into my constituency office in Bonnyville and question me exactly on this RDSP. My constituent wanted some questions answered. My second question is to the same minister. Have you heard from the disability community about how they feel these savings plans will impact their ability to save for the long term?

Mrs. Jablonski: Mr. Speaker, I have met with constituents and many families of Albertans with disabilities, and I've heard first-hand about their support for registered disability savings plans. We also received a letter from the Association for Community Living which expressed full support for the RDSP exemptions. The letter stated that if we choose to do this, it would be a lasting gift from families for our disabled children.

Mrs. Leskiw: My last question is also to the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports. Who will be able to contribute to the RDSPs? Is it limited to parents of children with disabilities?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Jablonski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a federal government program, but I do understand that parents and grandparents, friends, and even the persons with the disabilities themselves can save through this program. This will help them to have a better quality of life in the future. The three programs that will exempt the RDSP are the AISH program, the seniors' benefits programs, and the income support program.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-North Hill.

Livestock and Meat Strategy

Dr. Taft: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Many cattle producers are concerned that the age verification requirement of the Alberta livestock and meat strategy is simply downloading costs onto smaller producers and will ultimately push them out of business. Producers are upset that Alberta Agriculture has done a poor job of consulting them. To the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: will the minister postpone the January 1, 2009, implementation of the regulations until he can go back and properly consult with cattle producers?

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, Mr. Speaker, very, very interesting. The hon. member, being the opposition critic, should know the answer to his own foolish question. The truth of the matter is that we put the Alberta livestock and meat strategy together with input from the entire industry at the time, and we brought this forward. That was part of the recommendations that the industry put together. I didn't dream this up at night. The industry did.

Dr. Taft: Well, I can tell you, cattle producers are pretty divided, and the minister knows that.

Last week the minister said, on one hand, that a voluntary system for age verification will not work, yet on the other hand there will be no verification police monitoring mandatory age verification because, he said, common sense will prevail. Well, there's \$300

million at stake, so the minister can't have it both ways. How does he expect common sense to prevail if he will not be enforcing compliance yet admitted that a voluntary system won't work?

Mr. Horner: We've already tried the voluntary system.

Mr. Groeneveld: I think that's probably, yeah, a pretty good comment. We tried the voluntary system. It didn't work.

I've been in Asia for two consecutive years now . . .

Mr. Hehr: We wondered where you were.

Mr. Groeneveld: Thank you. Thank you. Now you know.

. . . and heard very clearly that we have to age verify and have traceability on these cattle. I think the common goal from all cattle people and hog people and red-meat people at this time is to get some more markets going out there. Mr. Speaker, last week we shipped 12 cash loads of cattle to the U.S. If we don't get some more markets outside of Canada, we are going to have a bad, bad time in the near future.

The Speaker: The hon. leader.

Dr. Taft: All right. Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. These increased regulations, which have so divided the cattle community, are ultimately setting the stage for small producers to be forced out of business, all at a cost to taxpayers of \$300 million. When will the minister end the trend of this government which rewards big corporate agriculture at the expense of small producers? We saw it with BSE, and we're seeing it once again now.

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, Mr. Speaker, he's absolutely right that the livestock industry is struggling right now, the red-meat industry. To answer his questions, we did a cost review just last week of the implementation of age verification and traceability. It's under \$3 per head. If we can get the markets out there to increase the value of these animals \$100, \$100-plus, \$80, \$60, then \$3 is a pretty darn good investment.

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

Preventive Health Services

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Wellness and prevention programs and services are key components to reducing health care costs and improving the quality of life of individual Albertans. Can the minister elaborate on what is being done to prevent health-related issues for individuals so that they do not have to be treated?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member is correct that the ministry is known as Health and Wellness, not the ministry of sickness. I think it's important that we do put a large emphasis on prevention. I think that probably the most important area in prevention is the area of children's health. As you know, we have introduced nutritional guidelines and the Create a Movement program. We've also brought forward a children's mental health plan and a number of other issues around immunization programs. I think that's the first emphasis, on children.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As health care budgets

across Canada continue to spiral out of control, less and less funding is left to ensure that Albertans are staying healthy and has shifted to the escalating expense of treatment. What is the minister doing to ensure that an appropriate balance between prevention programs and treatment programs is being achieved in light of these exponential cost increases in our system?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, first of all, it isn't all about money. I mean, in many ways it's about working with organizations that already exist such as numerous initiatives in cancer. Think of the Telus Tour for the Cure for breast cancer. As well as that, I know I was part of an announcement I guess a couple of weeks ago with the Premier and the minister of seniors relative to a finding balance campaign, around seniors and trying not to have falls. Those are the kinds of things that we need to do.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Fawcett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly agree that it is a collective responsibility to provide prevention services. It is also individual responsibility to make healthy decisions and seek proactive, preventative health services. To the same minister: what is being done to promote and incent healthy decision-making by individual Albertans?

Mr. Liepert: Well, I guess the first thing that comes to mind, Mr. Speaker, is the approval by this Assembly of the Member for Calgary-Lougheed's bill, but there are a number of other initiatives that the government is involved in. The member is correct, I think, that personal initiative is the one area that will succeed the most in prevention.

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

Seniors' Housing

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my senior constituents are concerned with the difference between designated assisted living and long-term care facilities. My questions are to the Minister of Health and Wellness. Can the minister tell the Assembly whether designated assisted living facilities would provide counselling with regard to financial assistance programs for seniors, their legal rights and the importance of personal directives?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if that question could be answered on a blanket basis. I think that what is attempted to be done in designated assisted living, frankly, for that matter, in some lodges and in long-term care, is to provide the level of patient care that is needed. If that requires counselling and other services, then it would be my belief that, where possible, that would be done.

2:10

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. However, seniors often do not agree when they are assessed as only needing the care of a DAL facility and not long-term care. Can the minister tell seniors what their recourse is to appeal these judgments?

Mr. Liepert: Well, first of all, probably in the health care system there are going to be on a regular basis individuals who don't agree with particular decisions. I mean, we have that happen on a daily basis, where a patient may not agree with a doctor diagnosis. This happens all the time in the health care system.

Ms Pastoor: However, you do have the chance to have a second opinion. Hopefully that will always be available in this province.

DAL facilities provide less service and download costs to residents because of the hidden costs. How can the minister promote a situation where seniors will have to pay additional costs for anything beyond the absolute most basic hygiene, medical, and daily living care in these facilities?

Mr. Liepert: All of the assumptions in the member's preamble are far from correct, Mr. Speaker.

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

Chronic Wasting Disease

Mr. Prins: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Chronic wasting disease has been around North America for a very long time. About six years ago, in March of 2002, the only case of chronic wasting disease ever found in an Alberta elk was detected in northern Alberta. A few months later two more cases of CWD were detected, this time in white-tailed deer near Edmonton. My question is to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. What is the point of spending money on the chronic wasting disease program only along the border if the threat of disease may exist throughout the province?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, we direct our resources and manpower to where the risk is greatest, and that's along the Saskatchewan-Alberta border. In response to wild deer in Saskatchewan testing positive, we began testing along the border in 2005. Since then we've tested over 22,000 heads; 53 have tested positive. Accordingly, we know that chronic wasting disease is spread through the contact of healthy deer with diseased deer, so we'll continue our focus on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Prins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My second question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. What standards are in place to ensure and verify that farmed cervids, elk and deer, do not have chronic wasting disease?

Mr. Groeneveld: Mr. Speaker, Alberta has a mandatory CWD surveillance program in place for farmed elk and deer. Any animal that dies or is slaughtered must be tested. Over the past 12 months 45,000 cervids have been tested and only three positives found, and two of those were on the same farm. Alberta has really strict cervid import protocols in place to ensure that CWD is not imported into the province. Alberta's last case of CWD in farmed cervids was five years ago, in 2003.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Prins: Thank you. My last question is again to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. How do we know that chronic wasting disease is not somewhat endemic throughout the province, and how does our monitoring program integrate with that of our neighbouring province to the east?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, no wild deer have ever tested positive for CWD outside the border control area. We've tested close to 5,000

heads of wild deer from outside that area, and not a single one has tested positive. We do monitor from outside that area, but none have been found, so we're confident that, again, as I said earlier, our resources are focused where the problem is.

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

Health System Restructuring

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Jim Saunders, chief operating officer of corporate services for the Alberta health board, has said in the past, while promoting private health care: "Big-business philosophy requires that stakeholders use all of the tools in the chest to make the system successful. Private health services are one such tool." My first question is to the minister of health. What private health services does the minister plan to have Mr. Saunders implement?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that it's not a matter of implementation; it's a matter of overseeing the private health services that exist today. Let me start by saying that every doctor's office in this province – we have private health care operations in this province. What this particular member refuses to acknowledge is that they are publicly funded. You know, again he's after the bogeyman.

Mr. MacDonald: Again, Mr. Speaker, to the same minister: what private hospitals is Mr. Saunders in charge of under your scheme to privatize public health care in this province?

Mr. Liepert: None, Mr. Speaker, because I don't have a scheme to privatize health care in this province.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. MacDonald: Thank you. Again to the same minister: given that the Alberta Health Services Board is still developing at this time its conflict-of-interest rules, what conflict-of-interest rules apply to Mr. Saunders as he follows your directions to privatize hospitals in this province?

Mr. Liepert: Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that conflict-of-interest rules actually exist. There is no developing them. What the Alberta Health Services Board is looking at doing is ensuring that they are strengthened, and that's what they should be doing.

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

Livestock and Meat Strategy

(continued)

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Tory government looks after their big-business friends and takes working Albertans for granted. The Alberta livestock and meat strategy is doing little for farmers and lots for packers and feedlots. For a start, not enough of their \$300 million program is going to the producers who need it. To the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: why don't you change the funding formula so that producers who need it get it?

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, Mr. Speaker, the third-party agriculture critic has got a little bit of studying to do. When you do these types of things, the last thing you want is to trigger countervail duties from

other countries. Now, if you start fooling around with how these monies are paid out and you pick and choose winners and losers, watch out; you're in big trouble.

Ms Notley: Mr. Speaker, I would say that the winners and losers have already been chosen.

The livestock strategy is a conscious move to force small producers out of business and to support big agricorp. The President of the Treasury Board confirmed that in his statements yesterday. Farmers and even Saskatchewan's agriculture minister know that your program is not helping most producers. To the same minister: why won't you put local producers before your agricorp friends and insiders?

Mr. Groeneveld: My goodness. I can't believe it.

An Hon. Member: Earth to the NDP.

Mr. Groeneveld: Yeah.

We put this together for the farmers and ranchers of Alberta, very simply. As I said before, I didn't dream this overnight. The industry had input to the strategy. We're moving forward. Some little groups of noisy people can make it sound awfully good to you, hon. member, but if I back out of this now, I may as well leave the country.

Ms Notley: I wouldn't call the Alberta Beef Producers a small, noisy group.

The Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency isn't working, Mr. Speaker. If the government really wanted the agency to be credible to producers, agency reps would be democratically elected by those who they're supposed to help, and then they would be able to consult, like the minister suggests. To the minister: why won't you let Alberta producers, farmers, and ranchers have a say in ALMA by electing the agency democratically?

Mr. Groeneveld: Well, Mr. Speaker, we put the agency together. We have had commodity groups working on this since before 2003. We're not getting anywhere. We're in worse shape now than we were then. We brought in a high-profile board of businesspeople who will be steered by people from the industry. These are people that get out there, and they know how to market. They know how to work overseas, to grow markets, whatever the case may be. We have people from Japan on that board. We have a gentleman from Geneva right now. I think we're heading in the right direction, and I'm darn proud of it.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Wetaskiwin-Camrose, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*.

Olympic Torch Relay

Mr. Olson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week Albertans and Canadians found out about how the Olympic torch relay is going to travel across the country from coast to coast. The relay portion in Alberta will involve 73 communities over nine days, yet there are a number of communities that aren't going to be involved either as an official stop or as part of the community celebration. My question is for the Minister Tourism, Parks and Recreation. I'm wondering if she can tell me how communities were chosen to participate in this relay.

2:20

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Ady: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The VANOC organizing committee determined which communities would participate in the torch relay and host our formal celebrations for the torch relay. Our Olympic and Paralympic Secretariat encouraged VANOC to help and to include as many communities as possible. To make sure that route was as inclusive as possible, VANOC has designed this route so that 90 per cent of Canadians can at least participate or be within one hour's drive to participate in this thing. I would encourage all Albertans to participate in this torch relay.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Olson: Yes. My supplemental is for the same minister. I've already had some inquiries from people wondering how they can get involved. I'm wondering if the minister has any ideas about how people can get involved, especially those who aren't in communities that the torch is passing through?

Mrs. Ady: Well, Mr. Speaker, there are lots of ways that Albertans can participate in the torch relay. When I talk to those that participated in '88, they still remember how exciting that was and what a wonderful experience. So if you want to be a torchbearer and actually carry the torch, you would need to go to the VANOC website, which is vancouver2010.com, and apply. You could also participate as a host community. There are going to be 17 of the 73 communities that will actually have a celebration. There are lots of opportunities to participate.

Mr. Olson: To the same minister: can she advise us what the cost of this relay is for Albertans?

Mrs. Ady: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a VANOC event in conjunction with the torch relay's two main sponsors, which will be Coca-Cola and the Royal Bank of Canada. Each host community will be responsible for the costs associated with their celebration. We're inviting those communities to invite their neighbouring communities that the torch might not be stopping in to come and help celebrate.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-*Buffalo*, followed by the hon. Member for Battle River-*Wainwright*.

Homelessness

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has already spent over \$100 million on rent supplements and over \$40 million for eleventh-hour homeless and eviction prevention this year. Considering the increase in homelessness this year, subsidizing landlords has not proven to be the \$140 million answer to homelessness. To the Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs: considering the number of affordable housing units that \$140 million could buy, how much more money will be used to encourage landlords to keep rents artificially inflated?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Providing rent supplements for our low- to moderate-income individuals that are at risk of becoming homeless is a very important issue, actually. Following the Affordable Housing Task Force report recommendations that were approved, we did initiate a direct rent supplement program. That program does give the rent directly to the tenants so that they can pay the landlord, and they can be anonymous as to where they receive that supplement from. I can tell you that these programs, the

rent supplement program and the homeless and eviction prevention fund, are working and that they will continue.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like we're going to spend a lot more.

The argument against implementing rent regulations was that it would limit private-sector investment. Could the minister name an affordable housing project undertaken by the private sector in the last year that has not received any government funding?

Mrs. Fritz: I'll take that question under advisement, Mr. Speaker, and I'll provide that to you, hon. member. I can't name any project at this given moment.

Mr. Hehr: Well, that doesn't surprise me.

I've asked this question all week and have yet to get a clear answer: again, will the public, the Marthas and Henrys in language you can understand, be able to read the nine-year plan to end homelessness before Christmas?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mrs. Fritz: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Secretariat for Action on Homelessness has put forward a plan. I have received that plan. As I have mentioned to you I think each day over the past week, I will be bringing that plan forward in due course, following it going through the appropriate processes.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Chronic Wasting Disease (continued)

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my constituency there was a lot of concern last year over the deer cull along the border that was intended to contain the spread of chronic wasting disease. Constituents in my area desperately wanted to control the cervids population in a way that would enhance the economic benefits to the region rather than damage a critical sector of the local economy. Can the minister explain if a deer cull is planned again this spring or if he intends to use an extended hunting season, hunters, and the food bank in order to control the population?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Dr. Morton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We listened to the concerns of the constituents of the Member for Battle River-Wainwright, and we will not be conducting a spring or winter cull in that area next year. Instead, we're focusing on enhancing and using the hunter harvest program to collect deer and control the population, and we're increasing the capacity to test those deer. The testing is free of charge, but the testing in the control zones is mandatory. We've met with the hunter groups and also some of the guides in that area, and they understand that. That's how we're going forward.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that helicopters have been rented by the department again, which last year were used for population control. Can the minister assure this House and

my constituents that they will not be used for population control and explain what those helicopters will be used for?

Dr. Morton: The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that that program has been cancelled. We will of course continue to use helicopters for monitoring. That's standard practice in wildlife population surveillance. I'm also happy to report that we are working with the food bank programs and making sure that much of that harvested venison does reach the needy.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity, followed by the hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmor.*

Mountain Pine Beetle Control

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having witnessed first-hand from 2002 through 2004 the invasive clear-cutting obliteration of Kananaskis Country surrounding Cataract Creek park, which turned pristine wilderness into a war zone, I would caution the SRD minister against repeating the wanton destruction of recreational areas and endangering watersheds under the guise of managing pine beetles. Given that long-term effects of mowing down a diversified forest far outweigh the short-term cyclical damage from pine beetles, will the minister mandate selective logging and prescribed burning instead of clear-cutting?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to extend the offer once again to the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity to give him not a one-way but a two-way ticket over to British Columbia so that he can go over and see what has happened there and then come back and talk to us about it. The question isn't whether you have forest or no forest; the question is healthy forest. Pine beetle is the biggest threat to the health of the forest on the eastern slopes, and we're managing that threat in the way that's recommended by Parks Canada and Canadian Wildlife and so forth.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Pine beetles are selective; bulldozers aren't. Given that markets for softwood lumber have tanked and that the few remaining Alberta forestry companies are facing bankruptcy, will the minister commit to subsidizing more labour-intensive, environmentally sensitive logging practices, which have been sustainably practised for generations in Europe?

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, half the questions we get from that side criticize us for spending too much, the other for too little. Now we have another request for more subsidization. The answer is that we are plotting a course that's based on science that has the best chance, the lowest risk, of achieving the objectives of healthy forests in the watersheds of the eastern slopes.

Mr. Chase: Clear-cutting is a waste of both resources and money. Does the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development have a plan to mitigate the recreational, environmental, and financial fallout of further clear-cutting in and around the tiny portion of southwest Alberta set aside under the provincial designation of parks and protected areas? It's small. Protect it.

Dr. Morton: Mr. Speaker, I actually live quite close to the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity. I'll offer my own services to take him out along highway 1 and show him that what he's calling clear-

*See p. 2109, left col., para. 2

cutting is simply not the case. The way the company responsible for harvesting in that area cuts, it's contour cutting. It respects watersheds; it leaves margins. Certain trees are not harvested. I think it's time for a field trip with the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Drayton Valley-Calmar, followed by the hon. Member for Calgary-Varsity.

Advanced Education Service Regions

Mrs. McQueen: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Advanced Education and Technology has introduced a roles and mandates policy framework for Alberta's publicly funded postsecondary system. A key element of the framework is the creation of service region boundaries. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. What will this new approach mean for people outside of the larger centres where our public postsecondary institutions are located?

2:30

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, the hon. member is correct. The roles and responsibilities framework document is a very exciting thing for our postsecondary institutions not only in the cities but in rural Alberta because these community college institutions will provide stewardship around that area to co-ordinate and create what I believe will be very exciting opportunities for rural Albertans wherever they may be in Alberta.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. McQueen: Thank you. To the same minister. In my wonderful constituency of Drayton Valley-Calmar the Pembina Educational Consortium is doing a fantastic job serving learners in 50 rural communities and nine municipalities by co-ordinating program delivery from five different postsecondary institutions. Under the framework one institution is responsible for a service region. Does this mean that access to programming will be diminished or will continue to grow for our children and our grandchildren?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, exactly the opposite would be the case. Access to programming should be expanded and expanded considerably. Being the steward of a region does not mean that you're going to own everything in that region or that you're going to take everything over in that region. Being the steward of that region means that you're going to help co-ordinate and you're going to be the one-stop shop for that area for all citizens and all institutions. I look forward, actually, to working with the Pembina Educational Consortium to help expand the opportunities for students in that area.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mrs. McQueen: Mr. Speaker, thank you. My final question to the same minister: how, then, do educational consortia fit into Campus Alberta?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, the educational consortia across the province and many of the wonderful groups that are doing great work in helping adult literacy programs and students doing laddering into postsecondaries are part of building vibrant learning communities. As part of the mandate of the department we intend to work

with all of these institutions and the stewards in the region to help them co-ordinate these very valuable programs for Albertans. Over the next several months staff from the ministry are going to be working with all of the educational consortia around the province as well as those stewards in the region to make sure that that collaboration works to the benefit of all partners.

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

Postsecondary Education Funding

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Universities and colleges continue to face tough budget cuts due to inconsistent support from this government. Billion-dollar deferred maintenance costs have accumulated throughout the province, and new seats are desperately needed. Predictable, sustainable funding for operational budgets has not occurred, forcing students to pay higher rents and tuitions. When can postsecondary institutions expect a continuing commitment from this government to adequately address these issues?

Mr. Horner: I'm assuming that question is to me, but I'm not exactly sure which province he's talking about, Mr. Speaker, because it certainly isn't Alberta. Our funding for our postsecondaries has continued to climb. We have capped tuition rates for our students to the CPI. We have made major strides in the affordability framework and continue to do so. I'm not exactly sure where he's getting his information.

Mr. Chase: From students.

In 2005 the government committed to building 60,000 new postsecondary spaces by 2020 and planned on having 15,000 new spaces this fall, but these targets are falling far short. Given that the government isn't living up to their commitment in good times, what assurances do we have that projects such as the urban campus in Calgary will continue to move ahead, providing much-needed spaces for students?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I am confused, I must admit. The hon. member was with us at the announcement of SAIT, Bow Valley, and downtown U of C campus not some two months ago. The urban campus has been done. In fact, when we talk about spaces, I think we're ahead of the targets. Again, I'm sorry, but his facts are just wrong.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I appreciate the Bow Valley expansion. Four hundred leased seats for the U of C isn't an urban campus.

Contrary to what the minister said in the House yesterday, it does not seem that the minister is collaborating with students to address affordability as again today we see students speaking out about soaring rent and tuition prices at institutions throughout the province. When will the minister shift gears and make a real commitment to affordability for postsecondary students?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I said that the hon. member loves to use question period for rhetoric, which he obviously spends a great deal of time thinking up, and he's doing it again today. Yesterday I mentioned that we are working collaboratively with the students across this province. I've met several times with the University of Alberta Students' Union and the alumni about residences. We have several potentials on the go. Also, the minister

of housing announced sometime over the summer a \$50,000 grant to the U of C Students' Union to study interinstitutional residences, campus development. We are working very collaboratively with the students.

The Speaker: Hon. Member for Battle River-Wainwright, did I inadvertently deny you an opportunity for a third question? If I did, you can proceed with the third question now.*

Chronic Wasting Disease

(continued)

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My third question was to the same minister. Given the answers that he gave, there's often-times in constituencies misinformation that goes around or confusion. Given the fact that he's made changes to the program, I'm wondering if he can explain how he's going to communicate that information and the new program to constituents along the border.

Dr. Morton: Well, Mr. Speaker, we've had a number of meetings in that area, as I said earlier, with both the hunters and the guides. We'll also have three mobile trailers in the area where hunters can submit heads, and anybody else that wants to can drop in for more information. To come back to the question of increased hunter harvest, we've done a number of things to enhance the opportunity for both the local residents and all Albertans to hunt there. There's an early primitive weapons season. We have a quota licence that allows for more than one animal. We've changed the draw for antlered mule to a general licence. So there's much hunting opportunity in that area now.

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

Physician Recruitment

Dr. Sherman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of my constituents in Edmonton-Meadowlark end up going to emergency departments because they can't get in to see their family doctor. In fact, nationally 15 per cent of Canadians don't have a family physician. In Alberta that number has been said to be 15 to 20 per cent and in some communities 70 per cent. The minister of health has stated that the main goal here is to improve access to care. My question is to the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. What is your ministry doing to train more physicians in Alberta so Albertans can get that access to care?

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Mr. Horner: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work with our colleagues at Health and Wellness and Employment and Immigration to implement the health workforce action plan, which has been discussed here in this House and that does include growth in health programming. We've talked about the graduation of 2,000 nurses by 2012. We're also working with the postsecondary institutions to increase the annual graduates in the doctor of medicine programs to some 295 by 2011-2012. This year slightly over 250 students will be graduating from the doctor of medicine programs, and we expect that Alberta's medical schools will actually exceed their targets by 2009.

Dr. Sherman: Mr. Speaker, I recently met representatives of international medical graduates that are in Alberta, physicians from abroad. There are 600 IMGs who are unable to practise medicine in this province. My second question is for the same minister. What

opportunities has the ministry of advanced education created for foreign docs already in the province to help care for Albertans?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, we work with Health and Wellness and the postsecondaries on laddering programs, on the access planning framework. Alberta Health and Wellness funds the Alberta international medical graduate program, and that program assesses and trains internationally educated physicians for a provincial licence. We had nearly 50 individuals admitted into that program in 2007, and we will continue to work with them as well as the rural physician action plan, which also is recruiting.

Dr. Sherman: Mr. Speaker, my third and final question is to the same minister. Many of the new medical students don't go into rural areas, so the question is: how is the minister planning to convince medical students and future graduates to meet demands for family medicine as well as rural medicine?

Mr. Horner: Mr. Speaker, I mentioned the rural physician action plan in my previous response. In addition to working with RPAP, we also provide funding in bursaries for eligible medical students that are interested in careers in northern Alberta through the Northern Alberta Development Council. The rural physician action plan has both a rural Alberta north and a rural Alberta south plan. We have also expanded the rural integrated community clerkship program, which is showing significant success in attracting young, recently graduated doctors to the rural lifestyle and to the rural medical clinics. That program is having tremendous success.

The Speaker: That was 108 questions and responses today. In 30 seconds from now we'll continue with the Routine.

2:40

Members' Statements

(continued)

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

Registered Apprenticeship Program

Mr. Bhullar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In our province we're fond of saying that building tomorrow begins today. To realize the dynamic and diverse economy we want for our future, we need to ensure that our province has the people, skills, and expertise we will need down the road.

One of the initiatives that is paying dividends today and for our long-term future is the registered apprenticeship program, or RAP. For the past 17 years RAP has given Alberta students real-world experience and has truly established gateways to skills and opportunity for many Albertans. The success of this program is in large part due to its flexibility. The students, the employer, and the school work together to achieve a balance that enables youth to gain momentum on their career path while completing their high school diplomas.

In recognition of the hard work of many of these students, seven years ago government, industry, and Careers: the Next Generation developed a scholarship program. Over 500 financial awards are available under RAP, with 27 specifically sponsored by companies and organizations that value the program's impact in their industry.

Each recipient receives \$1,000 towards postsecondary or industry training. I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to inform the House that another 385 young Albertans were awarded scholarships this year. Overall, since 2001 over 1,500 students have received RAP scholarships, and they have helped parlay these financial awards into bright and fulfilling careers.

Mr. Speaker, RAP is a made-in-Alberta success story. When this

*See p. 2107, right col., para. 4

program began, in 1991, just five students were enrolled. This year more than 1,700 young Albertans are working towards finishing high school and helping to build our province's next generation economy. It's thanks to their hard work and a lot of willing and enthusiastic partners among government, schools, and industry that Alberta will be well positioned to meet its labour skills needs.

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

Canadian Wheat Board Elections

Mr. Berger: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the important opportunity and responsibility that is currently before Alberta's grain farmers. I'm referring to the Canadian Wheat Board 2008 elections, which close at midnight tomorrow, November 28. This election provides our producers with a very real and excellent opportunity to influence the future of the grain industry in western Canada. It is important for producers to vote for a candidate who represents their point of view and marketing preference.

Alberta producers and this government strongly believe that wheat and barley producers should have the right to freely market their own grain products to whomever they choose. A 2007 federal government plebiscite on barley marketing confirmed what the Alberta government already knew, that a strong and clear majority, 78 per cent, of Alberta's producers are ready for more competitive options.

A recent Informa Economics study, which I will be tabling later today, confirmed that western grain producers would significantly benefit from an open market compared to a single-desk system, gaining between \$450 million to \$628 million a year. Contrary to the Wheat Board's claim, they have almost no ability to exert market power and influence global prices. It is no wonder that Alberta's producers are frustrated by the Wheat Board system and its current leadership, which continues to disregard the needs and wants of the very people it serves. While the hypercompetitive global economy continues to evolve, our industry is losing ground and profits.

Mr. Speaker, the election of pro marketing choice directors has the potential to transition the Canadian Wheat Board into an efficient organization that is prepared and willing to compete in an open market. I strongly encourage Alberta producers not to waver in their resolve or lose this prime opportunity to make their views known and their vote count. Let me assure our producers that this government will continue to fight for their right to success and marketing choice.

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

Twelve Days of Christmas Redux

Mr. Mason: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Due to time constraints I'm afraid I'm going to have drop a few verses from my member's statement, but I hope that members will get the gist.

On the first day of Christmas
the health minister gave to me
a consultant from New Jersey.

On the second day of Christmas
the health minister gave to me
two Tory bagmen
and a consultant from New Jersey.

On the third day of Christmas
the health minister gave to me
three hospitals closing, two Tory bagmen,
and a consultant from New Jersey.

On the fifth day of Christmas
the health minister gave to me
five golden handshakes, four doctors fired,
three hospitals closing, two Tory bagmen,
and a consultant from New Jersey.

On the seventh day of Christmas
the health minister gave to me
seven Swanns a-walking, six empty wards,
five golden handshakes, four doctors fired,
three hospitals closing, two Tory bagmen,
and a consultant from New Jersey.

On the ninth day of Christmas
the health minister gave to me
nine health boards fired, eight used syringes,
seven Swanns a-walking, six empty wards,
five golden handshakes, four doctors fired,
three hospitals closing, two Tory bagmen,
and a consultant from New Jersey.

On the 12th day of Christmas
the health minister gave to me
12 lists a-waiting, 11 memos censored,
10 private clinics, nine health boards fired,
eight used syringes, seven Swanns a-walking,
six empty wards, five golden handshakes,
four doctors fired, three hospitals closing,
two Tory bagmen,
and a consultant from New Jersey.

The Speaker: The hon. member might consider sticking with his day job.

Presenting Petitions

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

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to present to the House a petition, organized by Ms Marla Hennig, with over 1,100 signatures urging the government of Alberta to "officially proclaim October 15th of every year Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day across Alberta." This day is officially recognized across the United States and internationally in the United Kingdom, but it is only officially recognized by a few provinces in Canada: New Brunswick and Ontario. It will also be adopted by Nova Scotia in 2009. Ms Hennig believes that this official recognition will bring a sense of peace and healing to bereaved families. She also believes that we need to raise awareness in our communities. The death of a child should never be left unrecognized.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Chase: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am presenting 35 more signatures on a petition that is well over 2,000 now petitioning the Legislative Assembly to "pass legislation that will prohibit emotional bullying and psychological harassment in the workplace."

Notices of Motions

The Speaker: The Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Zwodzesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise pursuant to Standing Order 34(3.1) to advise the House that on

Monday, December 1, 2008, written questions and motions for returns appearing on the Order Paper shall stand and retain their places.

Introduction of Bills

Bill 51 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2)

Mr. Snelgrove: Mr. Speaker, I request leave to introduce Bill 51, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2). 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 51 read a first time]

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

Bill 211 Documentation of Child Access Exchange Act

Ms DeLong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to introduce Bill 211, Documentation of Child Access Exchange Act.

Following a divorce or separation it's important for the well-being of the children that both parents continue to play active roles in their lives. The goal of this legislation is to help ensure that this access is enforced.

Thank you.

[Motion carried; Bill 211 read a first time]

2:50 Tabling Returns and Reports

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

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm tabling two different documents. First, I have five copies of a program from the Classics & Comedy Silent Auction Evening, that was put on by the Performing Arts of LaZerte Society. I attended the fundraising event on October 24, '08. The school did a wonderful job. I was honoured to have been invited. Many groups came together and supported this organization to make sure it was a great success.

Secondly, I am tabling five copies of the program of the Bannerman school Multicultural Day from October 30, 2008. This event was put on by both the Bannerman elementary school in my riding of Edmonton-Manning and the Nellie McClung school. The schools did a wonderful job celebrating and promoting cultural diversity and helping the students learn more about cultures other than their own.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Chase: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am tabling the prerequisite number of copies of the program for the Workshop West Theatre production of *Three Little Birds* by Kenneth Williams, which will complete its run at the Edmonton Catalyst Theatre this weekend. The play stars Tantoo Cardinal, her 23-year-old son Clifford Cardinal, and Michaela Washburn. I highly recommend taking in this performance by talented Métis artists.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table two tablings. The first is the appropriate number of copies of documents

which pertain to my questions today. One is an open letter from Erik Butters, chairman of the Alberta Beef Producers, and the other is a page from the Saskatchewan *Hansard* from November 4, 2008, in which the Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture talks about problems with the Alberta livestock and meat strategy.

The second tabling that I'd like to put forward today is the appropriate number of copies of both letters and informal petitions sent to me by Dr. David Miller in Beaverlodge calling on the minister of health to agree to proceed with funding for the new hospital in Beaverlodge. There are 3,500 copies.

Thank you.

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 share with us the projected government House business for the week commencing December 1.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As members will note after careful reading of the Order Paper, there's a government motion to be dealt with today. There are three bills remaining at second or third reading: Bill 52, the Health Information Amendment Act, 2008; Bill 53, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2); and Bill 40, Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Amendment Act, 2008. Given the potential progress this afternoon, we would expect that Monday, December 1, under government business at 8:30 p.m. we would proceed on second reading of the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2), unless, of course, unanimous consent is received to proceed with that second reading this afternoon, and Committee of the Whole on Bill 53, the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act.

On Tuesday, December 2, in the afternoon under Government Bills and Orders we would anticipate proceeding with Committee of the Whole on Bill 51, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2), and third reading of the Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act. There is the potential that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor would attend on the House in the afternoon, time permitting, to give royal assent to the number of bills that have been passed since his last attendance on the House.

We would have on Wednesday, December 3, in the afternoon under Government Bills and Orders for third reading Bill 51, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2). Mr. Speaker, if that progress is attained, we would anticipate an adjournment motion that afternoon pursuant to the appropriate standing order as there would be no further business remaining on the Order Paper.

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Official Opposition on a point of order.

Point of Order Factual Accuracy

Dr. Taft: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will cite a point of order in my exchange with the Minister of Health and Wellness. I'll refer to sections 23(h), (i), and (j). I don't think we need to make this a big deal. We have exuberant exchanges in this Assembly a lot. My understanding – and you will have the Blues in front of you in the appropriate time – is that it sounded to me like I was charged with

never having held a real job in my life or words to that effect. I want to inform the minister that that's actually not true.

I don't need to read my entire resumé into the record, Mr. Speaker. I'd be satisfied if the minister were to simply retract or apologize, and that would be in the spirit of the Assembly. I can assure the minister that I have worked in the private sector, in the nonprofit sector, and in the public sector. Before I ran for office, I ran my own research and communications business. I had clients from B.C. to Quebec and all over in between. I've written extensively. I've written three national bestselling books. I've worked with private consulting firms, launched their offices. I've been the head of significant nongovernmental agencies and so on. So let's just settle this in a gentlemanly fashion. I invite the minister to do that.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health and Wellness, do you wish to participate?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, sometimes in the heat of question period, as the member says, your mind thinks differently than what your mouth says. But before I get there, I want to say that especially on Thursday afternoons this happens quite a bit. Not only does that happen, but we get sort of childish things that come from other members of the House, that we just happened to have exhibited here this afternoon, and I won't go into detail. I think everybody knows what we're talking about.

You know, really, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a bit of a point of thin skin, not a point of order. This particular member has no qualms about besmirching the character of some people out there in this city who can't stand here and defend themselves.

Mr. Speaker, the comments that I made, something to the effect of "never held a real job in his life, [has] always been on the public payroll," I will withdraw because I do not want to denigrate all of the good folks who work for the government of Alberta, for the University of Alberta. I will withdraw those comments because I do not want it to be interpreted that way.

What I did want to say, Mr. Speaker, however, is that to the best of my knowledge this member had never been on a private-sector board. Obviously, the individual that he's referring to has been on private-sector boards, knows when there is a potential conflict of interest, and knows when to excuse himself from decision-making.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw those comments.

The Speaker: Okay?

Dr. Taft: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's pretty obvious. I gave the minister an opportunity for a reasonable retraction, and it was a rather unsatisfactory apology. That passes much more on his character than on anyone else's, so I'll leave it at that.

The Speaker: I would like to remind all members that comments Thursday or any other day of the week must be responsible comments. I would like to refer all members to page 525 of *Marleau and Montpetit*, perhaps a little weekend reading, and to one quotation in particular: "The proceedings of the House are based on a long-standing tradition of respect for the integrity of all Members."

Orders of the Day Government Motions

The Speaker: The hon. Government House Leader.

Amendments to Standing Orders

23. Mr. Renner moved:

A Be it resolved that the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta effective May 21, 2008, be amended as follows:

1 Standing orders 3 and 3.1 are struck out, and the following is substituted:

Sitting times and sessional calendar

3(1) Unless otherwise ordered, the sitting hours of the Assembly shall be as follows:

Monday: 1:30 – 6 p.m.

Tuesday: 1:30 – 6 p.m.

Wednesday: 1:30 – 6 p.m.

Thursday: 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

(2) If at the time of meeting there is no quorum, the Speaker may take the chair and adjourn.

(3) The Assembly shall not meet on

(a) New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Alberta Heritage Day, Labour Day, Remembrance Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, Alberta Family Day,

(b) December 26, or when that date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or Monday, then either December 27 or 28, as the case may be.

(4) Unless otherwise ordered, the Assembly shall meet each year

(a) for the Spring Sitting commencing on the second Tuesday in February and concluding no later than the first Thursday in June; and

(b) for the Fall Sitting commencing on the last Monday of October and concluding no later than the first Thursday in December.

(5) On or before January 15 each year, and following consultation with the Opposition House Leaders, the Government House Leader shall file with the Clerk a calendar that indicates the days on which the Assembly shall sit and which weeks will be constituency weeks when the Assembly will stand adjourned.

(6) There shall be one constituency week for every 3 sitting weeks unless varied by the calendar provided for under suborder (5).

(7) As soon as possible after January 15 each year, the Clerk shall publish the calendar provided for under suborder (5).

(8) Nothing in this Standing Order precludes the Government from advising the Speaker that the public interest requires the Assembly to meet on a certain date, and the Speaker shall give notice that the Assembly shall meet at that time to transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that time.

(9) The Spring or Fall Sitting of the Assembly may be shortened or extended by passage of a motion which shall be decided without debate or amendment.

2 Standing Order 4 is struck out, and the following is substituted:

Night sittings and adjournment

4(1) Upon passage of a Government motion, which may be made upon one day's notice and is not subject to debate, the Assembly may meet on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evening commencing at 7:30 p.m.

(2) When there is no evening sitting, at 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday or at 4:30 p.m. on

- Thursday, the Speaker adjourns the Assembly until the next sitting day.
- (3) If the Assembly is in Committee of the Whole 5 minutes before the adjournment time in suborder (2), the Chair shall interrupt the proceedings and call on the Committee to rise and report without question put.
- (4) When there is to be an evening sitting and the Assembly is in Committee of the Whole at 6 p.m., the Chair leaves the chair until 7:30 p.m.
- 3 Standing Order 7 is amended by adding the following after suborder (6):
- (7) At 3 p.m. the items in the ordinary daily routine will be deemed to be concluded and the Speaker shall notify the Assembly.
- 4 Standing Order 8 is struck out, and the following is substituted:
- Order of business
- 8(1) On Monday afternoon, after the daily routine, the order of business for consideration of the Assembly shall be as follows:
- Written Questions
 - Motions for Returns
 - Public Bills and Orders other than Government Bills and Orders
 - at 5 p.m.: Motions other than Government Motions.
- (2) On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, the order of business for consideration of the Assembly shall be as follows:
- Government Motions
 - Government Bills and Orders
 - Private Bills.
- (3) A motion other than a Government motion, once called, shall be considered until the motion has been given 55 minutes of debate and 5 minutes for the mover of the motion to close debate, unless the motion is voted on sooner, at which time all questions that must be decided in order to conclude debate on the motion shall be decided immediately.
- (4) Before the mover closes debate on a motion under suborder (3), a Member may move a motion, not subject to debate or amendment, that provides for the motion under consideration to be moved to the bottom of that item of business on the Order Paper.
- (5) Only one motion other than a Government motion shall be considered on Monday afternoon.
- (6) If the Assembly is in Committee of the Whole on Monday afternoon at 4:55 p.m., the Chair shall interrupt and the Committee shall immediately rise and report without question put.
- (7) (a) A public Bill other than a Government Bill retains its place on the Order Paper until the Bill has been given
- (i) 115 minutes of debate on the motion for second reading and 5 minutes for the mover of the Bill to close debate,
 - (ii) 120 minutes of debate in Committee of the Whole, and
 - (iii) 55 minutes of debate on the motion for third reading and 5 minutes for the mover of the Bill to close debate, unless the relevant motion is voted on sooner.
- (b) Once the time limits specified in this suborder are reached, all questions that must be decided in order to conclude debate on the motion shall be decided immediately.
- (c) A public Bill other than a Government Bill shall be called in Committee of the Whole within 8 sitting days of the day the Bill receives second reading unless the Bill has been referred to a Policy Field Committee, in which case the Bill shall be called within 8 sitting days of the day on which the Policy Field Committee reports.
- (d) A public Bill other than a Government Bill shall be moved for third reading by the Member who introduced the Bill, such motion to be made no more than 4 sitting days after the Bill is reported by Committee of the Whole.
- (8) Before the mover of a motion for second or third reading of a public Bill other than a Government Bill closes debate, or the time limit is reached for consideration at Committee of the Whole under suborder (7)(a)(ii), a Member may move a motion, not subject to debate or amendment, that the votes necessary to conclude consideration at that stage be postponed for 10 sitting days or the first opportunity after that for the consideration of the Bill, unless there are other Bills awaiting consideration at that stage in which case the Bill will be called after the Bills at that stage have been considered.
- 5 Standing Order 25 is amended by adding the following after suborder (2):
- (3) When the mover of a substantive motion or Bill is someone other than the sponsor, a later speech by either Member will close debate.
- 6 Standing Order 37 is amended by striking out suborder (2) and substituting the following:
- (2) In addition to the copies required under suborder (1),
- (a) 2 copies must be tabled of responses to written questions and returns ordered by the Assembly for distribution to the Member who asked the question or moved the motion for return and the Leader of the Official Opposition, and
 - (b) a sufficient number of additional copies must also be tabled for distribution to the leader of any other party or group in opposition.
- 7 Standing Order 41 is amended by striking out suborder (2) and substituting the following:
- (2) The draw referred to in suborder (1) shall be held on a date set by the Speaker.
- 8 Standing Order 52(1) is amended by striking out "At the commencement of each session" and substituting "At the commencement of the first session of each Legislature".
- 9 Standing Order 52.01 is amended in suborder (1) by adding "At the commencement of the first session of each Legislature," before "Five Policy Field Committees".
- 10 Standing Order 52.03 is struck out, and the following is substituted:
- 52.03 A Policy Field Committee may on its own initiative, or at the request of a Minister, review any regulation, amendment to a regulation or prospective regulation within its mandate.
- 11 Standing Order 52.08 is amended by adding the following after suborder (2):

- (3) A Policy Field Committee may report to a Minister or responsible public official on issues arising from a public meeting.
- 12 Standing Order 52.09(1) is amended by adding “or a report provided for under Standing Order 52.08(3)” after “report on a Bill”.
- 13 Standing Orders 59.01, 59.02 and 59.03 are struck out, and the following is substituted:
 Consideration of main estimates
 59.01(1) Following the Budget Address, the main estimates of departments shall stand referred to the Policy Field Committees according to their respective mandates, unless otherwise ordered.
 (2) The schedule for consideration of main estimates shall be prepared by the Government House Leader in consultation with the Official Opposition House Leader, the third party House Leader and the chairs of the Policy Field Committees, and such schedule, unless otherwise agreed, shall be subject to the following requirements:
 (a) Policy Field Committees shall meet to consider main estimates on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.,
 (b) no more than 2 Policy Field Committees shall be scheduled to meet at the same time,
 (c) each department’s estimates shall receive a minimum of 3 hours’ consideration,
 (d) the estimates of Executive Council may be considered by one of the Policy Field Committees or may be considered by Committee of Supply for a minimum of 2 hours.
 (3) The Government House Leader shall table in the Assembly the schedule for consideration of main estimates at any time following the date of the Budget Address being made public and no later than one sitting day following the Budget Address.
 (4) A Policy Field Committee shall consider estimates in the following manner:
 (a) the Minister, or the member of the Executive Council acting on the Minister’s behalf, may make opening comments not to exceed 10 minutes,
 (b) for the hour that follows, members of the Official Opposition and the Minister, or the member of the Executive Council acting on the Minister’s behalf, may speak,
 (c) for the next 20 minutes, the members of the third party, if any, and the Minister or the member of the Executive Council acting on the Minister’s behalf, may speak, and
 (d) any Member may speak thereafter.
 (5) When the time allotted for a department’s estimates has not expired, but there are no Members who wish to speak, that department’s estimates shall be deemed to have been considered for the time allotted in the schedule.
 (6) When an amendment to a department’s estimates is moved in a Policy Field Committee, the vote on the amendment stands deferred until the date scheduled for the vote on the main estimates.
 (7) When a Policy Field Committee has completed its consideration of the main estimates of the departments within the Committee’s mandate, the Chair shall so report to the Committee of Supply on the date scheduled for the vote on the main estimates without question put.

Application of Standing Orders during main, supplementary and interim estimates

59.02(1) The Standing Orders of the Assembly shall be observed in the consideration of estimates except as follows:

- (a) a Member may speak more than once;
 - (b) no Member may speak for more than 10 minutes at one time.
- (2) Notwithstanding suborder (1)(b), and provided that the Chair has been notified, a Minister and a private Member may combine their respective speaking times for a total of 20 minutes, with both taking and yielding the floor over the combined period.
- (3) During consideration of estimates,
 (a) officials of the Government may be seated at the Committee or in the Assembly to advise the Minister whose estimates are under consideration, and
 (b) staff of the opposition may also be seated to assist Members who are participating in estimates consideration.

Voting – main estimates

59.03(1) On the date scheduled at the end of consideration of main estimates there shall be one vote in Committee of Supply on main estimates unless

- (a) additional votes are required on amendments pursuant to Standing Order 59.01(6) prior to calling the vote on the main estimates;
 - (b) on at least one day’s notice a Member has provided written notification to the Chair and the Clerk of his or her desire that the estimates of a particular department be voted upon separately, in which case that department’s estimates shall be voted separately and the final vote for the main estimates shall consist of the estimates of any departments not yet voted upon.
- (2) The votes under suborder (1) shall be taken without debate or amendment except as provided in Standing Order 59.01(6).
- (3) The vote on the main estimates may be scheduled with a minimum of one sitting day’s notice to occur any time after the Policy Field Committees have completed consideration of the main estimates.
- (4) At 5 p.m. on the date scheduled for the vote on the main estimates, if the vote has not been taken earlier, the Chair shall interrupt the proceedings and, if required, Committee of Supply shall be called and the Policy Field Committee Chairs shall report without question put and then voting on the main estimates shall proceed.
- (5) On the date for the vote on the main estimates and prior to the vote on the main estimates, the Chair shall put the question to approve the estimates of the Legislative Assembly, as approved by the Special Standing Committee on Members’ Services, and the estimates of the officers of the Legislature, which shall be decided without debate or amendment.
- (6) Once the Committee of Supply is called on the date scheduled for the vote on the main estimates, it shall, if required, continue beyond the normal adjournment hour until all matters have been voted upon, at which time the Committee shall immediately rise and report.
- 14 Standing Order 61 is struck out, and the following is substituted:

Interim and supplementary estimates

- 61(1) Interim and supplementary estimates shall be considered for a minimum of
- (a) one afternoon provided that Orders of the Day are called by 3 p.m. and Committee of Supply is the first item of business, or
 - (b) 3 hours if the estimates are scheduled for an evening sitting.
- (2) A member of the Executive Council may, with at least one day's notice, make a motion to determine when Committee of Supply may be called to consider interim or supplementary estimates and the question shall be decided without debate or amendment.
- 15 Standing Order 62 is struck out.
- 16 Standing Order 64 is amended by striking out suborder (1) and substituting the following:
- 64(1) In this Standing Order,
- (a) "Appropriation Bill" means
 - (i) a Bill introduced to appropriate sums of money contained in the estimates approved by the Committee of Supply;
 - (ii) a Bill for a Special Act introduced pursuant to the *Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act*;
 - (iii) a Bill to provide for interim supply;
 - (b) "normal adjournment hour" means 6 p.m. on Tuesday or Wednesday and 4:30 p.m. on Thursday unless an evening sitting is to be held, in which case it means 10:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.
- 17 Standing Order 65(1) is amended by striking out "and" at the end of clause (a), adding "and" at the end of clause (b), and adding the following after clause (b):
- (c) Policy Field Committees may only go in camera with the unanimous consent of the members present.
- 18 Standing Order 68(2) is amended by striking out "dissenting or".
- 19 Standing Order 72 is amended by striking out suborder (2) and substituting the following:
- (2) The draw referred to in suborder (1) shall be held on a date set by the Speaker.
- 20 Standing Order 74.1(1) is amended by striking out "Immediately after a Bill has been read a first time" and substituting "At any time after a Bill has been read a first time and before it has been read a second time".
- 21 Standing Order 78.1(1) is amended by striking out "Immediately after a Bill has been read a second time" and substituting "At any time after a Bill has been read a second time and before it proceeds to Committee of the Whole".
- 22 Schedule A is amended by adding the following after section 25:
- 26 The Clerk shall destroy the ballots following the announcement of the election results.
- B And be it further resolved that the standing orders effective May 21, 2008, as amended in part A of this motion shall no longer be considered temporary and shall come into force on the day following the conclusion of the 2008 fall sitting.
- C And be it further resolved that the appointments to the standing committees of the Assembly outlined in Government Motion 2 and approved by the Assembly on April

15, 2008, as amended by government motions 12 and 16, agreed to on April 30, 2008, and May 29, 2008, respectively, be deemed to stand for the balance of the 27th Legislature.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I won't read the full motion as it's with respect to the amendment of the standing orders. There are three parts to it. The first part members of the House will be familiar with as it has been before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing a number of times, and their report was tabled in the House earlier.

3:00

The amendments to the standing orders provide for a number of very important improvements to our processes and, indeed, to the quality of life of members. I'm not going to deal with all of the intricacies of it but, first and foremost, the question of being able to plan our lives in terms of when we are here in session and when we are able, then, to be in our constituencies and with our families. Having tried over the last two years several variations on the theme, I think it's fair to say that we have now struck, hopefully, a set of rules and time frames which will really accommodate both the work of the session, the important work that we do here, balanced with the need for us to be back in our constituencies and, of course, to have work-life balance and see our families from time to time.

The rules, then, provide that the House will be called on the second Tuesday of each February, to complete on or before the first Thursday in June, and to again be called for a fall sitting each year on the last Monday of October, to be completed on or before the first Thursday in December. So we have some parameters that are not absolute. The House can be called, of course, at any time that it needs to be called. It can stay later on motion to extend it. It can indeed end earlier if business is done, as we might anticipate this fall. The parameters are there so that we can then plan our work life and our constituency life.

We currently sit from 1:30 to 5:30 and then in the evening from 7:30 on. These standing orders would provide for us to sit from 1:30 to 6 p.m. and then not sit in the evenings unless specially called to do so, but I'll comment later relative to consideration of estimates. We did try starting at 1 o'clock last year and going to 6 o'clock, which actually provided a very good block of time to do the work of the House, but members were concerned about starting at 1 o'clock because there are important things that we do, people that we meet with over lunch at various places both within the building and within the city, and that was seen to be a little bit difficult. Starting at 1:30 and going till 6 should give us enough time, I hope, given the sitting days that we have, to deal with what has become every year a government agenda of 50-plus bills.

The other factor in this is an early Thursday, if you will. Schools have been doing this for years to allow for other events. Now the Legislature can have an early Thursday, which is recognizing the fact that catching a plane home if you're going to Lethbridge or Medicine Hat or, indeed, driving home if you're going those distances can be accommodated to get you home early enough on the Thursday so that you can have a full and productive Friday in the constituency. If you live closer than that, you can actually get home in time to do a constituency event or see your family on a Thursday evening. Those time frames are, in my view, a very good compromise in terms of how we use our day. It leaves our mornings free for caucus meetings, for other meetings that are necessary. There was some suggestion that we should meet in the mornings as well, but I think that after discussion it was determined that this set of hours and days was the appropriate way to go. I commend that to the House.

I mentioned no night sittings. We remain open to the possibility of night sittings with proper notice to members if the agenda is such that we need to do so. Again, I'll get back to that when we talk about Committee of Supply and estimates.

One of the things that is in this set of standing orders amendments would be that the committees would be appointed once, at the beginning of the Legislature, and stand for the full Legislature rather than being appointed at the beginning of each session. That does not mean, of course, that there can't be changes. The rules as we currently have them allow for substitutions on a temporary basis, and of course by motion in the House we can substitute on a permanent basis. The flexibility is still there, but it allows for the continuity of a committee from one session to the other given that our policy field committees, in particular, may well have work that is ongoing. We don't necessarily want those committees to fail as a result of the session proroguing.

The other piece that's substantive in these standing orders is with respect to the consideration of the main estimates, and I suspect that's where we'll hear members in debate this afternoon. What is being proposed here is a process which is actually used in many jurisdictions but not one that's been used in this jurisdiction before. We've had in my time in the Legislature a number of different mechanisms to deal with estimates. Estimates are, obviously, one of the most important roles of the House, the House holding the government to account for its spending. Therefore, there needs to be an opportunity to peruse the estimates in an appropriate manner, and that requires time.

In the past we've had A, B, C, and D committees – in other words, four committees – of the House that would meet outside the House two at a time to review estimates. At one point there was even a designated subcommittee of supply that met on a Friday morning to provide more time. That process had its flaws, so we moved to other processes, one of which was where every department was examined for one day, a day being an afternoon or an evening. We've had a number of different processes.

What we have proposed here and the committee has recommended is that we utilize the policy field committees of the House that we have, as I say, in the way that many other jurisdictions do; that is, the estimates for each department will be referred to the appropriate policy field committee, the policy field committee that's charged with dealing with that department, and that committee will sit on a scheduled basis for three hours to review that department's estimates. Now, when I say "will sit for three hours," the rules are flexible enough so that when the schedule is set by the House leader in consultation with the leaders of the opposition and the third party, we can schedule less time for a department in order to allow more time for another department if everybody agrees. But it's scheduled, and everybody knows when it's going to happen and where it's going to happen. There's a limitation that suggests that only two policy field committees can sit at a time to make it possible for members to attend even though they might not be a member of the committee.

Now, it's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that our rules with respect to policy field committees allow for any member of the House to attend and participate in a policy field committee. There's no restriction here in terms of the participation of members. The rules do provide that only members can vote, but under the provisions that we're setting forward for examination of the estimates, there would not be any votes in committees. The votes on the estimates would come back into the House and be done in the manner in which we've done them in the past.

It wasn't this year, I don't think, but the previous year we set a scheduled vote in the House on the estimates. All the estimates were

voted on during that scheduled time for voting, and once the vote commenced, it carried on until it was completed. If any member wanted to vote on any line of the estimates separately or any department separately, they would give one day's notice to the Clerk, and that vote could be pulled out.

These rules preserve that concept, so voting would happen in the House at one time, all in the same afternoon, presumably, and would be dealt with in that manner. It's a mechanism which, as I say, has been used with some efficacy in other areas. It will allow for approximately 75 hours of examination of the estimates, which by my reckoning is about the most time that's been allowed in this House. It's a substantial improvement on the time frames and I think will afford a very good opportunity for the policy field committees to get into some depth on estimates.

I won't go through the remaining amendments. Some of them are simply administrative-type things that we found in the process of examining them. Others are more substantive, but as I say, members have had the opportunity to review them and see them, so I won't deal with each section.

3:10

Of the two other pieces that are important for the House to know, one I mentioned, that committees would be appointed at the beginning of a Legislature to last for the full Legislature. So there is a clause C in this motion which provides for a transitional clause, which means that the committees that are currently appointed would be considered to be appointed in accordance with the standing orders as adopted, if they are, which would mean that those committees continue to exist as they were appointed at the beginning of this Legislature.

The other one is clause B: the standing orders effective May 21, 2008, as amended in part A of the motion, will be permanent standing orders. In other words, in our current standing orders some of the provisions that we had were temporary and noted as such to expire on the expiry of this session, and this motion will make those permanent, as amended by part A.

I would commend these orders to the House. I'm under no illusions that they are the permanent standing orders, as standing orders do get amended from time to time, but I think the process that has been used, getting it back into the Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing, is a good process in that more members of the House can be involved in the discussion of the standing orders rather than it just simply being the purview of the House leaders. I think that's a very positive step forward, and I hope that in the future, whether I am House leader or whether others have the opportunity to engage in this particular role in the House, we will be able to continue with that kind of discussion with a committee of members to discuss and decide upon and recommend to the House the rules which affect the way we do business in this House.

The Speaker: This is a debatable motion. The hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre.

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There are two parts to my response to this government motion. I'd like to talk a bit about the process, which in fact is where my hon. colleague the Government House Leader finished his remarks. I was very unhappy with this process. In the past as a House leader I negotiated two-plus sets of standing orders changes. I was actually involved in negotiation. All sides presented sort of their wish list and their absolute no-go list, if you want to put it that way, and we looked at those lists and saw, where people were interested, where there could be some changes and some compromises made. We came back with a second list and continued to work from there.

It gave me the opportunity to work with my caucus and to say: okay, well, we don't like this particular article, but we really, really don't like this other article. In order to ensure that we were not subjected to the second one, we would compromise on the first one. It gave us some power to be able to actually have input to the rules that we were going to be governed by.

A number of you have heard me talk about how this is a consent-driven process. In effect, for these rules to be useful, we agree that we will all abide by them. The problem for me is watching this process considerably change our ability to have, really, any input on what these rules are going to be. What I faced this time was a list again provided by the government, as I would expect, but then I was faced with going in front of a committee, and there wasn't really any negotiation opportunity there. I could present my list saying, "This is problematic, and we don't like these items for the following reasons," and the committee went, "That's nice," patted me on the head, and voted in favour of the government propositions. We went through that process a couple of times, but nothing that I was particularly looking for or was very much against on behalf of my colleagues got any changes whatsoever.

Now, I understand, Mr. Speaker, that I'm standing in a House that has a 72-seat majority and that government majority is reflected on every committee that we sit. So the government can win everything and does win everything. But I object to the process that is being used. I understand that the Government House Leader, you know, is excited to have other people understand how we arrived at these rules that we all have to abide by, but for the members who are not members of the government caucus, this is basically a dictate to us. We did not have the opportunity to be able to consent or to be able to really negotiate on the rules that were going to be imposed upon us, and that's what we're faced with now.

I can't pretend that this is a superior system in any way, shape, or form, and frankly I don't see it inside of my definition of democracy either. There are specific roles that are recognized in a Westminster system for government members, for Official Opposition members, and for third and other party members in their responsibilities to the House and to their constituents and to the entirety of the citizenry that we represent in the province. We are very constrained in our ability to fulfill all of those roles based on the changes that will be imposed upon us at this point with the passage of this government motion.

Let me specifically address some of the changes that are being proposed here. The Government House Leader referred to changes that would enhance quality of life, and I don't think we have been as successful in this particular process as we have been in past ones. Two things have reappeared which we were supportive of in the first place. One is no night sittings and the second is constituency weeks.

But when you actually examine what's happening here, for a third of the weeks that we will be scheduled to be in session, in fact there are night sittings because now the estimates are scheduled to be at night. My understanding is that the new policy field committees the government has brought forward, that we've now been operating under for a year, would also be meeting at night. When you're looking at small caucuses like the Official Opposition and the third party opposition have, we're still looking at working every morning in our various caucuses and those duties every afternoon in the House and every evening in either committees or estimates. It didn't change that much for us, frankly, but I'm sure that the government members will gain from this.

Particularly, I'll note that when we go to the budget estimates, we're looking at a 30-minute break between when the House rises and when the budget estimate debates commence. So it's 30 minutes to leave the Chamber, gather up your materials, get back to

your office, file everything again – because we don't have enough money in our budgets for administrative support for that kind of thing, so we each refile our own – gather up the material that you need, and get on to another committee, and we haven't had anything to sustain us for the rest of the evening, if I may put it that way.

The second part of that is the constituency weeks. I think we would all agree that that was a very good idea and that it has worked very well for all of us. I haven't heard anyone say that it hasn't worked for them. It has allowed us to get back into our constituencies and not leave them for such a long period of time without the kind of care and attention that we like to bring to our constituents. I think the challenge in that is going to be to work out what that calendar is, to be able to take into consideration the major school and family breaks that happen during that period of time and to fit them as closely as we can into three weeks' House duty, one week constituency duty. I'm sure we'll see how that works out.

Now, I've talked about the night sittings and the adjournment. One of the other protections that I tried very hard to get put back in, and wasn't successful at, was that the private members' business is protected. There has been quite a bit of hue and cry, or there had been in the past, that there was a wish for more private members' time. We had a clause in previously that allowed that if we did not complete private members' business in a required amount of time on Mondays, the completion of that required amount of time would happen on Thursdays as the first order of business. That way private members' time is protected. I think that was a good idea. The one time it happened, I think everybody was happy to see that. That has not been reinstated, so we don't have protection. For example, on a Monday if there was a successful standing order – 32, I think it is now, or 30 – suspending the regular business for an emergency debate, that would be it for private members' business that week, completely and totally.

3:20

Now, that may well affect the ability to be successful in getting the approval of the Assembly should we pass the tests that are set out by the Speaker for emergency debates. Knowing that there would be no private members' business for that entire week may well taint a system that, otherwise, should be based on the merits of the argument for an emergency debate.

A couple of other points that I wanted to raise. I don't know why this continues to be in here, but I'll continue to raise concerns about it. I understand that there are a number of times – and we've certainly seen it quite a bit in this House – where the government does not wish either one of its bills or one of its private member's bills to proceed. There are a number of processes which are available for the removal of that bill from the Order Paper, using things like a hoist, that are available for public debate, yet for some reason the government continues to insist that there's a clause left in here which I call the sneaky kill. Essentially, without there ever being any public debate on it, a bill would be moved to a place where it never comes up, so it's a way of killing a bill without being seen to kill a bill. I still maintain that if you're going to kill it, make it public. Get it out there. Build that scaffolding. Let's see everybody talk about it. Tell us why you're going to kill this bill. To poison it behind the scenes and let it die quietly, I don't approve of that. So that's under 8(8).

Just moving on, there was a clarification around the movers of bills because the government now has such a large backbench to deal with that it has become common practice for a minister to in fact be in charge of a bill but to assign it to be moved through the Legislature by one of their backbenchers. The situation we got into was that both of them wanted to speak at the beginning of the bill, and if a

mover has spoken in place of a minister or as the sponsor of a bill, then which one of them closes the debate? A clarification for that is included in this.

The requirement that the draw for private members' motions and bills be a specific date didn't particularly work when we had elections and other reasons why we would need to move that date around, so that has now been removed and handed to the Speaker to set the date as he sees would fulfill the requirements. There is no time limit with that, but I hope – and I'll put it on the record – that there would be at least four weeks' warning to notify us when that draw would be, to be able to organize ourselves for that.

The policy fields are entrenched with these standing orders. I am not convinced that these are the great bastions of all-party democracy that others like to talk about because, frankly, that was just not my experience in this. Once again, I just saw a lot of work put in so that we could go to committees and have the Tory majority pat us on the head and vote the other way. All of our work made absolutely no difference. You know, we have some good people over here. You're not going to convince me in any way that some of the suggestions that came forward weren't good and valid ones. It was an awful lot of work for absolutely no result. I'm not convinced that this is a particularly useful endeavour on our behalf at all.

The thing that most offended me that was presented in these changes to the standing orders is the minimizing of the budget examination process. A number of changes have been made here. One, the debate itself has been moved out of this Chamber, which to me signals a major downgrade in the government's valuing and positioning of those budget debates. It was easy for the public to attend and to watch us in debate. Yes, indeed, not many people would come, but I don't think that's a good reason to put it in a place now that makes it very difficult for the public to witness those debates, not only difficult but also uncomfortable. We're now doing this in two committee rooms in a different building on the legislative site, and they are not particularly well equipped to have media and members of the public plus various staff members from departments representing and assisting both the ministers and the opposition parties.

The second truly offensive part of this new scheme is to have two committees running at the same time. I have referred jokingly about this, but actually I'm dead serious: I sometimes think this is a scheme on behalf of the government to literally kill the opposition members. We're now in a position of trying to fulfill both of the roles that are before us – that is, to represent our constituents and to fulfill the portfolio critic roles that are assigned to us – and trying to run back and forth between two committees.

The way it's set up is to protect some of our ability to question the government. Just given the numbers of opposition versus the numbers of government members in the committees, there's a time period that's set aside at the beginning for the Official Opposition and for the third party. If I as a member who wishes to raise a question about a constituent am performing a portfolio function in another committee room, when I arrive, how do I get put onto the list without being so far back on it that I'm never going to get up? I expect that's going to happen repeatedly.

I stay in touch with my constituents. I do a lot of work in seeking their opinions around budget debates, and I do try to bring their issues forward. Now, if I'm in one room performing my functions as Finance critic or Culture and Community Spirit critic or any one of us is performing those functions, trying to skip across and down the hall to another room, signal to the chairperson: where am I going to get put? At the back of the bus because I've just arrived at that committee and there are a number of others that have been sitting there. So my ability to represent both my constituents and perform

my portfolio duties is compromised, and I really resent that, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my constituents I really resent it. You know, I won my riding fair and square, I do a good job for them, and I don't see why I should be penalized or my constituents should be penalized because I'm not a member of the government. That is what's happening here.

This schedule is designed to make it much more difficult for members of the opposition to function, and I do not find that a worthy objective of the government. I think it's a further indication of the government's desire to minimize the legislative sittings entirely, particularly in the budget process. I see the changes in how we do the main estimates as an attempt to minimize that budget process and to particularly imperil the members who are elected as opposition.

3:30

We have been able to keep some things in that worked for both sides, including having officials of the government seated with the minister whose estimates are under consideration and also allowing staff of the opposition to be seated to assist those members as well. I think a number of members in the Official Opposition found that very helpful.

I think it's very important that we not be placed in the position where we have to vote against an entire budget because we disapprove of some of the things that are happening in certain budget departments, so I'm pleased to see that the exclusionary voting has been maintained; that is, with the appropriate amount of notice departments can be pulled out of the main estimates vote and voted on separately. I believe that that is appropriate.

The interim and supplementary estimates process continues to be very flawed, in my opinion. We've just witnessed that. We tried to debate 14 ministries, a billion dollars, in approximately nine minutes each. Of course, it simply wasn't possible. Yesterday six ministries did not get any examination and question and answer between members of the opposition and the government. I think that's a very sad statement and, again, another indication of this government's unwillingness to participate fully in an accountability process around budget, interim supply, and supplementary supply debates.

I'm not willing to support the standing order changes that have been brought before us. As I said before, I think the process and the standing order changes themselves are both flawed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Additional speakers?

Mr. Snelgrove: I just would like to put on the record that while the hon. member would say that they did not have the opportunity to debate all the government bills, *Hansard* will clearly show, Mr. Speaker, exactly the time that was spent on issues that had no relation whatsoever to the matter at hand, the supplementary estimates. The hon. member knows it, and the members of the third party all wanted to talk about issues of policy, future investments, that had little or no connection to what was the subject matter. If they were unable to address questions to the departments that were in supplementary supply, that is purely and simply their fault.

The Speaker: The hon. Member for Edmonton-Strathcona. You've got the floor. Go.

Ms Notley: Thank you. I'm pleased to be able to speak on this motion, and not surprisingly I'm also speaking against the motion. I was a little taken aback by the previous statements that were just made there. It's really quite ironic when the process is designed in

such a way as to limit the resources and the opportunities for opposition members to then have the product of those limited resources and opportunities thrown back at them as though somehow there's only one side to that process. It's really somewhat rich, shall I say.

Nonetheless, it's an interesting process for me to come to speak on these proposed changes. I, of course, only was elected in March of this year. This represents a fairly comprehensive, long-term proposed set of changes to the standing orders. I think I've said it before, but I can say it again, that it's been a challenge for me to be able to fully understand the implications of many of the changes, having not been around long enough to either know sort of the process or the evolution of some of these rules and the rationale behind them as well as what they look like when they're actually working in practice.

My understanding is that this represents a series of changes to the temporary standing orders which actually did result from, again, what I understand to have been a fair amount of negotiation between all three parties, and basically this represents a new version of those temporary standing orders, having primarily been amended to address government concerns with the negotiated set of rules that had been in place before and having arisen almost entirely from a majority vote and not from negotiation, again, between the party House leaders. With that in mind, then, it's not surprising that the majority of the substance of these proposed changes are not ones which will enhance or support the role of the opposition as we attempt to do our job within this Assembly.

I want to start with sort of the most big-picture statement here about the role of the opposition within this Assembly. A lot of times when we've had these discussions, we were repeatedly told that, really, we don't function in a parliamentary democracy, that we function in a representative democracy, and there is no difference between a member who has a role in opposition and a member who is potentially a government backbencher who is there to represent their constituents. While in no way, shape, and form do I want to undermine the very important role of a government backbencher in representing the interests of their constituents, nor do I want to undermine the very, very important role of opposition members in coming to the Legislature to represent the interest of their constituents.

My understanding of the history of parliamentary democracy and parliamentary process is that there has been an additional set of considerations for the role of opposition, the role of critic, that our system is premised somewhat on that. Yet this appears to be a move away from that, where we continuously nibble away at the specific job of opposition and simply say: well, we're all just members in it together, and we should all have the same opportunities. There's, of course, then, no consideration for the fact that opposition members are not, for instance, invited to government caucus meetings, or there's no consideration of the fact that there is in parliamentary democracy a history of caucus discipline, all those kinds of things that they were told to just pretend don't exist, and as a result opposition should be considered, you know, in a very similar fashion to backbench MLAs.

With that sort of being the overview, what I then saw through these changes is a number of places where the ability of the opposition to function in its role as opposition has been diluted or undermined, so I'm just going to try to focus on the most critical areas. Most of that relates to what the hon. Member for Edmonton-Centre has already identified with respect to the role of estimates and how estimate debate has changed. I've been on the record before, but I will say it in this Assembly as I did in the committee: the new structure for debate of estimates is deeply, deeply problematic for our caucus.

Yes, there are only two of us. Yes, we have to accept what Albertans told us in terms of how many caucus members we were able to elect. There's no question about that. Nonetheless, I am repeatedly contacted day in, day out by people from across the province asking me to act in the role of opposition member and to raise their issues and to ask questions on their behalf. They may not be supporters of mine. Often they're not. It doesn't matter. I'm in opposition, so they think I have a responsibility to them which goes beyond my responsibility to my constituents. I get those calls from all over Alberta.

Certainly, the budget process is the fundamental underlying mechanism through which this government does business, makes decisions, and implements any particular course of action. By limiting our ability to participate in it, I think we truly limit our ability to represent members of the Alberta population who are looking for opposition debate on their behalf. The particular concern, as has already been mentioned, of course, is this notion of having the estimates occur concurrently in two different rooms. One room may be this Assembly. There may be two committee rooms used or maybe this Assembly and a committee room but, in any event, two rooms, two separate places going on at the same time.

3:40

Now, of course, one thing that was changed as well in these rules was the obligation to have the agreement at least of the Official Opposition House Leader in terms of the scheduling of estimates, and now we've moved to only: must consult with. While I appreciate that our third party is now named in having to be consulted with – and that's a bonus for us – it does, I suspect, reflect a net loss in that at the end of the day we have to go along with what the government ultimately decides with respect to the scheduling of estimates.

When we had this discussion in committee, I was told: well, you know, if two of your critic areas happen to be scheduled at the same time, your job is to get your other caucus member there. Well, you know, here's the thing. I mean, that would require each of us at the outset of estimates debate to be ready to debate in a fully intelligent way – of course, the hon. minister of the Treasury Board has indicated that he's frustrated that sometimes we don't seem as on top of it as we could be – to be ready to fully engage in a well-researched, well-thought-out, helpful, informative question-and-answering process on all 24 ministries at all times. If we're going to meet the objectives of the high standards that apparently we're not meeting and at the same time be available to do that on behalf of the people of Alberta, each of us needs to be able to do it for all 24 ministries. Frankly, I think that's a ridiculous expectation. I think it was really a facetious statement at the outset when I was told that that was the answer to our concern.

The practical outcome is that our caucus will probably need to limit its participation such that we're able to engage in maybe half of the estimates if we're lucky, if we're going to hold ourselves to a standard where our contribution is worth while. I don't think that benefits this Assembly. I don't think that benefits Albertans. It's not because we are, again, particularly wise people with particularly intelligent constituents; it's because we are opposition. I think that if a parliamentary democracy is going to work, there needs to be acknowledgement of the role of opposition, and we need to be able to do that job in as effective a way as possible.

That is the concern I have about the estimates process being concurrent, and that's the primary concern. Of course, again, just to note that in most other jurisdictions where it is concurrent, it's also associated with much more discussion time and also with more opposition, much bigger opposition caucuses.

Finally, because, you know, there was talk about how in the past

there had been negotiation between the House leaders with respect to the standing orders, I'd just like to raise two points that we had brought to this discussion and hoped to have included in the revised standing orders but which weren't. They related primarily to the issue of the opposition, again, to get ever-so-small an opportunity to put their issue into debate. Of course, as we know, the government directs about 99.999 per cent of the agenda with respect to what we talk about in this House. The very small exception to that rule is question period and in our case one member's statement a week.

Apart from that, we're not actually ever able to ask members of this House to consider an idea, a proposal that we'd like to put forward. The only way that can happen, of course, is through the private members or through the motions, the opportunity to have motions put forward. Unfortunately – again, this goes back to my original comments – because we've decided that we are for all intents and purposes a representative democracy rather than a parliamentary democracy, I get to throw my name into the hat along with a whole bunch of Tories. Again, I'm more than happy to acknowledge that they won. There's no question. They won; our caucus lost. There's no question about it. But we are now at the point where we've gone beyond the electoral outcome, and we're talking about the functioning of this particular Assembly in this particular parliamentary democracy.

What I had put forward was an opportunity where we would get a chance. Basically, what would happen is that it would be 50-50, that half of the private members' bills would go to the government and half of the private members' bills would go to the opposition. The opposition would divide them on a pro rata basis, which would have given our caucus one private member's bill a year and probably one motion a year. Again, it's not as though we were suggesting that we wanted to take over what was going on in this House and completely subvert the government's agenda. We just thought that it would be worth while to get a rare opportunity to identify those priorities and lead the debate for a brief period of time. I was very disappointed that that proposal was not reflected in what ultimately was put forward and voted on by the majority of government members in the committee that tabled these amendments.

On the same issue we'd also talked about seeking the opportunity to have more flexibility to change the rules around emergency debate so, once again, in that ever so slight, rare situation we might be able to respond in a more timely way to events going on in the province and make our debate here more relevant to the actual goings-on for real Albertans outside of this House. Unfortunately, that, too, was not addressed in the ultimate set of amendments that came forward.

It's for those reasons that we will not be supporting them. As I say, there are smaller procedural issues here and there, but I think the key focus for us is that we are concerned that we're not going to be able to do the best job that we feel that we should be doing in our role of a very tiny opposition in a parliamentary democracy. We are disappointed as a result of that, so we will be voting against these amendments.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there additional members who would like to participate?

Shall I call on the hon. Government House Leader to close the debate? Proceed.

Mr. Hancock: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief, at least comparative to most of my comments. Just a couple of things, though, that I think do need to be referenced. The hon. Opposition House Leader indicated, although it was, I think, corrected by the House leader of the third party, that the Committee of Supply

process where we refer the estimates to the policy field committees would take it entirely out of the House, and that's not correct. It needs to be established that if there was one sitting, one of the committees could certainly sit in the House. If there are two sitting at a time, one of them could sit in the House, and the galleries would be available for the hundreds and hundreds of Albertans who come to watch the supply debate.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, through your good offices you've made all debates in the House available on streaming video on the web, which is the modern process by which most people watch us, including, I think, our press gallery, who's here every day but not physically present. They're here listening on the audio box and now, presumably, glued to the video screens of their computers on their desks. So to suggest that this is not available to the public, I think, is a misstatement.

Now, the other concern has been a question – and we hear this quite a lot – about resourcing, that because the opposition is underresourced, they cannot be prepared to do all of this work. I'd only have two comments about that, Mr. Speaker. One is – and this recognizes the unique role of the opposition that has been mentioned by both opposition House leaders – that the unique role of the opposition does provide for their need to have extra resources over and above what private members of the government caucus have.

In fact, they do have more resources than private members on the government side of the House, although I do think that I heard the Leader of the Official Opposition today comment about potentially wanting to give up some of those resources so that we could be leaders in the economic downturn process. If that wasn't what he was saying, I'm not sure what it was, but what I heard him say is that he thought we should provide leadership by example and perhaps cut back on the resources available to members. I think, Mr. Speaker, that that would be a mistake. I think the opposition needs the resources that they have to do the job that they need to do and that private members on the government side need resources to be able to do the jobs that they need to do to properly represent constituents. It's a small price to pay for democracy.

3:50

The question of whether they can engage in every debate: not every member of the House engages in every debate, and for that we are truly blessed. We do need to rely on other members of our caucus to carry the ball in some cases, and I think opposition needs to do that as well. If people go back and read *Hansard*, whether it's this year or last year or the year before, regardless of the size of the caucus not everybody participates in every debate. To suggest that somehow it's precluding a member's ability to represent their constituents by having two committees sit at the same time, I think, is a little far fetched, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to spend just a moment on the role of private members. The House leader for the third party would suggest that there's somehow – and she was good enough to indicate that she didn't want to denigrate the role of private members on the government side. But I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a difference between parliamentary democracy and representative democracy at all. Under the parliamentary system it is the role of the House to hold the government to account.

The government is represented by Executive Council, who are members of the House. All members of the House who are not members of Executive Council have a duty and obligation in this House to hold Executive Council to account, whether it's for the estimates or whether it's for the legislation that's being brought forward. The fact that we have caucuses and the fact that private members on the government side have an opportunity to help participate in the policy discussions in Alberta probably more than

anywhere else, have that advantage of contributing to developing the policy, should not detract from the important role that every member has in this House of holding the government to account.

That goes as well for the role with respect to private bills. Private members have the opportunity to bring forward issues that are important to them on a private member's basis. That's not the purview of the opposition. That's not a role which is provided solely to the opposition. That is a role that's important to every member of the House, as is questioning the government during question period. Although the opposition gets a pre-eminent position in that, it cannot be afforded the sole position in that. Being able to ask and get answers on issues that are important to their constituents or important to the public of Alberta is a very important role to play.

Some questions are broader than others, but all of them are important to the member that's asking, and all of them are important to the public of Alberta. Sometimes they're specifically targeted to specific issues, and sometimes they're tougher and more pointed, but the fact that somebody asks a broad question doesn't necessarily mean that the response that's given is not very important.

Mr. Speaker, the last comment I'll make is with respect to scheduling of estimates. We've had a very co-operative process of scheduling estimates for I guess it's 11 years now that I've been in the role of Government House Leader. I don't see any reason why that would not continue under my role as House leader or any other House leader role because for the good of the operation of the House you need to schedule estimates not only when the ministers are available to come but also when the opposition and other members of the House are available to come. So that important scheduling, although it's purely an administrative process, is not one which you basically just throw up and say: this is what we're doing. It's one that has to be done co-operatively, and it will continue to be done co-operatively.

[Government Motion 23 carried]

Statement by the Speaker

Cellphone Cameras in the Chamber

The Speaker: Before I recognize the hon. Government House Leader, hon. members, the chair has been watching very attentively for the last hour, hour and a half. I would just like to point out to all members, seeing as we're talking about rules, that in the memo that I put out every year in the spring prior to a session, I list a whole series of decorum things. Number 18 says, "Cellular phones, tape recorders, camera phones, cameras and pagers are not permitted in the Chamber." In the last hour, hour and a half the chair has observed at least, probably, eight or nine members flicking with their little pearl thing up and down. It's called a BlackBerry, which falls in the same category.

Now, the reason that that rule exists in this Assembly has to do with the violation of the privacy of some members by other members. When the cellphone arrived, oftentimes with the newer models there was a picture-taking capability. Some members used that device to take pictures of other members and then posted those pictures. It became such a very grave embarrassment to some members that they raised a point of privilege with the chair. That's why these devices are not to be used in this Assembly, yet members either don't know the rule or choose to violate the rule or choose to go up against the rule.

I'm prepared to review that, understanding the technological sophistication of the current membership in this particular Assembly, but members have to appreciate that if there's a camera device in there and a member takes a picture of another member or a document on another member's desk and then violates the integrity of the

one member by either making it public or posting it on a computer or posting it on a website, all hell will break loose for some members.

I'm going to send a memo to all members shortly saying: here's the situation; I'm prepared to change this when we come back for the next session in the spring, but will you live with the responsibility of it? Please, at least until we continue this, because not all members are here at the moment, would you kindly keep them private and not use them. You have the right to use your computers. But if you've got picture-taking capability, I'm sorry. There's a risk of some person wanting to be mischievous or naive or ignorant or mean, which hurts it for everyone else. That's the little dilemma. I'm sorry to have raised that.

Government Bills and Orders Second Reading

Bill 53

Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)

The Speaker: Hon. Deputy Government House Leader, I believe you were proceeding with Bill 53.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General I'd like to move Bill 53, Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2), for second reading.

I think everyone here knows that miscellaneous statutes usually just reflect very straightforward provisions that are noncontentious in nature and, therefore, generally receive support, at least as a rule.

With that I'll just take my seat. Unless there are any other comments from other members, I'd call the question.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Additional comments?

Shall the question be called?

Hon. Members: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 53 read a second time]

Government Bills and Orders Third Reading

Bill 40

Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Amendment Act, 2008

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

Mr. Dallas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move third reading of Bill 40, the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, 2008, on behalf of the hon. Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Mr. Speaker, as a member serving my first term in the Alberta Legislature I'm honoured to have the opportunity to help take this particular piece of legislation through the process. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services for all the support they have given me throughout the process. Thank you to Tyler Lawrason, Christine Ferbey, Fay Orr, April Patriquin, Susan Wismer, Richard Ouellet, Antonella Soria, Nela Afonso, Phil Goodman, Elizabeth Jeffray, and Marika Giesen.

[The Deputy Speaker in the chair]

It's been an interesting learning experience and a wonderful opportunity to see and participate in the democratic process on behalf of my constituents and Albertans. It's also been a chance to take part in meaningful debate as Bill 40 passed through first and second readings and Committee of the Whole. I've been very interested in what members of the House have brought forward in terms of comments, concerns, support, and general questions.

I'd like to once again take this opportunity to reiterate some of my earlier comments on areas of Bill 40 where some members had raised questions. The amendment in section 61 of Bill 40 will operate to make confidential information provided by a child to the Child and Youth Advocate the privileged information of the child. Again, this means that the Child and Youth Advocate cannot be compelled through the litigation process to disclose the child's confidential information without the child's permission.

4:00

The intent of this amendment is to provide children and youth with the assurance that they can speak freely and openly with the advocate without concern that confidential information in their individual advocacy file will be disclosed. As I mentioned during second reading, there have been instances in the past where a child has confided to the advocate his or her feelings towards parents or other family members only to find that the advocate had to disclose this confidential information in the course of litigation. This led to difficulties in the child's relationship with their family later on.

The amendment does not change the advocate's statutory obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the director, nor does it prevent the public from accessing information from the advocate that is not specific to an identified child's case. Further, it does not prevent the child's individual child welfare file from being accessed in the course of litigation. For example, the amendment will not prevent public access to the type of information contained in the advocate's quarterly reports. This amendment was recommended by the Child and Youth Advocate over a year ago to respond to concerns that office heard from children and youth receiving advocacy services.

I also would like to address concerns around the timelines for plans of care, as we discussed during Committee of the Whole. Mr. Speaker, the original intent of the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act was for consultation and planning to begin with families within this 42-day time period. The courts interpreted this as meaning a plan of care would be filed within 42 days. It is not always possible to develop and file a plan for care within this time period, for example, if a parent who needs to be involved in the development of the plan cannot be located. The intent of amending this area of the legislation is again to ensure that through policy a plan for services is embarked upon for the family within this 42-day timeline. The practice within Children and Youth Services is to work with the family as soon as the child or youth is brought into the government's care, and these plans are developed as soon as possible. That practice will not change.

Mr. Speaker, at this final stage of the process we have before us a solid bill, a bill that will help strengthen an enhancement act that is of utmost importance to Children and Youth Services staff and the families, children, and youth they serve. I know it is with great consideration that members have examined Bill 40. Members clearly recognize the significance of the enhancement act.

I'd like to take this opportunity to once again assure members and Albertans that while amendments are being made to the existing legislation, the underlying philosophy of the current statute will not be changed by Bill 40. The enhancement act will continue to support the development and well-being of Alberta's children,

youth, and families while keeping them safe and protected. The amendments to the enhancement act come as a result of improvements identified by staff in the field as they applied the legislation in real situations. The changes are mainly to address matters that are procedural and administrative in nature now that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services has observed how the legislation has been functioning. Amendments to the legislation will also help ensure that it is up to date and reflects Alberta's society today.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to once again say that it has been a pleasure to sponsor Bill 40. I listened with great interest to what all hon. members of this House had to add to the debate, and I look forward to the upcoming debate this afternoon. I hope members from all sides will stand with me in support of Bill 40, the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Amendment Act, 2008, when the time comes for us to vote on the bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the answers that have been provided by the previous speaker because he's covered some of the ground that we really had concerns about. I think, especially in light of information that has come into the public arena recently around what's happened to some of the children that were under government care and then the subsequent wrangling in the House about who would get information and a request for MLAs to sign confidentiality agreements and a number of other things, there was great concern to us that the provision to protect the child's confidentiality would somehow cloak those records from others that were interested also in promoting and protecting the child. So useful information.

This act, of course, because it's around children who are most vulnerable, attracts a great deal of attention – and it should – and a great deal of concern, and it should. Children have a particular status in our society in that, unlike seniors, they do not have their own set of rights until they come of age, which here in Alberta is 18. A senior, who is another person who is likely to be physically vulnerable, maintains their full capacity unless the courts have deemed otherwise, but under most circumstances they would still be able to make decisions and choices about their life and be given protection on their own say-so. Children are without rights, essentially, until they're 18, particularly in Alberta because we still haven't signed the international declaration on the rights of the child.

Dr. Taft: How long has that been?

Ms Blakeman: Oh, it's forever. We ended up with some letter being placed on file as a sort of compromise solution.

Dr. Taft: I think that's 15 or 20 years.

Ms Blakeman: Oh, yeah. Fifteen years for sure because it was when I was at the advisory council, and that was in the early '90s. Yeah, we're coming up to 20 years on that one. We have never signed on to the UN declaration on the rights of the child, which is interesting in light of this particular bill, which is proposing to enhance children, youth, and families.

I think, in talking to the critic of the bill, the biggest concern that remained for us once some of our other questions had been answered was the issue around filing a care plan. Removing the requirement to file a care plan within 42 days, I think it is, was a concern because it made it open ended. We understand from those working in that sector that the 42 days was arrived at based on a particular formula,

a percentage of a child's life. So that 42 days was important in their whole lives when you looked at the age of a child that we would be dealing with here.

I think that one of the principles of the legislation was around ensuring expediency for the child around custody orders. We have an additional concern that it's being removed from the legislation. Everything is being removed from legislation. You know, I see this as part of a larger pattern on behalf of the government, which is flowing through this legislation and almost every other piece of legislation we have before us, that is a minimization of this Chamber and the work we do as a Legislature. At a certain point there's no need to bring anything before this Legislature anymore. It can all be done behind closed doors by the government, and this place will not be called. Now, it will be interesting to see how payment for MLAs is justified at that point, but I'm sure the government will come up with something. They always seem to look after themselves in that way.

We see that happening again in this bill: a number of things being removed from the bill. Therefore, changes to it would require that it come back before the Assembly for debate. It's being removed from the bill and placed into regulations or changes are allowed to be made through orders in council or a ministerial order. That, again, removes it from the scrutiny of this Assembly and from the public's eyes, the media's eyes, and the opposition's eyes.

We are generally supportive of the legislation. We're most concerned with the overriding protection of children, the protection of their information and their basic rights. We think the government got this bill mostly but not entirely right. I think it is around the timelines that are now missing from the legislation and that either don't appear at all or appear under regulation that is our primary concern.

4:10

One of the other issues that I think was raised, that I have a note on here, is the changes to the powers of the appeal panel. We always like to see civilian oversight on those panels, but I think it also needs to be noted that when you're dealing with a sector that requires a particular expertise, you need to make sure that that civilian oversight is also mixed with expert oversight.

You know, I was at a public hearing open house last night and watched a group of really well-meaning people completely misunderstand what was supposed to happen. I watched it happen. There were four groups that were working in a public consultation process, and three of them managed to get through it, and the fourth one just didn't. We all had the same presentation at the beginning. We all had staff from the same department working with us at our tables. I don't know what happened, but it can happen when you end up with civilian oversight on a committee or on an appeal panel, for example.

You need to work from an evidence base. I keep coming back to that in this legislation and in a number of other topics that I speak on: you need to make these decisions based on evidence. We often make them based on some sort of personal connection or what seems logical to us at the time but that when you actually look at the evidence is not supported. Although we do like to see civilian oversight – and I would still support some citizen participation on an appeal panel – I think we also need to be careful that we do have an expert understanding of the circumstances there. Everybody has an opinion on children, and we might not always all be right on that one. Sometimes we need the expert guidance that's available.

Those are the comments that I would like to make on behalf of the critic of the bill. We are essentially supportive of the changes here although we think there are some flaws that should be corrected.

Thank you for that opportunity.

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

Ms Notley: Thank you very much. I rise to speak in third reading of Bill 40. I will try to be brief because I think I've explored at some length now, in previous readings, our concerns around this bill. They essentially remain in place.

There are four points I guess I want to make. There are at least two points in this bill, and probably more, but at least two that were brought to my attention by people with an interest in child welfare in our province, two elements of the bill which, in fact, are improvements and are good things. The first was with respect to the filing of the cultural plan, and the second was with respect to the continued funding or provision of support to guardians who take on their role on a permanent basis. I think those things are good things.

Our caucus, ultimately, will be voting against this bill. I would be more concerned about it – because there are these good things in the bill – except that I'm told that both of these things, for the most part, happen as a matter of practice. You know, it's a bit of a tough call because I do support both of those objectives, and I do want to give credit to the minister for seeking to have them put in place.

The difficulties that we have with the bill, though, that will ultimately result in our voting against it, have been identified before. The first, of course, is with respect to the appeal panel. As I've stated before, I think that that panel's jurisdiction needs to be maintained. I believe that if the ministry and people within the ministry have concerns about the quality of decisions being made and the level of expertise that is brought to bear on those decisions, then the answer is to improve the appeal panel, to change the appointment process, and/or to better resource the appeal panel so that they can draw on expertise yet at the same time enjoy the benefit of removing what I might call the institutional bias from which the appellant is trying to remove themselves by entering into the appeal process in the first place. I think that there is a way to get to the objective which I think underlies this change while at the same preserving and enhancing the rights of appellants. I'm afraid that that way is not what is reflected here. Instead, we have created this horrific bureaucratic nightmare.

Again, you just can't create a system more broken than creating an appeal panel, tell them to draw appellants through the process so that they become more and more invested, more and more crystalized in terms of where they think the problems are, tell them that they are correct, validate their identification of the problems, and then say, "Now that we've brought you through this process, we're going to let the people who created the problems in the first place consider our observations," and then they can do whatever they want in response to them. That is a recipe for creating even more frustrated people within a system.

The second thing has already been mentioned, the removal of the timelines with respect to the care plans. I think that that is also a problem because we've seen a lot of particular areas within child welfare where those timelines become truly, truly problematic. Really, the only way to get out of it is to put them in place and to hold people accountable for them. If the timelines are too short, whatever, then, you know, again that can be reviewed. But to simply remove them and to rely on policy and practice in a ministry where I know many, many people are working very, very hard trying to juggle way too many balls is not going to bring about the best outcome for children within the system.

Finally, the third thing, which I raised at the outset as being the most concerning and worrisome element of this, does ultimately relate to the whole issue of the privileged information. Once again I note with appreciation the comments made by the government member who has been shepherding this bill through the process with respect to the government's intent in relation to the release of

information. While debate or information or copies of *Hansard* on the government's intent is often a relevant piece of information, if there is uncertainty on how a piece of legislation is to be interpreted, it is not something that factors at all into how the legislation is to be interpreted if the legislation itself appears clear on the face of it.

My concern, as I explained in excruciating, probably boring detail in Committee of the Whole, is that the legislation on the face of it does not achieve the objective or the intent that you're describing and, in fact, is going to have that intent plus a much more worrisome and problematic outcome. I don't think that this member's comments will factor into any adjudication on the matter. I'm afraid that the legislation just will appear before a judge, and the judge will say: if they wanted to do that, they should have written it that way, but that's not how they wrote it.

In fact, there is a whole bunch more information that's not going to be released as well. That is my concern. We've had a tremendous amount of discussion globally in this Legislature over the last few weeks about the need to move or keep governance within this Assembly and to not move it to a regulatory or policy-making function. We've also had a number of debates in a bunch of different settings about the issue of transparency and openness and accountability. For those reasons, I think, when you're dealing with a matter like child welfare, it is of crucial importance that those values—openness, transparency, and accountability—are maintained to the greatest extent possible. I'm afraid that that's not achieved with this legislation both by the section with respect to creating privileged information and also through the absence of a redefinition in the role of the child advocate in relation to this Assembly.

For those reasons we will not be supporting this bill. Thank you.

4:20

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

Dr. Taft: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our points about this bill have been put on the record, but at this point, in third reading, I think we want to talk a little bit about what the effect of the bill is going to be and also, equally important, what else needs to be done.

One of the real jobs I had in my life was actually working in the child welfare area. This was in the early and mid-1980s, Mr. Speaker, and I was head of program evaluation for what was called the Edmonton region of Social Services and Community Health. Through that work I ended up meeting with many child welfare workers and reviewing a tremendous number of programs, and I can tell you that for those MLAs who have not had that front-line experience working on child welfare cases, I urge all of you to try to find the opportunity to spend a day with a child welfare worker. It's sobering. It's really quite disturbing to see that underside of society and how children in Alberta and around the world are suffering and are at risk.

The kinds of issues that I've heard discussed in the last days and weeks here are very much the kinds of issues we faced 20 years ago, and those were issues that were being faced years before that. I'm sad to say that I expect that 20 years from now we'll still be struggling with those issues because they'll be occurring for reasons beyond what we consider in child welfare. I think it's important to address some of those broader issues, and I'll just go through them fairly briefly here and not in any particular priority, Mr. Speaker.

I think that this kind of legislation will be churning away for years until we address poverty. Child poverty in Alberta is far too widespread. That's true across Canada, and it's true around the world, so I'm not saying this to blame anybody. I'm saying this to urge members of this Assembly to address some of the underlying causes that lead children to end up in custody. We have children born into families that don't give them enough of the basics, like

food and shelter and clothing. Those kids don't have a chance, hardly, of making their way ahead. There are kids who don't have the money to participate in things that you'd like to imagine were standard for kids: playing hockey, buying a pair of skates, owning a bicycle. Those things that make childhood childhood are not available to everybody, and they won't be until we help address issues of poverty.

Pre-eminent among all of those are issues of hunger. The members of this Assembly know that I have strong feelings about the need to end child hunger at least here in Alberta. It's something that is well within our grasp if we just have the political will to do it.

Related to that are issues of inequality. There is growing evidence that societies that have extreme inequality actually have more social problems. Even though the average wealth may be high, when you have extreme inequality, you have more poverty. The inequality itself raises issues around health and access to opportunity and all kinds of other issues. We have seen in Canada a rise in inequality and a kind of acceptance of inequality in a way that we didn't have years ago. I think that also contributes to these kinds of issues, and that also means that this kind of legislation is going to be constantly at work here.

Mental health issues are of profound importance. We have to remember that we're talking about mental health issues of children, including newborns, newborns who may be born with addictions or born with fetal alcohol damage. In fact, I've been dealing with a case in my constituency this fall of a drug-addicted prostitute who has just delivered this fall at least her third child, and that child had to spend weeks in hospital breaking its addiction to crack. What chance does that child have, Mr. Speaker? That child is almost certainly going to at some point in his life be affected by this legislation.

In addition to this legislation, I'd like us to be taking seriously issues of the mental health of children and families. I know we've talked about that in this Assembly. I know there is some work being done by the government on fetal alcohol syndrome, but I think it's inadequate. I think we're visiting tragedy upon our children and not doing enough to prevent it. Ironically, we actually spend more than we would if we prevented the problem.

Another thing we could do is prekindergarten. The school system now knows very well and can predict with wonderful accuracy by grades 3 or 4 or 5 who's going to drop out of school and who's going to finish grade 12 by reading and writing levels. So moving towards prekindergarten on a more ambitious scale, which I believe was a recommendation of the Learning Commission, would be a great step and, I have no doubt, a cost-saving step as well in the long term, in the big picture, and would make this kind of legislation that we're about to pass less necessary, Mr. Speaker.

I'll also mention one other thing, which is the social upheaval and turmoil which comes with a boom-and-bust economy. We've all lived through a boom. We've all seen the stresses that come from that. We're all maybe about to live through a bust. We're not sure, but we're certainly about to live through a correction. When we're in a boom-and-bust economy, we have a boom-and-bust society. That means a series of stresses as the boom works its way through: parents are away from families, work hours are incredibly long, costs soar, and pressures are intensified. Then when that corrects, we have the same kinds of things in reverse. There's overwhelming evidence, Mr. Speaker, that stable economies with slow, steady growth are actually happier, healthier places than boom-and-bust economies. I would love to work with this government to help Alberta's economy get on a more stable basis because in the long run, if we achieve that, this kind of legislation that we're passing today will be less necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to put this legislation in a broader picture

in saying that if we don't want to be turning these wheels on child welfare issues as we have for decades, then we need to address bigger issues. This legislation is fine. You know, there are some issues with it, but it's fine, and it's important. But unless we get the bigger picture right, we're not going to make the real progress that children in this province need.

I wanted to get those thoughts on the record because, damn it, I'm frustrated. I'm frustrated watching these issues come back year after year and decade after decade. It's like a stuck record, and it's tragic. It's tragic, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you.

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

[Motion carried; Bill 40 read a third time]

Government Bills and Orders

Second Reading

(continued)

Bill 52

Health Information Amendment Act, 2008

[Adjourned debate November 25: Mr. Rogers]

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

4:30

Ms Blakeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm speaking in second reading to Bill 52, the Health Information Amendment Act, 2008. This is a particularly timely bill because we are at a meeting point, a crossroads, of a desire for health information to be made more useful and to help contain costs in our health care system, coming into an absolute conflict with the ability to protect people's privacy and the pull that is happening around commercial use and fraudulent use of people's personal identified information and the resultant chaos that is created from that. We are at that point of immense conflict around these different issues.

In second reading we're trying to talk about the principle of the bill, so I'm trying to look at what's being considered in Bill 52. I'll be honest with you. I don't feel that I am as up to speed as I would like to be on this bill. I just personally have not had enough time to go back and forth with that careful consideration of what this means, so I will apologize in advance. I may make some assumptions that are erroneous, and I would expect to be corrected on that. I'm also upset that I would be in a position where I might do that because I don't like to do that, but I just have not had the time to be able to do a good job on this bill, and I really resent being put in that position.

Let me start from the beginning. When we look at health information, the overriding legislation that we have is the Health Information Act, and essentially there's a purpose. In acts you always have your definition section right at the beginning so that you understand what you're talking about and everybody's got the same definition to start with. Then the next section should be about the purpose of the act. Indeed, section 2 in the Health Information Act itself: the purposes of the act. There's a number of them, but I think the first couple are the most important because these show paramountcy.

Number one of the purpose of the act is "to establish strong and effective mechanisms to protect the privacy of individuals with respect to their health information and to protect the confidentiality of that information." That is number one. The number one goal of the act and of the government that implements that act is to establish strong and effective mechanisms to protect the privacy of individuals

and the confidentiality of their information. It's not number two; it's not number three; it's not number six. It's number one, and there's a reason for that: they wanted that to be paramount.

The second part of this – and this is the balance – is "to enable health information to be shared and accessed, where appropriate, to provide health services and to manage the health system." That is what we're trying to do. One, we're trying to protect people's health information; two, we're trying to be able to make use of that health information in a way that helps with the provision of those health services to those very same citizens. From this the conflict flows.

Then there's a third piece in here which I find also very important. The third purpose of the act, indeed, is "to prescribe rules for the collection, use and disclosure of health information, which are to be carried out in the most limited manner and with the highest degree of anonymity that is possible in the circumstances." Who cares? Well, you care because this is the instruction, that if you are going to collect, use, or disclose people's personal health information, you are to collect it in the most limited manner.

This gets contravened all the time, and I'll give you examples of that where people collect way more information than they need because, well, they think it might be handy someday. So when they're doing the form up, they think: "Okay. Well, we'd like your name." Yeah, definitely. "Your address." Yeah, okay. "Phone number. Marital status." Why? What's that got to do with health provision? Truly, you know, your marital status doesn't have any connection to whether they're going to operate on your heart or your knee. It doesn't. "Well, it might be useful, you know, just so that we can notify the next of kin." But later on they have a different section that says: "Next of kin. Who do you want us to notify in case of an emergency?" So why did we put what the marital status is?

That's just one really, really simple example of how we collect more information than we need or than we're going to use. This act tells us: don't do that. This act says: collect only a very limited amount, only what you absolutely need to collect, use, or disclose. It also says: do it with the highest degree of anonymity. You don't always need to put everybody's total information in connection with their information, and you certainly have to be very careful of the stewardship of that information. In other words, you are charged with not blabbing this information around.

I wanted to set out the context of this discussion by what's in the original act. That's the purpose I've outlined, and there are a number of other things. They talk about the right of access for people to look at their own records and to correct their own records; that there are remedies for contravening this act, which you always need; and that there are independent reviews for decisions, an appeal process, in other words, which you also always want to see. Those are pretty standard.

The second part of this. The way this act works is that essentially it defines custodians. It defines who is able to collect, use, and disclose this information, and they're called custodians. The way it's always described to people is: think of an arena. It should be hard to gain access to that arena, but once you have passed those tests as a custodian about the collection, use, and disclosure of people's information in the most limited manner, with the highest degree of anonymity, and you have demonstrated your purpose for using this information and it's something that we want you to be using it for, you are granted access to this arena. Once you're in that arena, the custodians may freely share the information amongst themselves. That's the key.

We've said that it's very hard to get into the arena. Lots of rules about how you get in the arena and, when you move outside, about how you use people's personal health information. But when you're

in that arena with the other custodians, people's personal health information is freely shared between the custodians. This becomes very important when we look at what's being considered under this act.

Who are the custodians? What are the expectations there around who they're going to name as custodians? I'm going back to the definitions sections in the act. Under section 1(f) custodian means, and they start listing them: the board of an approved hospital other than a hospital that is owned by a regional health authority or established by the Cancer Board, the owner of a nursing home, a provincial health board registered under the Regional Health Authorities Act, a regional health authority itself, a community health council, a subsidiary health corporation as defined in the Regional Health Authorities Act. That would be to cover things like lab services.

Then the Cancer Board continued under the Cancer Programs Act; a board, council, committee, commission, panel, or agency that is created by a custodian if all of its members are appointed by or primarily for that custodian but not including a committee that has as its primary purpose the carrying out of quality assurance; a health services provider who is paid under the Alberta health care insurance plan to provide health services; a licensed pharmacy; a pharmacist; the department and the minister; and then some individual boards, councils, committees, commissions, and panels designated in the regs as a custodian.

Then it goes on to a few exclusions. It doesn't include AADAC and some other community boards. So they're pretty specific about who is supposed to have access to this information.

4:40

Let me be clear. People want electronic health information to work, so they are willing to surrender their information because they want a system that works for them. I have talked before about, you know, one of my neighbours, who every six months stops me in the back alley and says, "When am I going to get my smart card?" as he still calls them. "I want to know that when I go to Banff and I go skiing and I break a leg and they take me to the Banff Springs hospital, they're going to have some card," that they can, you know, read their magnetic strip and know that he's had heart surgery and know what kind of medication he is on. He wants that in his wallet when he leaves his home. I can understand why he wants that. He wants to get good health care. He wants to know that if he's not where people know him and would have ready access to paper files, that information on him would be available, and he would get the best possible health care. Fair enough.

Balanced against that are a number of things that we know can go wrong with information that is held in electronic databases. There are a lot of examples that range from a whoops, uh-oh to: oh my God, this is totally out of control. I just read a very brief thing about something that is now going on in China or Japan where there's a sort of vigilante thing that happens. If somebody commits a crime on someone else, they start posting it on their Facebook and Internet sites and cross-reference – in other words, data match is how you'll hear about it in this act – with surveillance videos that are out there and accessible. They make a composite of who the person is, and individuals actually track this person down and wreak vengeance on them. Talk about a use of cross-matching different databases, and then it's citizen vigilantes. That's far beyond what was ever considered by somebody who said: gee, I think I'll set up video surveillance outside of my convenience store. Oh, yeah? Well, guess what? People are pretty darn inventive, and if they can figure out a way to have fun, make mischief, or make money, they will do it.

When we talk about these databases, we have to be really, really careful. Who gets access to that information, what they are going to

use it for, who else gets to look at it, how long do they keep it for, and how we ensure that it gets destroyed properly are really critical questions in this entire debate.

There are a number of issues that I've already picked up in my looking through this bill. It looks to me that information on services that are paid for privately can be added into the – my question is whether that is going to make them a custodian. I want to know the definition of that. I have a question for whoever is shepherding this bill through. Adding in the information on being paid for privately: does that make that entity considered a custodian with, therefore, access to the custodial arena? That would give, basically, private insurers access to the information in the custodial arena, which we know can be freely shared without the consent or knowledge of the individual whose information it is. That's the key part of that.

The second question I have. Data matching, for those of you that haven't read the bill, is taking two or more databases and combining them so that you get enriched information about individuals. You usually would use this in the context of public health modelling, public health evidence. You've heard me talk about: do you have the evidence here to be able to make these decisions? That's partly how you get it. You see this stuff come out in the newspaper all the time. You know, people who are between this age and this age and who are more physically fit are less likely to have this kind of cancer.

You arrive at those statistics, usually, by doing some kind of data matching. You are combining more than one database. But remember that what I just spent 10 minutes talking about is how we have to secure those databases from being used in a way that we did not anticipate. I believe that using the data matching the way it's being contemplated in this bill is going to up the ante. We're adding the data matching into the research.

I think there are a couple of issues here. They're mostly around the security of the databases. We've already had our own Auditor General really take this government to task, and I'll use his words: because security of our databases is exposed. We are not protecting the databases that we already have in other contexts, and now we're looking at data matching in the context of health information. Hugely problematic. We have to address the security concerns around our databases that have been identified by our Auditor General. What actions are being contemplated that will reassure us, as we move this bill through committees, that that activity is moving forward at the same time as we are contemplating this bill?

There are a number of examples of what goes wrong with the security of databases. There are things like theft of government services, you know. We've already had that happen. The Auditor General, again, found that we had more Alberta health care insurance numbers out there than we had citizens in the province. That was five or six years ago, when I was still on Public Accounts, and he was saying: who are all these people that we're giving Alberta health care insurance numbers to that are getting services? There are more of them than we have citizens in Alberta, so there must be other people that are accessing our services for free. We don't want to be paying for them, thank you very much. We want to pay for our own citizens.

The more recent go that the Auditor General has had around the security of our databases is to say that they can see the footprints of the hackers going through our systems. What are the hackers using the information for? Well, here are a couple. They use it to get government services for free, and they use it . . .

Dr. Taft: To steal identities?

Ms Blakeman: To steal identities. Thank you. I can't read my own writing.

In fact, there are a number of examples that I've already found, without trying too hard, where that's happened. Especially when they're coming with medical information, it really solidifies that identity theft.

The biggest security breaches always happen in the private sector. When you're looking at who's doing data matching and who's got access to our health databases, when it's the private sector, my antenna goes up. The biggest breaches of security are always in the private sector. We're just better and more careful because we're more vigilant when we've got it well contained in the public sector.

I think that we also have to deal with the rising costs of the electronic health networks. Again, that's an issue that's been raised by the Auditor General but in a number of other contexts. The minister the other day mentioned some 500 different computer systems that are out there in the health department. How on earth do we draw the reins of those all into one hand so that we have a comprehensive system that works? You can screw it up easily, and it's very expensive to work your way out.

I have questions about the custodians. I've got questions about the data matching. I have questions about the security of the databases. I also have questions about the increasing use of health information without the consent, that sort of broad use of a one-time-only okay. Well, you went into the hospital once and signed an okay for the use of health information. If they upload that into the regional health system, does that consent still apply? I think the court would argue no. We have some cases where that's being argued right now.

There's a lot to discuss here, and I look forward to this going to committee.

4:50

The Deputy Speaker: Any other hon. member wish to speak on this bill?

Dr. Taft: I'll just say, Mr. Speaker, for the record that we understand that this is being referred to a policy field committee and probably will come back in the spring a whole new number. We'll deal with it when it comes up next time.

Thank you.

Hon. Members: Question.

[Motion carried; Bill 52 read a second time]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been noted that there are some issues and concerns that require some additional discussion at a different level through a different committee. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 78.1 I would move that Bill 52, the Health Information Amendment Act, 2008, be referred to the Standing Committee on Health, where it can receive additional comments, and then be brought back for follow-up discussion at a later time, most likely in the spring session of the next Legislature.

[Motion carried]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Deputy Government House Leader.

Mr. Zwozdesky: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Given the progress that is being made, I would ask for unanimous consent to proceed to second reading of Bill 51, the Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2), assuming that maybe the House might grant such unanimous consent.

[Unanimous consent denied]

Mr. Zwozdesky: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course, it's disappointing not to get that unanimous consent because Bill 51 is a very good bill. It appropriates some very necessary monies. However, we will respect the wishes of those who were not able to provide unanimous consent.

On that note, I would move that we call it 5:30 and adjourn this day until Monday next at 1:30 p.m.

[Motion carried; at 4:54 p.m. the Assembly adjourned to Monday at 1:30 p.m.]

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

Activity to November 27, 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)
Committee of the Whole -- 1933-34 (Nov. 18 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1962 (Nov. 19 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)
- 40 Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Amendment Act, 2008 (Dallas)**
First Reading -- 1858 (Nov. 17 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1921-23 (Nov. 18 eve.), 1949-52 (Nov. 19 aft.), 2004-05 (Nov. 20 aft.), 2043-46 (Nov. 24 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2060-66 (Nov. 25 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2121-25 (Nov. 27 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)
Committee of the Whole -- 1990-93 (Nov. 20 aft., passed with amendments)
Third Reading -- 2046 (Nov. 24 eve., 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.), 1889-90 (Nov. 17 eve.), 1916-19 (Nov. 18 aft.), 1934-35 (Nov. 18 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 1962-63 (Nov. 19 aft.), 1965-66 (Nov. 19 eve., passed)
- 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.), 1884-87 (Nov. 17 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1913-16 (Nov. 18 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 1966 (Nov. 19 eve., passed)

- 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.), 1888 (Nov. 17 eve.), 1905-06 (Nov. 18 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1955-58 (Nov. 19 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2003-04 (Nov. 20 aft., passed)
- 45 Statistics Bureau Amendment Act, 2008 (Goudreau)**
First Reading -- 1694 (Nov. 3 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1803 (Nov. 5 aft.), 1816-17 (Nov. 5 eve.), 1888-89 (Nov. 17 eve.), 1906 (Nov. 18 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1958-61 (Nov. 19 aft.), 1974-75 (Nov. 19 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2004 (Nov. 20 aft., passed)
- 46 Health Professions Amendment Act, 2008 (Anderson)**
First Reading -- 1829 (Nov. 6 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1880-81 (Nov. 17 eve.), 1906-10 (Nov. 18 aft., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1975-76 (Nov. 19 eve., passed)
Third Reading -- 2004 (Nov. 20 aft., passed)
- 47 Mines and Minerals (New Royalty Framework) Amendment Act, 2008 (Webber)**
First Reading -- 1829-30 (Nov. 6 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1881-82 (Nov. 17 eve.), 1910-13 (Nov. 18 aft.), 1952-54 (Nov. 19 aft.), 1966-69 (Nov. 19 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1993-98 (Nov. 20 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2046-47 (Nov. 24 eve., passed)
- 48 Alberta Corporate Tax Amendment Act, 2008 (\$) (Evans)**
First Reading -- 1830 (Nov. 6 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1882 (Nov. 17 eve.), 1923-28 (Nov. 18 eve.), 1954-55 (Nov. 19 aft.), 1970-72 (Nov. 19 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 1999-2000 (Nov. 20 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2047-48 (Nov. 24 eve., passed)
- 49 Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008 (Berger)**
First Reading -- 1830 (Nov. 6 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1882-83 (Nov. 17 eve.), 1928-30 (Nov. 18 eve.), 1969-70 (Nov. 19 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2000-02 (Nov. 20 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2067-68 (Nov. 25 aft., passed)
- 50 Victims Restitution and Compensation Payment Amendment Act, 2008 (\$) (Redford)**
First Reading -- 1830 (Nov. 6 aft.)
Second Reading -- 1883-84 (Nov. 17 eve.), 1930-33 (Nov. 18 eve.), 1972-74 (Nov. 19 eve., passed)
Committee of the Whole -- 2002 (Nov. 20 aft., passed)
Third Reading -- 2068 (Nov. 25 , passed)
- 51 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2) (\$) (Snelgrove)**
First Reading -- 2111 (Nov. 27 aft.)
- 52 Health Information Amendment Act, 2008 (Rogers)**
First Reading -- 2018 (Nov. 24 aft.)
Second Reading -- 2060 (Nov. 25 aft.), 2125-27 (Nov. 27 aft., passed), 2127 (Nov. 27 aft., referred to Standing Committee on Health)
- 53 Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2) (Redford)**
First Reading -- 2081 (Nov. 26 aft.)
Second Reading -- 2121 (Nov. 27 aft., passed)
- 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)
Third Reading -- 1859-66 (Nov. 17 aft., agreed to on division)
- 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.)
Second Reading -- 1866-74 (Nov. 17 aft.), 2022-26 (Nov. 24 aft., defeated)
- 209 Traffic Safety (Driver Disqualification and Seizure of Vehicles Arising From Drug Offences) Amendment Act, 2008 (Quest)**
First Reading -- 1479 (Oct. 22 aft.)
Second Reading -- 2026-36 (Nov. 24 aft., six-month hoist amendment agreed to)
- 210 School (Enhanced Protection of Students and Teachers) Amendment Act, 2008 (Forsyth)**
First Reading -- 1634 (Oct. 29 aft.)
- 211 Documentation of Child Access Exchange Act (DeLong)**
First Reading -- 2111 (Nov. 27 aft.)
- 212 Agricultural Operation Practices (Confined Feeding Operations Approvals) Amendment Act, 2008 (McFarland)**
First Reading -- 1988 (Nov. 20 aft.)
- 213 Environmental Protection and Enhancement (Fines for Littering on Public Lands and Highways) Amendment Act, 2008 (Calahasen)**
First Reading -- 1988 (Nov. 20 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]

Table of Contents

Thursday afternoon, November 27, 2008

Introduction of Guests	2099
Members' Statements	
Edmonton Police Service Curb the Danger Program	2100
World AIDS Day	2101
Good Samaritan Society Southgate Care Centre	2101
Registered Apprenticeship Program	2109
Canadian Wheat Board Elections	2110
Twelve Days of Christmas Redux	2110
Oral Question Period	
Fiscal Restraints	2101
Alberta Health Services Board	2102
Bitumen Exports	2102
Beaverlodge Hospital	2103
Registered Disability Savings Plans	2103
Livestock and Meat Strategy	2103, 2105
Preventive Health Services	2104
Seniors' Housing	2104
Chronic Wasting Disease	2105, 2107, 2109
Health System Restructuring	2105
Olympic Torch Relay	2106
Homelessness	2106
Mountain Pine Beetle Control	2107
Advanced Education Service Regions	2108
Postsecondary Education Funding	2108
Physician Recruitment	2109
Presenting Petitions	2110
Notices of Motions	2110
Introduction of Bills	
Bill 51 Appropriation (Supplementary Supply) Act, 2008 (No. 2)	2111
Bill 211 Documentation of Child Access Exchange Act	2111
Tabling Returns and Reports	2111
Projected Government Business	2111
Government Motions	
Amendments to Standing Orders	2112
Statement by the Speaker	
Cellphone Cameras in the Chamber	2121
Government Bills and Orders	
Second Reading	
Bill 53 Miscellaneous Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)	2121
Bill 52 Health Information Amendment Act, 2008	2125
Third Reading	
Bill 40 Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Amendment Act, 2008	2121

COMMITTEES OF THE ALBERTA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund

Chair: Mrs. Forsyth
Deputy Chair: Mr. Elniski
Blakeman
DeLong

Denis
Johnston

Kang
Notley

Olson

Standing Committee on Community Services

Chair: Mr. Rodney
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hehr
Benito
Bhardwaj
Chase

Doerksen
Johnson

Johnston
Lukaszuk

Notley
Sarich

Standing Committee on the Economy

Chair: Mr. Allred
Deputy Chair: Mr. Taylor
Amery
Bhullar
Blakeman

Campbell
Marz

Mason
McFarland

Weadick
Xiao

Select Special Ethics Commissioner Search Committee

Chair: Mr. Campbell
Deputy Chair: Mr. Marz
Blakeman
Lukaszuk

Lund
MacDonald

Mitzel
Notley

Webber

Standing Committee on Health

Chair: Mr. Horne
Deputy Chair: Ms Pastoor
Dallas
Denis
Fawcett

Notley
Olson

Quest
Sherman

Swann
Vandermeer

Standing Committee on Legislative Offices

Chair: Mr. Mitzel
Deputy Chair: Mr. Lund
Bhullar
Blakeman
Campbell

Horne
Lukaszuk

MacDonald
Marz

Notley
Webber

Special Standing Committee on Members' Services

Chair: Mr. Kowalski
Deputy Chair: Mr. Oberle
Elniski
Hehr
Leskiw

Mason
Rodney

Snelgrove
Taylor

VanderBurg
Weadick

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Chair: Dr. Brown
Deputy Chair: Ms Woo-Paw
Allred
Amery
Anderson
Benito
Boutilier

Calahasen
Dallas
Doerksen
Fawcett
Forsyth

Jacobs
MacDonald
McQueen
Olson
Quest

Sandhu
Sarich
Swann
Xiao

Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing

Chair: Mr. Prins
Deputy Chair: Mr. Hancock
Amery
Berger
Bhardwaj
Calahasen
DeLong

Doerksen
Forsyth
Johnson
Leskiw
Liepert

McFarland
Notley
Oberle
Pastoor
Rogers

Sherman
Stevens
Taylor
Zwozdesky

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Chair: Mr. MacDonald
Deputy Chair: Mr. Griffiths
Benito
Bhardwaj
Chase
Dallas

Denis
Drysdale
Fawcett
Jacobs

Johnson
Kang
Mason
Quest

Sandhu
Vandermeer
Woo-Paw

Standing Committee on Public Safety and Services

Chair: Mr. VanderBurg
Deputy Chair: Mr. Kang
Anderson
Brown
Calahasen

Cao
Jacobs

MacDonald
Notley

Sandhu
Woo-Paw

Standing Committee on Resources and Environment

Chair: Mr. Prins
Deputy Chair: Dr. Swann
Berger
Boutilier
Drysdale

Griffiths
Hehr

Mason
McQueen

Oberle
Webber

If your address is incorrect, please clip on the dotted line, make any changes, and return to the address listed below. To facilitate the update, please attach the last mailing label along with your account number.

Subscriptions
Legislative Assembly Office
1001 Legislature Annex
9718 - 107 Street
EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4

.....

Last mailing label:

Account # _____

New information:

Name _____

Address _____

.....

Subscription information:

Annual subscriptions to the paper copy of *Alberta Hansard* (including annual index) are \$127.50 including GST if mailed once a week or \$94.92 including GST if picked up at the subscription address below or if mailed through the provincial government interdepartmental mail system. Bound volumes are \$121.70 including GST if mailed. Cheques should be made payable to the Minister of Finance.

Price per issue is \$0.75 including GST.

On-line access to *Alberta Hansard* is available through the Internet at www.assembly.ab.ca

Address subscription inquiries to Subscriptions, Legislative Assembly Office, 1001 Legislature Annex, 9718 - 107 St., EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4, telephone 427-1302.

Address other inquiries to Managing Editor, *Alberta Hansard*, 1001 Legislature Annex, 9718 - 107 St., EDMONTON AB T5K 1E4, telephone 427-1875.